

## Summary

This thesis examines the Foreign Office's involvement in international sport from the end of the First World War to 1948, with an introductory survey of earlier incidents. The evolution of political intervention in the cultural area of sport is traced in an attempt to give historical perspective to the contemporary debate on the relationship between politics and sport. The records of the Foreign Office for this period show that while involvement in sport was a predominantly informal part of its work, sport was used consistently for the political ends of diplomatic advantage and national self-advertisement, and to help re-inforce on the cultural level the expediencies and demands of foreign policy. The infrequent examples of high-level political involvement, including the Cabinet's discussion of the location of the 1940 Olympic Games and the governmental backing given to the 1948 Olympic Games in London, are discussed as part of a wider system of intervention.

The records of the Foreign Office, held at the Public Record Office, have been the main source for research, along with relevant files of the British Council, the Cabinet Office, and the Home Office. Sources from the two sports organisations most frequently involved in state involvement, the British Olympic Association and the Football Association, have also been used for supplementary information.

**The Foreign Office and International Sport**  
**1918-1948**

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For Catherine,  
who only sings at football matches

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## Introduction

### 1. The Historiography of Sport and Politics

On 20 September 1990, the Olympic Council of Asia announced that Iraqi athletes would be barred from competing in the forthcoming Asia Games, due to start in Beijing the following week. The reason for the ban was political: Iraq had invaded Kuwait on 2 August, and was occupying it in the face of mounting condemnation from countries with interests in the Gulf region. Despite the observation by Iraqi delegates to the Council that China, the host nation, had its own recent history of state violence, the ban remained. An added element of emotion was provided in this case by the fact that the Council's Kuwaiti President, Sheikh Fahd al-Ahmad al-Sabah, had been killed during the invasion.<sup>1</sup>

This example of sport being used as the medium for a political statement on the tone of relations between states is just one of many that have characterised the public image of international sport since the late 1960s. As such, it is part of the process that has helped to shape the historical investigation into the unclear and often controversial relationship between international politics and international sport. The Black Power demonstrations at the Mexico City Olympics of 1968, followed in subsequent Olympics by the murder of 11 Israeli athletes at Munich in 1972, and the black African boycott of Montreal in 1976 over sporting links with South Africa, helped to create a climate favourable for research.<sup>2</sup> This investigation was hastened by President Carter's boycott of the Moscow Olympics of 1980 over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and by the USSR's retaliatory absence from Los Angeles four years later.<sup>3</sup> Outside the Olympics, the profile of

political involvement in sport has also been high, particularly, in the British context, in connection with sporting relations with South Africa,<sup>4</sup> and the problem of English football followers abroad.<sup>5</sup> Numerous works on the history of sport have been rooted in these various contemporary debates. These have ranged from Duff Hart-Davis' blunt anti-Soviet work on the Berlin Olympics, an unsubtle attempt to project Brezhnev's USSR of 1980 onto Hitler's Germany,<sup>6</sup> and James Walvin's polemical work on football after the twin disasters of Bradford and Heysel,<sup>7</sup> to such considered works as those by Alan Tomlinson and Garry Whannel on football and the Olympics,<sup>8</sup> Mangan on imperialism,<sup>9</sup> and John Hoberman, David Kanin, and Richard Espy on the Olympics.<sup>10</sup> The result of all this research has been to demonstrate that the entry of political concerns and interests to sport is not of such recent conception as media coverage and institutional ideologies would suggest; and that the structures of domestic and international sports rely, to a great extent, upon the structures of politics and diplomacy.

In British sports history, the work on political involvement has tended to concentrate generally on the inter-war period, and more centrally on the roles of the Foreign Office and Home Office in the 1930s. The reasons for this are clear. It was a time of growing international contacts in many sports: the Olympic Games developed into a truly international event, and the World Cup in football was successfully promoted from 1930. These two competitions are examples of the world-wide enthusiasm and interest that sport was able to generate. It was also a period in which the evolving sport systems of certain European countries were becoming overtly linked with those countries' political systems, particularly in Germany, Italy, and the USSR: Eric Hobsbawm has claimed that international sport between the

wars became 'an expression of national struggle, and sportsmen representing their nation or state, primary expressions of their imagined communities.'<sup>11</sup> The received wisdom on sport and politics in Britain is that the Foreign Office and other state agencies became involved in sport only as a counter to the sports propaganda emanating from fascist and, to a lesser extent, communist dictatorships. Within this view, state involvement in the 1936 Berlin Olympics, or the use of sport as cultural propaganda by the British Council, would never have occurred had it not been for the politicisation of sport in Europe. To a certain extent, this is an accurate version of developments; and sport is a useful means for the historian to approach the Foreign Office's search for a system of national publicity abroad after the First World War.<sup>12</sup>

But as this is roughly the version which the Foreign Office had informally established by the late 1940s in response to the growing need for a more coherent approach towards international sports contacts, it must be treated with some caution. Research into the records of the Foreign Office and certain sports organisations can show that the process of involvement which became most evident during the 1930s has a longer history. By returning to such examples as the Foreign Office's co-operation with Anglo-French sporting contacts in the years before the First World War, and then moving beyond the 1930s to see the different political applications of sport in the Cold War, the important inter-war period can be seen in context as part of an continuing process. In the earlier period, this involvement was never formally or clearly defined or planned as far as the Foreign Office was concerned: it was generally characterised by pragmatic responses to given situations within a greater diplomatic or political context. But there is a large amount of evidence of such involvement,



often subtle and frequently semi-official, which shows the Foreign Office as perceiving British involvement in international sport as being a legitimate governmental concern. This work has as its basis the view that the Foreign Office and other state agencies involved themselves in certain British efforts in sport to ensure that they made an appropriate contribution to Britain's international political aims.

## **2. The Development of International Sport**

Historically, the Foreign Office has been helped in this process by the structure of patronage and ownership that has developed in British sport. From the patron status held at the Football Association (FA) by Edward VII as Prince of Wales and as King, through to his namesake's and great-great-grandson's ceremonial opening of the 1990 Commonwealth Games in Auckland, there has always been a connection between royalty and organised sport. This connection has been more pronounced amongst the aristocratic classes: the BOA, for example, has had the Duke of Sutherland, the Viscount Portal, the Duke of Beaufort, the Marquess of Exeter, Lord Rupert Nevill, and the Princess Royal as its Presidents.<sup>13</sup> The historical reasons for this alliance are based around the amateur origins of such organisations, which left them open only to people with the necessary time and means to dedicate to them. The perpetuation of this trend throughout the twentieth century has had political implications for sport. Its administration, on a national level, by people who command genuine political power through the House of Lords, or economic power through commercial and industrial interests, has tied it closely to the governing ideologies of an industrial capitalist nation. It has established

a community of interests between the government and governing bodies of sports, based around national advertisement abroad and its repercussions for trade and diplomacy. Once the idea that British sportspersons competing against opponents from other countries were representing the country had taken root, the implications for the government have become important. This community of interests has occasionally been undermined, most notably in the BOA's decision to send a team to the 1980 Moscow Olympics despite the Government's desire for a boycott. But in the period under research, there <sup>is</sup> was a strong sense of co-operation bordering on compliance from those who administered sport towards those who administered the country. The Foreign Office's contact with the BOA, the FA, and other bodies must be seen as indicative of their shared perspective that sportspersons were national representatives.

Since the establishment of the Olympic Games by French educationalist Pierre de Coubertin in 1894,<sup>14</sup> there has been a tacit recognition within British governing circles that friendly, successful sport between the representatives of different nations can act as a useful vehicle for improving and maintaining higher relations in the realms of diplomacy and trade. Coubertin's idealism has often been stressed in discussions of the motivating impulses behind international sport, and he has often been promoted as a saintly internationalist who believed that the friendly rivalries of the sports field would prevent the unfriendly ones of the battlefield.<sup>15</sup> This internationalist idea was somewhat contrasted by the views of Coubertin's contemporary, J. Astley Cooper, who proposed an Anglo-Saxon Olympiad as a means of strengthening the ties between Britain and its colonies and the USA, and whose scheme is worthy of study as a British version of the classical sporting impulse. Although he claimed in September 1895 that

the 'promoters of the games at Athens should be congratulated' for their efforts,<sup>16</sup> his emphasis was always on a festival as a meeting place for the English-speaking countries, and in 1908 he attacked the Olympic Games as 'a hybrid, babel gathering': 'The reasonable function of the Olympic idea is to foster nationalism; as a means to cosmopolitan understanding it is of doubtful value.'<sup>17</sup>

The idealised view of Coubertin is in need of redress in the popular version of Olympic history, as his particular emphasis on selected nations and their exclusively male amateur representatives did instil a very limited internationalism from the start.<sup>18</sup> But some contemporary press coverage of the early Olympics would suggest that the idea of sport acting as a safety valve for international tension was a significant factor in their existence. However, the immediate harnessing of this phenomenon to existing state structures ensured that the developing political complexion was one favourable to current governmental ideologies. This lack of radicalism was not just a matter of aristocratic appropriation: Coubertin deliberately chose men from elite circles for the pulling power of their names and the influence they could bring in their native countries. For Britain, this included the Prince of Wales and Arthur Russell, 2nd Baron Amptill.

Coubertin's insistence that competitors should represent their country furthered this nascent politicisation. Although this was not uniformly established in practice at the Olympics until 1908, the promotion of the idea that an athlete running for one country against an opponent running for another country entailed a degree of political significance: this significance is increased when the use of national anthems, flags, and the involvement of heads of state in the ceremonies are noted. This early organisation of sportspersons into groups identified by the territorial 'name and jurisdiction'<sup>19</sup> of their countries

created the raw material for state intervention and involvement: if the competitors were participating in the name of their country, then they could be subject to the political priorities of those who ruled their countries.

A basic factor in the emergence of state interests in British sport was the scale to which international sport grew in the early years of the century, and the special place Britain had in the history of sport. International sport began in earnest in a recognisable form in the last decades of the nineteenth century, a period which witnessed a huge growth in the number of sporting contacts between teams and individuals from different countries, and the subsequent organisation of those sports by international governing bodies. The impetus for the majority of these bodies came from Europe, with British enthusiasts generally preferring to remain isolated from the attempts to internationalise sport: this later led to a noticeable difference between British expectations, as the creators of modern sport, and the reality of competition once other nations became competent. Football can be used to illustrate this. Britons involved in such diverse overseas enterprises as evangelism, commerce, education, and military service, helped to spread the game around the world,<sup>20</sup> proving it to be 'one of Britain's most successful cultural exports, more resoundingly successful than Shakespeare, and more smoothly adaptable than, say, a Gilbert and Sullivan opera': but the establishment of the *Fédération Internationale de Football Associations* (FIFA) in 1900 was met with 'indifference bordering on contempt' in Britain.<sup>21</sup> A mixture of natural aloofness and an inability to recognise that Britain's lead in sport, as in trade and industry, was being undermined, kept the governing bodies of sports in Britain from joining forces too readily with the international bodies.

However, British teams and individuals did participate in international contacts in a number of sports in this period. The most obvious example is the Olympic Games: Britons in a number of sports visited Athens (1896 and 1906), Paris (1900), St. Louis (1904), and London (1908). Similarly, contacts in football proliferated. The England amateur team regularly met their counterparts from Germany, France, Belgium, and Holland from 1901, while the full international side undertook its first overseas tour in 1908 with matches in Vienna, Budapest, and Prague against Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia.<sup>22</sup> On the club level, pre-war tours included Nottingham Forest's to Uruguay in 1904, Tottenham Hotspur's to Argentina in 1909, and Sunderland's to Germany in 1913. International contacts can be seen in various other sports. Apart from the growth of test matches in cricket, which as an almost exclusively imperial sport is outside the concern of the present study,<sup>23</sup> it is worth noting that the first British international fencing team met France and Belgium in Paris in 1903;<sup>24</sup> while in lawn tennis, the Anglo-US Davis Cup tournament of 1900 had developed into a seven nation challenge by the start of the war.<sup>25</sup> These few examples help to show how the pre-war period was one of experimentation and growth, during which British sportspeople and teams becoming involved in the internationalisation of sport, while their governing bodies tried to remain independent from the emerging world federations. In this attempt to defend the perceived superiority of British sport, they were helped by a number of issues, most notably the vexing problem of amateurism, which set something of an ideological wedge between the domestic and international governing bodies. But with the growth of the Olympic Games, the most elitist of British sporting administrators were given a chance to promote the country's prestige in an idealised arena that was rich in political value

from its inception. Sport's universal appeal and international structure endowed it with a natural attractiveness to state interests.

### **3. The Neutrality of Sport**

Beyond this natural appeal based on the popularity and spread of sport, there was another reason for its adaptability to political use. Because sport grew on a supra-national level, particularly through the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and promoted around itself an air of superiority to political concerns, it has provided a neutral arena for meetings between nations that can be constructed as apolitical when expedient. The most striking examples of this from recent British history have centred around Anglo-Argentine sport since the Falklands War of 1982. Despite the conflict between the two countries in the spring of 1982, both national football teams played in the World Cup in Spain that summer; while in 1986, with diplomatic relations still unrestored, the teams met in the quarter finals of the World Cup in Mexico. In 1989, at a time when trade talks between the two governments were improving, the League champions of the two countries, Arsenal and Independiente, met in a commercially-contrived challenge in Miami, Florida. Such matches can be presented by governments and governing bodies as having no political significance because they are sport and have been played on neutral territory under the auspices of sporting organisations. But their political value in helping to normalise relations between countries has not been missed by governments.

There have been a vast number of examples of sporting contacts being used to demonstrate 'the temper of relations between the states represented'.<sup>26</sup> For the period under research, these included the successful running of the 1908 London Olympics as a prop to Anglo-

French relations; the British presence at the Antwerp Olympics of 1920 to support Belgian reconstruction; the deliberate promotion of sporting contacts with Germany throughout the appeasement period; and the encouragement of Anglo-Soviet contacts in the years following the Second World War. Sport is perceived to be a neutral area in popular culture; it is also supra-linguistic; but it has, in fact, consistently been used for diplomatic purposes. One of the most famous examples of this has been the Sino-US 'ping-pong diplomacy' of the 1970s, when table tennis matches helped to pave the way for President Nixon's diplomatic overtures to Mao Tse-tung.

This apparent cultural neutrality has also made sport a valuable tool when the condemnation of another government or its policies has been desired, as sport provides a public but peaceful way to demonstrate disapproval, a 'risk-free method of expressing displeasure'.<sup>27</sup> Recent examples of this aspect of sports diplomacy have included the 1977 Commonwealth Statement on Apartheid in Sport (the Gleneagles Declaration), which enabled the governments concerned to express their wishes for an end to apartheid without directly incurring any financial costs or raising the risk of armed conflict.<sup>28</sup> The campaign to boycott the 1980 Moscow Olympics provides another case, when President Carter of the USA and his European allies attempted to keep their sportspersons away from Moscow to express disapproval of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Moscow campaign gave western countries a chance to criticise the Soviet Government for its actions without endangering an escalation of the conflict. In the period under consideration, this aspect of sports politics was not as prominent as it has been recently. The boycott was not the developed weapon that it has become since the anti-apartheid cricket and rugby campaigns of the 1960s and 1970s,<sup>29</sup> and the

governmental employment of such methods by many black African states in 1976. But there were occasions when its use was called for, most notably over the Berlin Olympics, when diverse movements in the USA and Britain urged their governments and National Olympic Committees to stay away as a protest against Nazi policies. Moreover, some lower key examples of state action against politically undesirable sporting contests show this process at work at a less public level, as in the Home Office's ban on a Soviet football team invited to Britain in 1930: such a ban would not incite Stalin to war, but it could signify the Labour Government's dislike of his propaganda - and their fear of it influencing British citizens.

As well as using the content of sport as a tool of policy, the British state has also made consistent use of the sporting occasion to supplement political activity, both domestic and international. Reference has already been made to the patronage that royalty and aristocracy have given to sports organisations: this is also true of specific sporting events and achievements. The presence of royalty at every FA Cup Final since 1923, and the constant publicity surrounding the Queen Mother's love of horse racing, are just two examples of the role of sport as the 'theatre of the great', a meeting place of governors and governed.<sup>30</sup> The bestowal of honours upon successful sportspersons is the other side of the same coin: Linford Christie, Frank Bruno, Kenny Dalglish, Steve Davis, and Steve Perryman are just some of the performers recently elevated to various degrees of the order of the British Empire for their services to sport. The basic premise of such awards is that the sportspersons are doing something of which the state approves. Not only does it demonstrate, as John Hargreaves argues, a contrived interest in the country's popular pastimes; it also indicates that the sports in question are perceived to be



doing some good for Britain's international standing and image. Patronage, attendance, and honours all existed in the period in question, and they form useful examples of the state showing its interest in, and approval of, the successful execution of sport.

Of more direct political value has been the chance that the international sporting occasion has given for informal meetings and discussions between the governing elites of the countries involved, and the pre-1948 period is no exception to this. In 1906, Edward VII used the occasion of the Intercalated Olympic Games at Athens for his visit to Greece, during which various strategic and political matters relating to the stability of the Mediterranean and Balkans were discussed. The Prince of Wales was encouraged to attend the Paris Olympics of 1924 because other leading European figures would be present; while Sir Robert Vansittart, Permanent Under Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, used the pretext of the 1936 Olympics to visit Berlin at a crucial time in Anglo-German relations. Quite apart from the meetings of the IOC itself, which provide a private club atmosphere for members, many of whom have political and economic power, this aspect of international sport should not be underestimated.

These factors, then, form the basis of this study. They demonstrate why sport, from an early stage, has been seen as a worthwhile sphere of interest for politicians and their permanent staff. Moreover, they suggest that the natural alliance of interests between the state and the administrators of many sports has ensured that there has been a structural link between sport and politics, as well as a channel for pragmatic involvement when necessary. This should all be seen in the context of Britain's unique role in the world of sport. The fact that Britain is the historical home of sport has placed British sport

in a unique position. This has three main aspects that are worthy of note.

First, it has provided a sense of inbuilt deference in many nationals of other countries when dealing with British sport. The anglophile Coubertin worked very hard to secure British support of his Olympic idea; Berlin insisted on guarantees of British participation before it agreed to host the 1916 Olympics; and FIFA suffered a great deal of procrastination from the four British FAs between 1904 and 1946 which it would not have tolerated from other nations. Second, it has led in Britain to the evolution of sports ownership into a form independent from the direct management of the state. Whereas sport was promoted and controlled by the state in many European nations between 1918 and 1948, the more haphazard and piecemeal development of British sport throughout the nineteenth century gave it its own peculiar structures; and while there have always been close links between the personnel involved, there was no governmental agency for sport in Britain until 1935, when the predominantly voluntary Central Council of Physical Recreation and Training (CCPRT) was established;<sup>31</sup> and no government minister with specific responsibility for sport until the Wolfenden Report of 1960<sup>32</sup> led to the creation of the post of minister for sport, which has been swapped between the departments of Education and Environment. A more institutionalised development would have clarified the uncertain manner with which successive governments tried to deal with sport, but the historical development of British sport left it with fragmented control. The final aspect is that a sense of often arrogant superiority has surrounded many sports in Britain, stemming from a sense of pride in the country's historical primacy. This is in evidence today more than ever, with unreasonable demands to succeed being

constantly placed upon many sportspersons and administrators. This has developed from the assumption that because Britain gave sport to the world, it has a right to win. Such a view informed many of the debates in the early part of the period, particularly with regard to the Olympics, and it is interesting to note that many minutes and decisions from the Foreign Office were couched in such terms. This assumption must be borne in mind in any examination of the connection between sport and state.

#### **4. The Period, 1908-1948**

The period of 1918-1948 has been chosen for two related reasons. First, the massive developments in the size and scope of international sport across these years have made it an important phenomenon by any standards: this development meant that the Foreign Office had little option but to become involved, which has given the sources for this period an intrinsic value. Second, this evolution of state involvement over a long period can help to provide a context for the more detailed work that has been conducted on the 1930s. This decade was crucial to the development of a relationship between sport and state, due to the overt politicisation of sport abroad, to which Britain had to respond. But to see certain events in isolation, such as the frequently studied 1936 Olympic Games, can be misleading; and a greater understanding of any one event can be gained by studying the context.

Some of the advances in sport made in the years between 1900 and the First World War have already been outlined, but it is necessary to extend this survey to indicate the size and importance of international sport by 1948. The Olympic Games provide a useful indicator for this purpose: not only do they include many different sports, none of which are supposed to favour overtly specific

countries; but their special place as the pinnacle of amateur sporting achievement has made them immensely popular with sportspersons, publics, and governments alike. The growth of the Olympics thus provides a rough index to the growth of international sport as a whole. In 1896, 311 competitors from 13 countries appeared at Athens; in 1924, with the defeated nations from World War One absent, 44 countries sent 3092 competitors to Paris; while in London in 1948, 4099 competitors from 59 countries participated. The only arrest to this steady growth came with Los Angeles in 1932, when the international economic depression combined with the relative inaccessibility of the location to reduce the number of entries. The trend was also repeated in the Winter Olympics, an innovation that started at Chamonix in 1924, with 294 competitors from 16 countries, and by St. Moritz in 1948 had grown to accommodate 713 competitors from 28 countries.<sup>33</sup>

The identity of the nations represented is also of interest. At the 1896 Olympics, Australia, Chile, and the USA were the only non-European countries represented. At Paris in 1900, new nations included Canada, Cuba, and India, with South Africa joining in 1904, Egypt in 1906, and Bohemia in 1908. After the war, the geographical spread became greater, and in the 1920s the new nations included Argentina, Brazil, Estonia, Haiti, Japan, and Mexico. This continued to widen after the Second World War, with the 1948 Olympics at London involving sportspersons from Iran, Korea, Panama, and Trinidad.<sup>34</sup> The regular meeting of such geographically, culturally, and politically diverse nations for the purpose of sport throughout this period suggests something of the importance for national promotion that the Olympics were perceived to provide. The amount of interest aroused by these events is remarkable, enough to justify long and expensive

journeys and a large amount of time and commitment. By 1952, when 69 nations sent representatives to Helsinki for the 1952 Olympics, the global appeal of sport cannot be doubted. The period chosen thus covers the years of international sport's major development, and Britain's involvement in this growth.

The second reason for choosing this period, that of wishing to place the previous work of Beck, Hart-Davis, Jones, Mandell, Stoddart and others on sport and politics in the 1930s in a wider context,<sup>35</sup> enables the historian to go beyond the immediate problem of sporting contacts with the European dictatorships to see how the British state had dealt with sport under different diplomatic conditions. The sport of the appeasement period is of paramount importance to this study, forming as it does a central theme: for example, the Foreign Office's involvement in the 1935 football match between England and Germany, and their pressure on the BOA to withdraw London's bid for the 1940 Olympics in favour of Tokyo, form major examples of direct state intervention. But by going back to 1908, when the Foreign Office supported the London Olympics to assist Anglo-French relations, and then going on to 1948, when the Foreign Office and the Cabinet actively encouraged the London Olympic Games for diplomatic and economic reasons in the Cold War, the sport of the appeasement period can be seen as just one - albeit a crucial one - of the diplomatic uses of sport.

Sport, by itself, can be an infinitely variable political and ideological concept depending upon its setting, and it has been used in the diplomatic process in a number of contexts. By concentrating exclusively on sporting relations with Nazi Germany, some historians have tended to promote an image of Foreign Office involvement in sport as an aberration, a one-off necessity caused by the highly

centralised sports policies of the country in question. By going backwards and forwards from that time, we can see that it was only aberrant in its scale, not in its conception. By covering a long period with the appeasement years at its core, it is possible to gain a perspective on the historical development of the relationship between British international sport and diplomacy.

## **5. Sources**

A number of primary sources were consulted for this work. They can be divided into public records, private records, newspapers, and memoirs. Their availability and their usefulness deserve comment at this early stage.

### **i. Public Records**

Relevant records from the Foreign Office, Cabinet Office, Home Office, and the British Council for this period are plentiful, held at the Public Record Office, Kew (PRO). The bulk of useful material is in the Foreign Office files, mainly dealt with as correspondence by the regional political departments, or by the wider News or Library departments. Some issues, when specific enough, were dealt with by Consular (such as the presence of royalty at overseas events), Commercial (such as the import and export of goods and materials), or Treaty (such as the acceptance of medals by British sportspersons from foreign governments). These records are generally well indexed, and the amount of material on sport cited in the Foreign Office's own contemporary index, especially from 1920 onwards, suggests a large scale of involvement. Home Office records are of some use, particularly for the England v Germany football match of 1935, but

their concern with sport was inherently based more around safety and public order than on any assessment of international politics. The records of the Cabinet Office provide some excellent background material in the form of ministers' and civil servants' correspondence and memoranda, which are often candid in their discussions of diplomatic expediency. These files also contain official papers that helped to determine government policy on key issues, as well as the occasional discussion of specific sporting matters: the Berlin Olympics, the debate over the location of the 1940 Olympics, and the planning for the 1948 Olympics were all discussed at Cabinet level. The importance of such matters can be seen by this top level debate. The records of the British Council are more difficult to use. Sport was never officially incorporated into its remit, and while numerous Council officials abroad made extensive use of sport in their programmes of cultural propaganda, the lack of a unified central policy has left the documentation rather fragmentary.

But these public records are often problematic. The arguably ephemeral nature of the subject matter has caused problems relating to both the time of incident and the survival of documents. Throughout most of the period, the popular nature of sport was often emphasised as a consistent theme in Foreign Office files; and while this has been useful for assessing actions and attitudes, it has left sport in something of a limbo in Foreign Office thinking. This institutional bias thus tended to marginalise sport in day to day procedures, and is even noticeable in the terminology used: for example, the BOA was frequently referred to under incorrect titles, and the proper name 'Olympic Games' was often written with lower case initials. The long-term result of this is that documents on sport have always been ready candidates for destruction when records have been transferred to the

PRO. There are hundreds of references to sport in the Foreign Office indexes, including many fascinating and seemingly crucial ones, but only a modest proportion have survived. The natural tendency for this proportion to be based on the most public debates, such as the Berlin Olympics, is partially responsible for the bias in the secondary material.

## **ii Private sources**

To supplement the research conducted on the public records, some research has been carried out on the records of certain private organisations concerned with different aspects of sport. The FA and the BOA were chosen as the governing bodies of the two sports with which the Foreign Office was most regularly concerned. The FA proved very helpful, allowing this researcher, at least, full access to their minute books, committee reports, and extensive specialist library. The minute books, while never being particularly candid, are of great use when approached with a background knowledge of sporting events and Foreign Office action: this eases the reading between the lines that is so necessary with any body that promotes an appearance of political neutrality. For example, it is of great interest that the controversy surrounding the England v Germany match of 1935 was not alluded to in the minutes of either the International Selection Committee (ISC) or the FA Council, and the wishes expressed in Foreign Office correspondence often entered into FA policy without any direct reference to the source of the idea. These records are also useful in highlighting the shift in the FA's policy on international competitions from the isolationism of the 1920s and 1930s to the full membership of FIFA after the Second World War. However, the usefulness of the



minutes is limited by the fact that the correspondence from this period has not been kept.<sup>36</sup>

The BOA, however, is not normally as helpful as the FA with regard to unpublished documentation. Their collection of Official Reports, both British and foreign, is excellent, and the sumptuous nature of the German artefacts from Berlin gave a fascinating insight into the professionalism of the propaganda used in 1936. But the only unpublished material on open access in their library is a collection of transcripts of correspondence on the Berlin Olympics: and while this includes some gems, including Harold Abrahams' intelligent and articulate plea against participation, it would be interesting to see more of such material relating to other Olympics.

A third useful private organisation is the Trades Union Congress (TUC), whose conference reports are helpful in establishing the nature and extent of organised labour's moves against Nazi sport, and their provision of an alternative, socialistic sports programme. The TUC's library also contains some European and American ephemera on the proposed Berlin boycott, and on the alternative Workers' Olympiads.

### **iii Newspapers**

Newspapers have been used sparingly in this research, and only in relation to specific issues, rather than in any comprehensive sample to cover the 44 year period. This is partly because of the great time-scale of the subject matter, and partly because the content of press reports has only been supplementary to this study. Much useful information may be gleaned from the press, particularly on the way in which individual sporting events with political implications are presented. But on the major issues, with decisions being made at various levels within

the Foreign Office and other branches of government, newspapers are generally detached from the process and thus uninformed on the incidents of everyday involvement. The treatment of specific issues in newspapers with different political outlooks is of value, such as a comparison between the *Manchester Guardian's* pieces encouraging a boycott of Berlin and the editorial policy of *The Times*, which advocated participation. Also worthy of note is the manner in which the specialist sporting press generally tended to ignore any wider political implications for sport, and thus perpetuated the received image of sport's neutrality. *Football Pictorial*, for example, skirted around the political implications of the 1935 England v Germany match: its cartoon of a puny English forward scoring past a burly German goalkeeper by shouting "heil" to ensure 'the goalie's hand is otherwise engaged' in a Nazi salute was as close as it came to addressing the issue.<sup>37</sup> Newspaper coverage of sport and politics could be a subject for further research.

#### **iv Memoir and Autobiography**

For a degree of balance and supplementary information, autobiographies and memoirs by important figures in both sport and politics are clearly significant: and while this may lead to some strange combinations on the sport historian's bookshelf, such as Bill Shankly next to Lord Simon, it can also help to broaden the approach. The two genres are of equal value, both for what they say and for what they leave unsaid. In the sporting context, Mike Gatting's defence of the 1989 rebel cricket tour of South Africa that 'what goes on in the townships has nothing to do with us'<sup>38</sup> can be seen to have a long pedigree, exemplified by Eddie Hapgood's claim to have felt sick at giving the Nazi salute before the England match with Germany in

1938, but that his status as a footballer barred him from rebelling.<sup>39</sup> Such excuses are the lifeblood of sport's own self-image of neutrality, and as a result certain important political issues are marginalised into humour or farce. Hapgood described how he made a clearance in the Italy v England match of 1933 which went into the stand and hit Mussolini 'just above his lunch', and how he wished it had been something more lethal than a football;<sup>40</sup> while Fred Perry wrote of being introduced to Hitler before a Davis Cup match in Berlin that 'he was such a little man and totally surrounded by tall bodyguards and aides. With all those people around him I don't know how he managed to see a single ball being hit.'<sup>41</sup> The historical timing of authorship is crucial here: with Hapgood, for example, writing during the war, the desire to kill Mussolini was more legitimate than it could possibly have been in 1933. This must always be kept in mind. A further problem of such works, generally ghosted as they are, is that of the market at which they are aimed. They are written for sports fans, for followers of the particular star, whose tastes are assumed to be sporting, not political. The neutrality of sport perpetuates itself further.

For political figures, the same equation works but with the factors reversed. Writing for posterity and in order to present their particular version of events to historical assessment, their general aim is to record personal involvement in major events. As with the low priority of sport in the public records, such an ephemeral area does not fit naturally into the works of politicians and civil servants. When Anthony Eden, Edward Grey, Lord Halifax, John Simon, or Robert Vansittart came to write their memoirs, it was the enduring political crises and diplomatic advances of their careers that concerned them, not whether British athletes had attended a certain meeting or not, or if two particular football teams had played each other. Some redress has

been made to this by minor public figures, as seen in Henry Channon's published diary's coverage of his Olympic visit to Berlin. But on the whole, such sources have been treated as background material, as personal statements by some of the people involved within the terms of reference of either sport or politics.

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## Notes on the Introduction

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 21 September 1990, p. 10; 4 August 1990, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> For the Mexico City demonstration, see: Harry Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (New York: 1969); Joel Thirer, 'The Olympic Games as a Medium for Black Activism and Protest', *Review of Sport and Leisure*, vol. 1, 1976, pp. 15-31; Jack Scott, *The Athletic Revolution* (New York: 1971). For Munich, see Allen Gutmann, *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement* (New York: 1984). For Montreal, see Lord Killanin, *My Olympic Years* (London: 1983); Sam Ramsamy, 'Apartheid, boycotts and the Games', in Alan Tomlinson and Garry Whannel (eds), *Five Ring Circus: money, power and politics at the Olympic Games* (London: 1984) pp. 44-52.

<sup>3</sup> For Moscow, see Lord Killanin, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-219; Baruch Hazan, *Olympic Sports and Propaganda Games: Moscow 1980* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: 1982). See also: David Kanin, *A Political History of the Olympic Games* (Boulder, Colorado: 1981); Richard Espy, *The Politics of the Olympic Games* (Berkeley, California: 1979); Alan Tomlinson and Garry Whannel (eds), *op. cit.*; David Wallechinsky, *The Complete Book of the Olympic Games* (revised edition, Harmondsworth: 1988); John Hoberman, *The Olympic Crisis: sport, politics and the moral order* (New Rochelle: 1986).

<sup>4</sup> See Peter Hain, 'The politics of sport and apartheid', in Jennifer Hargreaves (ed.), *Sport, Culture and Ideology* (London: 1982) pp. 232-48; Richard Lapchick, *The Politics of Race and International Sport: the Case of South Africa* (Westport, Connecticut: 1975); H. Archer and A Bouillon, *The South African Game, Sport and Racism* (London: 1982); Adrian Guelke, 'The Politicisation of South African Sport', in Lincoln Allison (ed.), *The Politics of Sport* (Manchester: 1986) pp. 114-48.

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<sup>5</sup> James Walvin, *Football and the Decline of Britain* (London: 1986); John Williams, 'White Riots: the English football fan abroad', in Alan Tomlinson and Garry Whannel (eds), *Off the Ball: the football World Cup* (London: 1986) pp. 5-19; Stephen Wagg, *The Football World: a contemporary social History* (Brighton: 1984) pp. 194-219.

<sup>6</sup> Duff Hart-Davis, *Hitler's Games: the 1936 Olympics* (London: 1986).

<sup>7</sup> James Walvin, *op. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> Alan Tomlinson and Garry Whannel (eds), *op. cit.* (1984); *op. cit.* (1986).

<sup>9</sup> J.A.Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: aspects of the diffusion of an ideal* (Harmondsworth: 1986).

<sup>10</sup> John Hoberman, *op. cit.*; David Kanin, *op. cit.*; Richard Espy, *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality* (Cambridge: 1990) p. 143.

<sup>12</sup> Philip Taylor, *The Projection of Britain: British overseas publicity and propaganda 1919-1939* (Cambridge: 1981).

<sup>13</sup> See Martin Polley, 'Great Britain and the Olympic Games, 1896-1908', in C.C. Eldridge (ed.), *Empire, Politics and Popular Culture: essays in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century British history* (Trivium 24) (Lampeter: 1989) pp. 98-115.

<sup>14</sup> John J. MacAloon, *This Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the origins of the modern Olympic Games* (Chicago: 1981); David C. Young, 'The Origins of the Modern Olympics: a new version', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 4, no. 3, December 1987, pp. 271-300.

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<sup>15</sup> John A. Lucas, 'Baron Pierre de Coubertin and the formative years of the modern international Olympic movement', Ed.D. dissertation, University of Maryland, 1962.

<sup>16</sup> J. Astley Cooper, 'Americans and the Pan-Britannic Movement'. *Nineteenth Century*, vol. XXXVIII, no. 223, September 1895, p. 440. See also J.A. Mangan, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-6; Katherine Moore, 'The Pan-Britannic Festival: a tangible but forlorn expression of imperial unity', in J.A. Mangan (ed.), *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British culture and sport at home and abroad 1700-1914* (London: 1988) pp. 144-62.

<sup>17</sup> J. Astley Cooper, 'Olympic Games: What has been done and what remains to be done'. *Nineteenth Century*, vol. LXIII, no. 376, June 1908, pp. 1012, 1013.

<sup>18</sup> Alan Tomlinson, 'De Coubertin and the modern Olympics', in Alan Tomlinson and Garry Whannel (eds), *op. cit.* (1984) pp. 84-97; Jennifer Hargreaves, 'Women and the Olympic phenomenon', in *ibid.*, pp. 53-70.

<sup>19</sup> Benjamin Lowe, David Kanin and Andrew Strenk (eds), *Sport and International Relations* (Champaign, Illinois: 1978) p. 113.

<sup>20</sup> Tony Mason, 'Some Englishmen and Scotsmen abroad: the spread of World football', in Alan Tomlinson and Garry Whannel (eds), *op. cit.* (1986) pp. 67-82.

<sup>21</sup> Alan Tomlinson, 'Going Global: the FIFA story', in *ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>22</sup> Football Association International Selection Committee, 4 July 1908: FA Archives. See also Morley Farror and Douglas Lamming, *A Century of English International Football 1872-1972* (London: 1972).

<sup>23</sup> See C.C.P. Brookes, *English Cricket* (London: 1978); R. Bowen, *Cricket: a history of its growth and development* (London: 1970).

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<sup>24</sup> Charles-Louis de Beaumont, *Modern British Fencing: a history of the Amateur Fencing Association of Great Britain* (London: 1949).

<sup>25</sup> Dennis Coombe, *A History of the Davis Cup: being the story of the International Lawn Tennis Championship 1900-48* (London: 1949).

<sup>26</sup> David Kanin, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Neil Macfarlane with Michael Herd, *Sport and Politics: a world divided* (London: 1986) pp. 110-31.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Hain, *op. cit.*

<sup>30</sup> John Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture: a social and historical analysis of popular sports in Britain* (Cambridge:1986).

<sup>31</sup> H. Justin Evans. *Service to Sport: the story of the CCPR 1935-1972* (London: 1974).

<sup>32</sup> Wolfenden Committee. *Sport and the Community* (London: 1960).

<sup>33</sup> David Wallechinsky, *op. cit.*, p. xii-xiv.

<sup>34</sup> Barry Hugman and Peter Arnold, *The Olympic Games: Complete Track and Field Results, 1896-1988* (London: 1988).

<sup>35</sup> Peter J. Beck, 'Politics and the Olympics: the lesson of 1924', *History Today*, vol. 30, no. 7, July 1980, pp. 7-10; ---, 'England v Germany, 1938', *History Today*, vol. 32, no. 7, July 1982, pp. 29-34; Duff Hart-Davis, *op. cit.*; Stephen Jones, 'State intervention in sport and leisure in Britain between the wars', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1987, pp. 163-82; ----, *Sport, Politics and the Working Class: organised labour and sport in inter-war Britain* (Manchester: 1989); Richard Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics* (New York: 1971); Brian Stoddart, 'Sport, cultural politics and international



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relations: England versus Germany, 1935', in Norbert Müller and Joachim Rühl (eds), *Olympic Scientific Congress 1984 Official Report: Sport History* (Niederhausen, 1985) pp. 385-412.

<sup>36</sup> David Barber, FA, personal comment to author, July 1989.

<sup>37</sup> *Football Pictorial*, week ending 2 November 1935, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> Mike Gatting, quoted in Frank Keating, 'A disgrace, a waste, a fiasco and a bloody good riddance'. *The Guardian*, 14 February 1990, p. 15.

<sup>39</sup> Eddie Hapgood, *Football Ambassador* (London: 1945) pp. 26-8.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32-3.

<sup>41</sup> Fred Perry, *An Autobiography* (London: 1985) p. 50.

**PART ONE**

**FOREIGN OFFICE INVOLVEMENT IN  
SPORT BEFORE THE 1930s**

**'No business of ours'**

## **Chapter One**

### **British Sport and International Relations before 1918**

The period between the start of the century and the outbreak of war was a crucial one in the development of international sport. It saw the spread of contacts between nations in a large number of sports, and witnessed the growth of the Olympic Games from a French aristocratic novelty into a major international meeting place, patronised by royalty and sponsored by governments. In Britain, as elsewhere, the management of these sports was generally concentrated in the hands of a small elite of aristocratic and bourgeois amateur sportsmen, men who often held positions of genuine power in political and economic fields. This natural community of interests ensured that the values of the state and those of sport were generally in common: and while there were obvious points of disagreement in this relationship, such as the adverse effect of the pro-British judging at the 1908 Olympics, the pre-war period was a formative time in which the lack of external pressures in sporting matters facilitated a smooth relationship between state and sport, albeit one that was viewed with a degree of cynicism by the former. However, the planning for the 1916 Olympics, scheduled to be held in Berlin and thus controversial in the Foreign Office's view, brought to light some of the basic discrepancies in the interests and goals of each partner, as the political needs of diplomacy came into conflict with the more idealistic needs of the sporting world.

Because of the nascent significance of sport as a medium for national representation, British involvement in international sport in

the pre-1914 period can be seen in the wider context of Britain's international political needs and concerns. The diplomatic expediencies of the time must be kept as reference points for the sporting events that took place. The 1908 London Olympics, for example, were overtly used as a populist and commercial prop to the Anglo-French Entente, while the maintenance of sporting contacts with Germany well into 1914 suggest the existence of attempts to avert war by promoting friendly relations. Such events can be seen as indicators on the cultural level of national needs and interests on the political level. However, of most interest here are the sporting events in which the Foreign Office involved itself, to ensure that the correct kind of cultural work was being carried out to the approved diplomatic ends. The priorities of the Anglo-French Entente, the maintenance of friendly relations with Russia, the avoidance of hostility with Germany, and a general interest in the stability of Central Europe and the Balkans, thus form the background to the Foreign Office's intervention in sport before 1914.<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that all the examples of involvement discussed in the surviving records were essentially pragmatic in nature, as there was no defined Foreign Office policy on sport. Sport was an area that was clearly held in disdain by many of the officials involved in foreign policy, a popular phenomenon perceived to be of ephemeral interest and dubious value. The incidents of involvement are therefore of great interest, as they are examples of the Foreign Office employing a somewhat unknown and untested quantity for political ends: as such, they were experiments for a conservative institution, the lessons of which were drawn on in later years.

## 1. The 1908 Olympic Games, London

The Athens Olympic Games of 1896 were the first of the quadrenial series of sports festivals that has become the main focus point of the international sporting calendar. The Olympics had relatively humble origins, however, and the first three meetings attracted little British interest. Only eight competitors went to Athens from Britain; the Paris Olympics of 1900, held in a disorganised manner as part of the International Exposition, attracted various clubs and individuals but no coherent teams; while at the St. Louis Olympics of 1904, the only Britons to appear were three Irishmen who deliberately competed in the name of their island. But with the formation of the BOA in 1905, the first organised British team competed in Athens in 1906, at the Intercalated Games, given IOC blessing as a compensation to Greece for the moveable nature of the official Olympics.<sup>2</sup>

It was at Athens in 1906 that Lord Desborough, President of the BOA, was asked to arrange for London to host the 1908 Olympics, as Rome, the original host city, had withdrawn its invitation on economic grounds.<sup>3</sup> Although the BOA deserves credit for organising the meeting in only two years, it was greatly assisted by the Franco-British Exhibition of Science, Arts, and Industry that was already scheduled to take place in Shepherd's Bush during the Olympic year. This assistance removed many financial and logistical burdens from the BOA, with the trade fair not only providing £2000 in expenses with free advertising, attendants, equipment, and plant, but also ensuring a planned infrastructure of transport and accommodation facilities for the expected visitors. This enabled the BOA to concentrate on the sports, leading to the codification of rules for all sports represented after

consultation with their governing bodies, as well as a judging system complete with an international appeals committee.<sup>4</sup> It also earned the BOA criticism from the bitter J. Astley Cooper, the propagator of the earlier scheme for an Anglo-Saxon Olympiad. He referred to the London Olympics as the 'mis-called Olympic games', and claimed that they were 'nothing more nor less than a side show to the Franco-British Exhibition'.<sup>5</sup>

The Foreign Office displayed some interest in this international event, which attracted a record 2035 competitors from 22 countries. Given Britain's eagerness to strengthen its alliance with France in the face of the escalating German naval programme, it was natural for the Liberal Government to give its support to such a major example of co-operation between the two countries: as *The Times* put it, the Exhibition would draw 'still more closely together those bonds of commercial friendship and of common interests by which the two countries represented here during the last few years became more and more cordially united.'<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, some involvement was forthcoming before the Olympics were formally attached to the Exhibition, in such areas as waiving customs duties on French exhibits,<sup>7</sup> and granting permission for a French ship to dock in London for the duration of the fair.<sup>8</sup> The Foreign Office was also willing to assist with the sporting events once they were announced. In July 1908, the Foreign Office requested the Treasury and Customs to grant permission for the importation of French arms for the shooting contests,<sup>9</sup> and the request of Martyn Gurney, Consul General at Marseilles, that facilities be granted to a group of French businessmen who were visiting London for the Games was dealt with favourably,

on the grounds that 'it will undoubtedly be profitable to Anglo-French trade.'<sup>10</sup> Overall, the nature of the involvement and the small quantity of official documentation on these first London Olympics indicates that the matter was perceived as somewhat marginal but potentially useful in maintaining a friendly atmosphere between France and Britain. But the debate and activity over these Olympics did give rise to two key themes that were to be repeated consistently in most subsequent discussions.

The first of these concerned the way in which intervention was carried out when it was perceived to be expedient. It was aired in 1908 in response to the allegation by the *Fédération Française des Sociétés d'Aviron* that French rowers were being treated unfairly by the BOA and the Amateur Rowing Association (ARA). The matter was brought to the attention of the Foreign Office by Sir Francis Bertie, British Ambassador to France, who had been lobbied by the French rowers' president, E. Seirn. He claimed that his association had been told to register by 1 June while other countries had been given an extra month, a situation which would have put France at a disadvantage in terms of team selection. Bertie clearly preferred not to get too involved, simply passing the matter on to the Foreign Office.<sup>11</sup> The response from the Western Department was typical of the manner in which the Foreign Office preferred to undertake business that could have unfavourable repercussions if debated publicly. Gerald Spicer minuted:

We certainly cannot interfere. The Amateur Rowing Association have no doubt excellent reasons for their decision. Lord Desborough is, I believe, the moving spirit,

and he might like to know that this appeal has been made to Sir F. Bertie.<sup>12</sup>

On 24 April the Foreign Office's Legal Adviser, William Davidson, wrote to Desborough at the BOA assuring him that 'it is no business of ours', but asking that Bertie be told the reason for the discrepancy.<sup>13</sup> The Foreign Office thus became involved in ensuring the smooth running of the Olympics.

The second important theme to be initiated over 1908, and one which had a long line of supporters in the Foreign Office until the start of the Second World War, was that of the unpleasant atmosphere that could be caused in sports events by cheating, misunderstanding, and poor performances. This aspect of sport, counter-productive in diplomatic terms, was raised in 1908 in connection with the news from Paris of the French Government's grant of F50,000 for 'the French representation at the Olympic sports of the Franco-British Exhibition.'<sup>14</sup> Although this information was not linked with any similar British request for state funding, the idea of a government grant was obviously intimated, and Samuel Cockerell of the Commercial Department tried to undermine the case for any such requests by discrediting the Games and distancing the Government from them:

Up to the present it can hardly be said that the Sports have led to any strengthening of the friendly relations; some of the French performers are more likely to go home disgusted than pleased. e.g. Mr Schilles the cyclist.<sup>15</sup>

This referred to the final of the 1000 metre sprint, held on 16 July, which the Frenchman Maurice Schilles won from Briton Ben Jones,



but which was then declared void because the time limit had been exceeded. The judges' decision not to rerun the race was a surprise, and clearly owed its origin to the misfortune of the other Britons in the event, who had both suffered punctures.<sup>16</sup>

This single example of the dubious refereeing that characterised these Olympics, most of which put competitors from the USA at a disadvantage, typifies the way in which national prestige was perceived to be at stake in these sporting contacts. This was clearly stated in much of the BOA's documentation on the Games, and in many contemporary press accounts.<sup>17</sup> It is relevant in this connection because it showed the opponents of Olympism in the Foreign Office that far from aiding international relations, as the apologists of Olympism claimed they did, the Games could actually harm them by exacerbating existent differences in the emotionally-charged sporting arena. The Foreign Office was thus provided with ammunition with which to attack the Olympics and other sports when approached for patronage, support, and funding. The 1908 Olympics thereby became something of a cautionary tale in the Foreign Office. There were, of course, some benefits accrued: the generally good publicity created by the Games painted a picture of British economic and social stability, assisted by the prominent role of Edward VII and a number of visiting royals; while the diplomatic need to remain on good terms with Russia was aided in the Olympics by the IOC's insistence that Finnish athletes compete under the Russian flag. But the side of sport that created the many 'angry scenes between Britishers and Americans'<sup>18</sup> that *The Sportsman* reported over the controversial 400 metres race, from which a US runner was disqualified in a manner that demonstrated the

national bias of the judges, was not welcomed in Whitehall. Such events, and the atmosphere they helped to create, were constantly alluded to in the Foreign Office in future debates on international sport.

The idealism of Coubertin's movement was not taken seriously in some quarters: the athletics writer on *The Sportsman*, for example, claimed that 'by exciting the passions of race rivalry, they [the Olympic Games] are retarding rather than advancing the approach of the Millenium' of international harmony.<sup>19</sup> But there was a great deal of coverage given within Britain to the idea that national prestige was an issue in Olympic performances. "Strephon", writing on 'The Moral of the Olympiad' in the *Athletic News*, referred to 'the deplorable experience' of British competitors winning only eight events, and forecast that 'there will be little done for the glory of Old England in the way of providing the cost of training; and once again the Yankees will triumph' at the next Olympics.<sup>20</sup> With such issues perceived to be at stake, and with the genuine opportunities for the cultural reinforcement of commercial and diplomatic links that the Olympics provided, an element of governmental involvement was inevitable: as Lowe, Kanin, and Strenk have stated, 'state representation has created state interest',<sup>21</sup> and the fact that a major branch of the Liberal Government spent at least some time and effort to assist the smooth running of the Games demonstrates their presumed worth.

The method of the Foreign Office's involvement at this time is worth noting. Virtually all the correspondence relating to the 1908 Olympics was dealt with by either the Treaty or the Commercial departments. Only a discussion with the Norwegian Legation over the

wearing of uniforms by that country's military representatives was dealt with by the relevant geographical section as political correspondence.<sup>22</sup> The main significance of the Foreign Office's involvement in the London Games is that it responded pragmatically and semi-officially when important issues were involved, as in the placation of the French; but a strain of cynicism towards sport and the people who administered it was evident from this early stage. This limited and aloof involvement should be seen against the background of press jingoism, whereby the sporting, quality, and popular newspapers expressed an almost unqualified consensus that British sporting success was a natural right, and that national honour was involved in the athletic performances. The contemporary writings of Olympic defenders also carried this theme: Cook, for example, saw it as 'something like a national disgrace if we did not come up to the high standards of efficiency expected of us.'<sup>23</sup> The precedents of popular identification between state and sportsperson, and of Foreign Office involvement in sport for diplomatic ends, were thus extant at such an early stage as 1908.

Another important aspect of the political nature of the Olympics at this time was the involvement of royalty and aristocracy in the patronage and management of the BOA and the Games themselves, which ensured that the Games were presented at home and abroad as being in ideological association with the governing classes. British royalty had been involved with the Olympic movement from an early stage. Both Edward VII and George, Prince of Wales, patronised the 1904 Congress in London, while Edward used the 1906 Games as the occasion for his visit to Greece: his presence there was reported as

adding 'a special brilliancy'<sup>24</sup> to the sporting events. At London, the Games were opened by the King, with Queen Alexandra also keeping a high profile, and they were joined by their counterparts and cousins from Greece and Sweden. The impression created by the royal presence at this popular occasion, and the manner in which the Games were presented in the bulk of the press as centring around royalty, helped to imbue the Olympics with an image of a loyal and united Britain. This can be exemplified by the deferential treatment given by *The Times* in its coverage of the opening ceremony, in which it was claimed that 'there is no one living more fitted to open and in one sense preside over the fourth Olympiad than King Edward the Peacemaker',<sup>25</sup> and the gearing of the crucial ceremonies around the royal presence indicates the strictly conformist political role of Olympism in Britain in 1908.

On a more day-to-day basis, the management of Olympism by a predominantly aristocratic elite further confirmed its perceived place in the informal machinery of the British state. This was a natural development, as the amateur terms of reference embraced by the IOC ensured that only those with spare time and independent means could work for the cause, and it resulted in the administration of such men as William Grenfell, 1st Baron Desborough of Taplow, and Arthur Russell, 2nd Baron Amphill. From public school and Oxbridge backgrounds where the 'games ethic' of connecting competitive sport with national and imperial aims was a prevalent educational tool,<sup>26</sup> and working within the state structure for the maintenance of British interests internationally, the appeal of an aristocratic Olympism was natural. Their sporting experiences, while varied, were purely amateur

and elitist in nature: Desborough, for example, had fenced for Britain and swum Niagara twice, while Amptill had presided over the Oxford University Boat Club and rowed at Henley. They were isolated from the professionalism that had developed in a number of sports, which helped to entrench them in the fiercely-defended, but not consistently maintained, amateurism of the Olympic movement. Their careers and other interests also demonstrate their firm positioning within a pro-establishment world view: Amptill provides an excellent example of this through his career in colonial administration as Governor of Madras and his interests in field sports and Freemasonry. The ideological attraction of Olympism in its British context was perhaps explained best in the writings of Theodore Cook, a *Daily Telegraph* journalist and member of the IOC and BOA, whose privately published account of the 1906 Games, *The Voyage of the Branwen*, and official report of 1908 contain many illuminating comments on the perceived value of amateur sport in the promotion of British prestige.

The practical application of this establishment hegemony over Olympism can be seen on a number of occasions in relation to 1908. Apart from the direct royal involvement in the ceremonial, we can see governmental sponsorship of Olympic entertainment, with Lewis Harcourt, Liberal MP for Rossendale, hosting a banquet on behalf of the Government at the Grafton Galleries, at which Cabinet ministers, diplomatic representatives, and colonial administrators mixed with Olympic visitors.<sup>27</sup> Other important agencies involved in the celebration of the Games were the Church, which conducted a special Olympic service at St Paul's Cathedral on 19 July, and the City of

London, where both the Lord Mayor and individual guilds entertained the Olympic visitors.<sup>28</sup>

The effects of this state approval of, and co-operation with, Olympism were varied. John Hargreaves' concept of the 'theatre of the great' is relevant here: the popularity and credit earned by the governors from mixing in the pastimes of the governed was undoubtedly an important aspect of their involvement. But this was more significant in such widespread and predominantly working-class sports as football, where royal patronage and political appearances were common,<sup>29</sup> and to view the Olympics purely in this light is to miss an important aspect of the structure of Olympism. The aristocratic nature of its conception and birth, and its artificial imposition on a number of sports at one time, ensured its peculiar position: it was a framework forced upon sport from above, rather than a system of organisation evolved from the circumstances and environment unique to each sport. For all the faults and shortcomings of the administrators of the individual domestic sports, such as the factional splits over professionalism in both rugby and football and the elitist control of fencing and cricket, the governing bodies of these sports were created by interested parties to foster the perceived needs of the game. The Olympics, in their modern European setting, were created not to cater purely for sportspersons' needs, but as a channel for the narrow internationalist leanings of a romantic aristocratic minority. In the British version, complete with its close relationship with the Crown and contacts with the Government, and its strictly class-shaped codes of amateurism, the Olympic Games were quickly appropriated by bourgeois and aristocratic administrators and patrons

and made to fit into the nation's dominant ideology. After 1908, however, they were not so readily embraced by the branch of government whose interests the Olympians were purporting to assist. There were far too many complications caused by the inherent rivalry between certain states, and by the complexities of diplomatic discourse, for the Foreign Office to believe in Olympism enough to support it unconditionally.

## **2. The 1912 Olympic Games, Stockholm**

Following the aloofness of 1908, governmental involvement in the 1912 Stockholm Games was minimal. The main task for the Foreign Office was over the administrative detail of whether British colonies and dominions could enter the competition as independent nations. Prior to this, there had been some confusion over the status of such entrants, and the BOA had retrospectively claimed certain competitors who believed themselves to be representing their country in its own right: the Irishmen at St. Louis were an example of this.<sup>30</sup> The discussion of this important point for 1912 was initiated by Count Wrangel, Swedish Envoy in London, who wrote to Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey inviting army officers from Britain, India, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and South Africa to compete.<sup>31</sup> The decision involved the Foreign Office, the India Office, the War Office, and the British Legation at Stockholm.<sup>32</sup> The solution, much to the BOA's later regret when placings began to slip, was that Britain and Ireland would count as one, while the dominions and colonies could count as independent for sporting purposes. This represented little more than a formalisation of current practice.<sup>33</sup> For Britain, the

political value of this decision was that it gave the countries concerned a semblance of autonomy, allowing them to win sporting honours in their own right, while not actually challenging the nature or structure of British rule: and while sport has undoubtedly been an important medium for the expression of nationhood by countries coming out of imperial domination, witness cricket in the West Indies and athletics in Kenya, the Foreign Office's formalisation of the separate representation was a useful adaptive tool at this stage.

The Foreign Office also involved itself by waiving import duties on publicity materials being sent to the colonies from Sweden,<sup>34</sup> and, more importantly, by encouraging serving army officers to participate in the equestrian contests. This latter issue developed from a request for guidance by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff in November 1910, as the War Office did not usually allow officers to perform in public competitions,<sup>35</sup> and it was dealt with by the Foreign Office in a manner that clearly demonstrated Whitehall's attitudes to the potential propaganda value of the Games. Spicer minuted:

The Olympic Games are on a different footing from the ordinary exhibition from which the factor of personal gain is seldom or never absent. The games are held every fourth year in the various capitals in turn. On the last occasion, 1908, they took place here. The Swedes then not only competed in a large number of events but sent over a splendid team of gymnasts who carried all before them. If we stand aloof in 1912 it will create a bad impression.<sup>36</sup>

The idea that involvement could create a good impression was thus accepted by some at the Foreign Office in 1910, although it is worth



qualifying this observation by highlighting the social standing of the competitors involved, and the fact that they were state employees. As officers and amateurs, the impression that they would create was perceived to be in keeping with the Foreign Office's own standards, a factor that was consistently to recur in the consideration of sporting matters in the inter-war period.

The most valuable material on the political features of the 1912 Olympics came not from the Foreign Office, but from the BOA. The official report for 1912 provides an excellent insight into the perceived role of Britain in the Olympic movement, the development of sport in other countries, and the stance that the BOA wished the Foreign Office would take. Written by Desborough, Cook, and the Reverend Richard de Courcey Laffan on behalf of the British Olympic Council (BOC), the report was critical of the state and the public for failing to take a sufficient interest in the Olympics, and argued that Britain's standing overseas would suffer as a result. The authors blamed indifference and apathy for the poor facilities that they believed had caused the relative decline of British sporting standards between London and Stockholm, where Britain finished third instead of first, and expressed their hopes that a higher level of investment and subscription would enhance British standards at Berlin in 1916. They called for

real and intelligent support not so much to win back that primacy which was asserted in London with all the advantages of home, as to give the best possible opportunity to our selected athletes to show the best form, whether they win or lose, abroad. But while it deprecates any mere

passion for records and results as such, the Council would suggest that this country should cease to be represented at future Olympic Games unless that representation is worthy not merely of the athletes themselves but of the nation in whose name they compete.

They also warned that the nations that had learnt sport from Britain were set to exert a greater influence than their self-proclaimed masters, and that British supremacy in sport could not be taken for granted any longer as 'the weapons are now equal.'<sup>37</sup> Just as British superiority in trade and international power had been eroded since the turn of the century by such emergent nations as the USA and Germany, so too was sporting prowess seen to be slipping in relation to the same competitors: and while the reasons for this decline were complex, the reaction of the Greater Britons at the BOA was to blame the Government and the public for failing to appreciate the international significance of Olympism.

Although the report had no official status in terms of governmental policy, it is significant because of the ideological orientation and political influence of its authors. However independent the BOA was by constitution, the community of interests of the peer, the churchman, and the Tory journalist who composed its polemic kept it firmly tied to the establishment. It is also indicative of the view that success in the Olympics was a recognisable service to the country, and so brought the issues of patriotism, national image, and international propaganda into the terms of reference of British Olympism. These themes were further developed in the subsequent pamphlet issued as part of the fund-raising campaign for the planned Berlin Games of

1916, *Aims and Objects of the Olympic Games Fund*, in which the phrases 'striking descent' and 'athletically incompetent'<sup>38</sup> were used in such a context as to identify blatantly the standing of British sportspersons with the standing of the nation itself. Again, there was no official status involved, but the social positioning of the authors ensured a degree of empathy. It was also indicative of the ambivalent and ill-defined relationship between the BOA and the government, whereby the former relied on the structures of the latter to thrive, but was free to maintain a stance of neutrality by attacking the government for its failure to fund the national sporting effort. This informally hegemonic basis of British Olympism, which has survived in such forms as the patronage of royalty and the close identification of the sportsperson with the state, was to be radically altered by the war. After 1918, the Olympics became a vast international event, while the political expediencies of the post-Versailles years had to be reconciled with the more traditional insistence on a natural British superiority. The War was also to change the Foreign Office's attitude towards the Olympics.

### **3. Foreign Office involvement in non-Olympic sports before 1914**

As with the Olympics, the Foreign Office had no official brief to involve itself in the operation of other sporting fixtures, but the fact of involvement can be seen by a number of references to sport in the Foreign Office's correspondence. Significantly, the sports which the Foreign Office helped were generally bourgeois in nature, based as they were around field sports and equestrian events, including polo. In

1908, the Foreign Office assisted in getting an army team to Buenos Aires for an international horse show, as requested by British Envoy Walter Townley. This involved the Foreign Office, the War Office, and the Argentine Legation, and the correspondence indicates a willing co-operation between all parties, coming as it did at a time when the promotion of British commercial interests in South America over those of the emergent Germany was a diplomatic priority.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, but on a larger scale, the Foreign Office ensured an adequate British representation at the Vienna Field Sports Exhibition of 1910, which provides an interesting example of the Foreign Office changing its attitude to an ephemeral matter when advised to do so by their diplomatic representatives.

Originally approached in April 1908 by Count Albert Memsdorff, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to Britain, the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade decided against British representation, offering only to help with the publicity for the event, while the colonies approached also turned down the idea.<sup>40</sup> The Foreign Office's change of attitude came in August 1909, when the news from Paris of the French Government's grant of F200,000 for the event <sup>41</sup> was closely followed by an appeal to Grey from Sir Fairfax Cartwright, the British Ambassador to Austria-Hungary. Cartwright reported the 'great disappointment' caused in Austria-Hungary by the British decision to stay away, and how their proposed absence was leading to 'much adverse comment':

The strained relations which prevailed at the beginning of the year between Great Britain and Austria-Hungary have improved so rapidly of late that it would be a pity if

anything were done at the present moment, which could be in any way interpreted as a sign that a feeling of ill-humour against this country still existed in England. I venture to hope therefore that if insuperable objections do not exist against the official participation of His Majesty's Government in the Exhibition in question, their decision in this matter may be reconsidered.<sup>42</sup>

Following on from the crisis over the Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908, and the subsequent British stance on the security of the Balkans that led to Vienna perceiving Grey as a warmonger,<sup>43</sup> such an opportunity to indicate mutual reconciliation was a useful one. It led to an immediate reconsideration by the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade, and a Treasury grant of not more than £5,000 was granted 'in view of the political importance which is attached to the action of His Majesty's Government by His Majesty's Ambassador in Vienna'<sup>44</sup> and an advisory committee was established under Desborough.<sup>45</sup> The Exhibition went well from the British view, while some extra Austrian aristocratic sympathy being engendered by the death of Edward VII on the opening day. James Fairholme, the British Commissioner at the Exhibition, reported the messages of condolence given by the Emperor on his visit, and went on to emphasise the worth of British participation by the useful contacts made with 'the better classes' who visited the display of equipment, trophies, and stuffed animals.<sup>46</sup> This sporting exhibition thus assisted with the normalisation of Anglo-

Austrian relations at a time when any pro-British feeling in Central Europe was of considerable value.

Further Foreign Office assistance was given in the minor matter of transporting polo ponies from Spain to the USA for Lord Wimborne in 1914, where the direct involvement of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, British Ambassador to the USA, assisted in by-passing customs regulations for the animals.<sup>47</sup> This simple act of assistance was complemented in the immediate pre-war period by further Foreign Office interest in the commercial side of sport, when Richard Turner, Vice-Consul at Liepzig, <sup>sent</sup> sending home information for sports goods manufacturers on a Sports Requisites Fair that would be profitable due to the interest created in Germany by the planned Berlin Olympics.<sup>48</sup>

These few examples from the surviving records indicate that sporting matters were not a priority for the Foreign Office in the years immediately before the First World War. Apart from the necessary involvement to facilitate various aspects of the Olympic Games in 1908 and 1912, and the assistance offered to ensure British representation at the Vienna Field Sports Exhibition of 1910, there was no major intervention. Similarly, there was no programmed policy towards sport, as the structure of intervention for the limited commercial and diplomatic aims was of a very small and informal nature: it consisted chiefly of the private letter or the semi-official pressure, as exemplified well by the Foreign Office's dealings with the BOA over the French rowers in 1908. Thus, the occasional involvement that was brought about for short-term political or commercial advantage, while taking on its recognisable shape for the inter-war years, was not perceived by the Foreign Office as a valuable

diplomatic tool of diplomacy, and the concept of using sport as publicity for Britain was only in its infancy.

#### **4. War, 1914-1918**

The preparations for the 1916 Berlin Olympics were advancing when the war started, and even after the commencement of hostilities there were those within the Olympic movement who favoured the continuation of the Games regardless of the international situation. Eventually, war made the project impossible, and the plans for an alternative meeting in the neutral USA were stopped by Coubertin, who insisted that if the original host city could not hold the Games, then they should not be celebrated at all. The stance taken by the Foreign Office over the prospect of an international sports meeting taking place in the German capital became more hesitant as 1914 progressed, as departments became aware that a war with Germany should preclude the friendly co-operation that was explicit in the Olympics.

This can be seen at its clearest in the debate between the Foreign Office, the Army Council, and the BOA over the advisability of British Army officers competing in the modern pentathlon at Berlin. This event had been introduced at Stockholm, when the USA's George Patton had come fifth, and it was dominated by Sweden until 1932. It was military in nature, consisting of five events to test the all-round ability of officers: riding, fencing, shooting, swimming, and cross-country running.<sup>49</sup> The Army Council were 'of the opinion that no advantage would accrue to the Army in taking part in certain of these items, and they do not therefore feel disposed to give their support to

the competition'<sup>50</sup> a view with which the Foreign Office agreed. Robert Vansittart, Assistant Clerk in the Western Dept, saw 'no particular reason for supporting the request of the [British Olympic] Association, and some reason for agreeing with the inclination of the Army Council',<sup>51</sup> while his colleague Ronald Sperling overstated the lessons of 1908 in his comment that 'these games usually lead to much international ill-feeling.'<sup>52</sup> However, the matter was deemed important enough to be referred to Sir Edward Goschen, British Ambassador to Germany, who advised that the Army should wait until other countries had declared their intentions before acting on the BOA's request.<sup>53</sup> The unsettled international situation, and the prospect of a sporting meeting between military representatives of Britain and Germany, clearly combined to influence the reluctance of the Foreign Office and the War Office: and it is interesting to note the comparative eagerness with which the Foreign Office had acted in favour of officers representing Britain in the equestrian contests at Stockholm two years earlier. The reliance of the Olympics upon existing state structures and on the mood of relations between countries had thus established an obstacle to the movement's development by 1914.

The major discussion that the Foreign Office was drawn into in this period concerned the future of the Olympic movement. It was initiated by the personal intervention of Theodore Cook, now editor of the influential country journal *The Field*, and member of the BOC and IOC, whose views on the international position of the Olympics can be summed up by the quotation he borrowed from *The Times*' coverage of the 1912 Olympics in the 1913 BOA appeal pamphlet. This demonstrated the inevitable disparity in Olympism between the



internationalist ideals of the governing body and the national needs of its component countries, as in his 1909 appeal for British excellence:

We may question if the Olympic Games are good either in their influence on the spirit of sportsmanship or in their effect on international relations of a larger kind. We may regret that the Games were ever instituted. But, if we withdrew from them now, we should inevitably be regarded as having done so in petulance and under the mortification of defeat.<sup>54</sup>

In May 1914, Cook wrote to the Foreign Office asking for an urgent meeting to discuss the Olympics,<sup>55</sup> a request quickly followed by a detailed letter to Vansittart in which he set out the problem. He claimed that the Government should involve itself more in the Olympic movement, in a programmed rather than a pragmatic manner, in the two key areas of financial assistance and diplomatic facilities. He justified such a policy on the grounds that 'the questions raised by the Olympic movement... have now assumed in other countries an importance entirely disproportionate to that which they hold among ourselves', claiming that the position taken by the Foreign Office over Berlin would be taken by many in Germany as an indication of British feeling towards Germany: the Olympics had been

raised out of the level of a mere sporting occurrence into an event of international political significance in which any misunderstanding might produce incalculable consequences upon the general cordiality which should exist between the two countries.

He observed that the governments of most other countries were involved in their nations' respective preparations for the Olympics, a situation that left Britain behind in both training and capital; that the legitimacy of the Games was proven by the royal patronage it had already received; that Britain had 'permanently identified itself with the movement' by hosting the 1908 meeting; and that the location of the 1916 Games would provide Britain with an excellent opportunity to demonstrate its attitude towards Germany in a friendly, internationalist atmosphere, particularly as the German Olympic Committee had insisted upon a guarantee of British participation before it agreed to act as host.<sup>56</sup>

Enclosed with this letter was the self-congratulatory 'Short Memorandum of the Olympic Movement', a brief history written in Cook's typical style, including an exaggerated piece on the British fencing team's record at Athens in 1906, of which Cook had been the captain. It also sardonically noted that the 1908 Olympics had been the only one at which the government of the host nation had not awarded special decorations to the competitors and officials. The condemnation of the official British attitude expressed here was made more explicit in another enclosure, 'The Olympic Games - Recommendations', in which Cook asked the Foreign Office to use its direct influence to secure diplomatic facilities for the BOA's representatives at the IOC Congress in Paris in 1914 and at Berlin for the Games, the attendance of government representatives at Berlin, and the presentation of a KCMG to Coubertin.

The Foreign Office's response to this large and audacious list was, as was now usual with Olympic matters, circumspect. Vansittart

informed Cook that this was not a Foreign Office matter, securing a memorandum from Edward Parkes of the Librarian's Department to show the lack of precedent for such actions. Vansittart was clearly unimpressed by the urgency which Cook placed on the matter, minuting his 'own impression is that Mr. Cook is taking these *démarches par acquit de consciences*',<sup>57</sup> while Assistant Under Secretary of State Eyre Crowe expressed his desire for the Foreign Office to remain uninvolved in such a new and controversial area unless absolutely necessary:

I do not think we ought to be rushed in a matter of this kind. There is much diversity of opinion even in this country about these games. Many sensible people consider them to be pure advertisement for professional sportsmen. If the govt is to take them up officially, it must be after a deliberate decision. It is not a Foreign Office question at all, and cannot be decided by Sir E. Grey.<sup>58</sup>

The war deferred the need for such a decision, and while the German Olympic Committee did not immediately renounce its claim to host the 1916 Olympics, it soon became apparent that the military situation in Europe would not enable the Games to take place. The Games of the 6th Olympiad thus became the first of the modern series to be cancelled. It is interesting to note that Cook resigned from the IOC during the war after his failure to secure the expulsion of German members from 'certain international academic and scientific groups',<sup>59</sup> a move that showed his pre-war pleas for Anglo-German co-operation in a different light. In the context of his fiercely anti-German writings

of this period in the editorial column of *The Field*, his requests for Foreign Office assistance stemmed more from his desire for Britons to succeed than from any internationalist ideology. Contrasting the British Army, manned with the 'English sportsman, a cricketer, a footballer, a rider to hounds [who]... understands how to play the game out to the end, how to play for his side and not himself', with the brutal German system where 'there is nothing of the mutual understanding which prevails between amateur cricketers and professionals, or British officers and men',<sup>60</sup> he proudly asserted at the start of the war that 'the "British Team" is certainly on its way to Berlin; but in a very different sense from what was contemplated even so lately as in June last.'<sup>61</sup> This stance, expressed through many sporting metaphors, illustrates well the ideology of Olympism in Britain at this time, in which the internationalist polemic of peace time was only a veneer on an inherent insistence on British superiority. As such, it had direct political relevance. But with Crowe's reticence at the Foreign Office, the issue of state involvement was shelved by the war, leaving Britain unprepared for the overt politicisation of sport in Europe that was to come afterwards.

In wartime Britain, organised sport soon became something of an expendable aspect of popular culture.<sup>62</sup> Some sports clubs, particularly in such bourgeois sports as rugby, were used by their members as the means for collective enlistment. The sense of identity and bonding that the clubs offered, along with the character-building qualities that such sports were supposed to instil, were thus drawn upon in the early period of the war to boost the volunteer army. The Army also made use of the mass gatherings at football matches as recruiting platforms,

although the reluctance of the FA and Football League to disrupt their annual competitions earned the game something of a stigma. Arthur Marwick has written of football in this period, 'here in the extreme was the conspicuous consumption of the energies of young men eminently eligible for the trenches',<sup>63</sup> and Tony Mason and Colin Veitch have both shown how the anti-football lobby, particularly in the columns of *The Times*, pointed to football as an unpatriotic diversion of manpower from the war effort.<sup>64</sup> The game's defenders' claims that it provided morale-boosting entertainment and a recruiting platform were ended when the 1915 FA Cup Final was followed by the suspension of competitive football for the duration. Football continued on a regional basis, and the attempts to disprove the charge of a lack of patriotism included the formation of a Footballer's Battalion (the 17th Service Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment) and the re-scheduling of matches to Sundays to interfere less with war work.<sup>65</sup>

Other sports obviously suffered too. Horse racing declined, as most fit horses being requisitioned for military purposes; cricketers, for the first time, 'put away their bats in order to deal with dictators who misguidedly imagined that their ambitions were more important than cricket';<sup>66</sup> while the Amateur Fencing Association held its last meeting on 2 November 1914.<sup>67</sup> While there was obviously no organised international sport during the war, the co-operation between the administrators of most sports and the War Office demonstrated again the common interests of the two:

In happier times we should just have celebrated the Boat Race and the Grand National. This year the horses are waiting behind the trenches and the crews are all beside the

guns. Both will have harder struggles before them than they have seen at Aintree or Putney. But a stern race is a good one to win.<sup>68</sup>

The use of such sporting images in British propaganda, characterised by the famous stories of sporting officers leading their men over the top by kicking footballs,<sup>69</sup> clearly shows the bond between state and sport that ensured British sport worked within the hegemonic framework. Moreover, the moral of futility that comes from the other famous sporting myth of the trenches, that of the Christmas Day football match between British and German soldiers in No-Mans Land, is a useful symbol of the lack of credibility of the internationalist ideologies of Olympians and others who saw sporting contacts as a way to prevent war.

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## Notes on Chapter One

<sup>1</sup> See Francis Hinsley (ed.), *British Foreign Policy under Sir Edward Grey* (Cambridge: 1977); Zara Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy 1898-1914* (Cambridge: 1969).

<sup>2</sup> Martin Polley, 'Great Britain and the Olympic Games, 1896-1908', in C.C. Eldridge (ed.), *Empire, Politics and Popular Culture: essays in eighteenth and nineteenth century British history* (Trivium, 24) (Lampeter: 1989) pp. 98-118.

<sup>3</sup> John Rodda, 'IV London 1908', in Lord Killanin and John Rodda (eds), *The Olympic Games* (London: 1979) p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> Theodore Cook, *The Fourth Olympiad, being the Official Report of the Olympic Games of 1908* (London: 1908); F.A.M. Webster, *The Evolution of the Olympic Games, 1829 B.C.-1914 A.D.* (London: 1914).

<sup>5</sup> J. Astley Cooper, 'Olympic Games: what has been done and what remains to be done', *Nineteenth Century*, vol. LXIII, no. 376, June 1908, p. 1012.

<sup>6</sup> *The Times*, 9 May 1908, p.13.

<sup>7</sup> FO 368/181, 3569, 5354.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 13805.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 22457, 22912, 23592.

<sup>10</sup> Martyn Gurney to Sir Edward Grey, 6 July 1908. *Ibid.*, 23634.

<sup>11</sup> FO 369/142, 13114.

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<sup>12</sup> Minute, n.d. *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> William Davidson to Lord Desborough, 24 April 1908. *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Sir Francis Bertie to Sir Edward Grey, 20 July 1908. *FO 368/181*, 25297.

<sup>15</sup> Minute, n.d. *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> David Wallechinsky, *The Complete Book of the Olympic Games* (London: 1988) p. 221.

<sup>17</sup> Theodore Cook, *The Olympic Games of 1908 in London* (London: 1908); Thomas R. Burlford, *American Hatred and British Folly* (London: 1911); George Matthews, 'The controversial Olympic Games of 1908 as viewed by the *New York Times* and the *Times* of London', *Journal of Sports History*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1980, pp. 40-53.

<sup>18</sup> *The Sportsman*, 4 July 1908, p.6.

<sup>19</sup> *The Sportsman*, 29 July 1908, p.7.

<sup>20</sup> *Athletic News*, 27 July 1908, p.5.

<sup>21</sup> Benjamin Lowe, David Kanin, and Andrew Strenk (eds), *Sport and International Relations* (Champaign, Illinois: 1978) p. 113.

<sup>22</sup> *FO 371/491*, 23488.

<sup>23</sup> Theodore Cook, *The Cruise of the Branwen* (London: 1908) p. 16.

<sup>24</sup> *The Times*, 24 April 1906, p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> *The Times*, 14 July 1908, p. 10.



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<sup>26</sup> J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: aspects of the diffusion of an ideal* (Harmondsworth: 1988).

<sup>27</sup> Theodore Cook, *The Fourth Olympiad*, p. 396.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395.

<sup>29</sup> John Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture: a social and historical analysis of popular sports in Britain* (Cambridge: 1986).

<sup>30</sup> Charles Lucas, *The Olympic Games, 1904* (St. Louis: 1905) p. 143.

<sup>31</sup> Count Wrangel to Sir Edward Grey, 30 October 1911. *FO 371/1226*, 43156.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 43156, 45057, 49142, 50029.

<sup>33</sup> Lord Kilmarnock to Sir Edward Grey, 11 December 1911. *Ibid.*, 50029.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 48090.

<sup>35</sup> Sir Arthur Nicolson to Eyre Crowe, 10 November 1910. *FO 371/989*, 41086.

<sup>36</sup> Minute, n.d. *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> British Olympic Council, *Official Report of the Olympic Games of 1912 in Stockholm*, (London: 1912) p. 27.

<sup>38</sup> British Olympic Council, *Aims and Objects of the Olympic Games Fund* (London: n.d.) pp. 3, 8.

<sup>39</sup> *FO 371/397*, 30905, 32497, 34481, 34779, 35137, 35733, 39737.

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<sup>40</sup> *FO 368/167*, 13021, 14739, 30763, 33767, 34209, 36341, 37473, 38575, 40967, 44672.

<sup>41</sup> Sir Francis Bertie to Sir Edward Grey, 23 June 1909. *FO 368/270*, 23743.

<sup>42</sup> Sir Fairfax Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey, 25 August 1909. *Ibid.*, 32640.

<sup>43</sup> Grey of Falloden, *Twenty Five Years*, volume I (London: 1935) p. 295.

<sup>44</sup> Treasury to Board of Trade, 26 October 1909. *FO 368/270*, 40149.

<sup>45</sup> *FO 368/167*, 36569.

<sup>46</sup> James Fairholme, report of the Exhibition, n.d.; received by Commercial Department 6 February 1911. *FO 368/510*, 4443.

<sup>47</sup> *FO 369/781*, 10924, 18059.

<sup>48</sup> *FO 368/990*, 32863.

<sup>49</sup> Norris McWhirter (ed.), *The Guinness Book of Olympic Records* (New York: 1983) p. 91.

<sup>50</sup> War Office to Foreign Office, 10 March 1914. *FO 371/1988*, 10779.

<sup>51</sup> Minute, 11 March 1914. *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Minute, 11 March 1914. *Ibid.*

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<sup>53</sup> Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey, 17 April 1914. *Ibid.*, 17138.

<sup>54</sup> *The Times*, 27 July 1912; quoted in British Olympic Council, *op. cit.*, (London; n.d.), p. 7.

<sup>55</sup> Sir Theodore Cook to Foreign Office, 15 May 1914. *FO 371/1988*, 22388.

<sup>56</sup> Sir Theodore Cook to Robert Vansittart, 2 June 1914. *FO 371/2186*, 24954.

<sup>57</sup> Minute, 5 June 1914. *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Minute, n.d. *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> John Rodda, 'Berlin (Cancelled) 1916', in Lord Killanin and John Rodda (eds), *The Olympic Games*, revised edition, (London: 1979) p. 73.

<sup>60</sup> Sir Theodore Cook, 'The Great Game', in *Kaiser, Krupp and Kultur* (London: 1915) pp. 90-1, 88-9.

<sup>61</sup> Sir Theodore Cook, 'Public Work and Public Duty', *op. cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>62</sup> See Derek Birley, 'Sportsmen and the deadly game', *British Journal of Sports History*, vol. 3, no. 3, December 1986, pp. 288-310.

<sup>63</sup> Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (London: 1965) p. 50.

<sup>64</sup> Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915* (Hassocks: 1980) pp. 251-5; Colin Veitch, "'Play up! Play up! and Win the War.'" Football, the Nation and the First World War, 1914-15',

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*Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 20, no. 3, July 1985, pp.363-78.

<sup>65</sup> Jack Rollin, *Soccer at War, 1939-45* (London: 1985) pp. 211-25.

<sup>66</sup> E.L. Roberts, *Test Cricket Cavalcade 1877-1947* (London: 1947) p. xi.

<sup>67</sup> Charles-Louis de Beaumont, *Modern British Fencing* (London: 1949) p. 42.

<sup>68</sup> Sir Theodore Cook, *The Last Lap* (London: 1916) preface.

<sup>69</sup> See Colin Veitch, *op. cit.*

## Chapter Two

### Sport and Diplomacy in the Post-War World, 1919-1932

The revival of international sport after the Armistice, by which point the IOC had established itself in neutral Lausanne after leaving Paris in 1915, can be seen to have been started by the Inter-Allied Games, an Army-organised contest along Olympic lines held in Paris to keep the mobilised troops fit and busy.<sup>1</sup> This period was one of great activity for the Olympic movement, which viewed the time of international reconstruction as being a fertile one for the ethic of peace through friendly contacts. The ideological impulse behind Olympism was at its most significant in these years of Wilsonian diplomacy, but the IOC immediately proved itself to be working within, and not in opposition to, the diplomatic framework of the time by failing to invite any of the defeated Central Powers, or revolutionary Russia, to the first post-war Olympics, held at Antwerp in 1920. Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Russia had all been active in the Olympics before the War, in both administrative and sporting matters. But the political expediencies of the victorious powers, shaped by a need to destroy the threat of a powerful Germany and to isolate bolshevism, ensured that the pariah status afforded to these countries in political circles was extended to such cultural circles as the Olympic Games and other sports. Officially, these nations were not invited because they had lost their recognised National Olympic Committees in the turmoil; but the reality of Olympism proved itself to be less radical than its polemic,

and the IOC was too closely linked to the existing power structures in France, Britain, and the USA to desire any genuine internationalism.

For Britain, other political concerns arose over the Olympic Games of 1920 and 1924, including the whole issue of representation at Antwerp, and French antagonism over the Ruhr occupation at Paris. These issues helped to ensure that the Foreign Office remained involved in certain sports events, albeit against its own wishes. The world of sport was already too complex to exist outside the world of politics, and the co-existence of the two is well illustrated for this period by the fact that the rehabilitation of Germany in the latter mirrored its rehabilitation in the former: Germany joined the League of Nations in October 192<sup>6</sup>~~3~~, and the IOC in 1925. Germany's re-acceptance in sport was so rapid that in 1930, Berlin was awarded the Olympic Games for 1936. The political expediency of accommodating the Stresemann administration to the League system was reflected in such minor ways. Against this can be seen the sporting manifestations of the less friendly policy extended towards the USSR through the 1920s and early 1930s. Along with other instances of intervention, these show that the expression of Foreign Office interest in sport continued to develop pragmatically in the period between the Armistice and the commencement of Nazi rule in Germany. The more thorough appraisal of the place of sport in diplomacy that the Foreign Office was forced to make in the late 1930s had its roots in the 1920s.

### **1. The 1920 Olympic Games, Antwerp**

The 1920 Olympics were awarded to Antwerp, an ill-conceived choice considering the material and economic losses suffered by Belgium

during the war. However, invitations were duly sent out for the Games to be held just eighteen months after the Armistice, and in a unique instance the affirmative reply from Britain came not from the BOA, but from the Foreign Office. This appears to have been an accidental occurrence, and was certainly not any 'deliberate decision' that Crowe had advocated before the War. The files relating to the acceptance have not survived, but later research by the Foreign Office in response to the BOA's appeals for help revealed that it had been given by Ernest Lehmann, a clerk who had since retired.<sup>2</sup> This aberration left the Government in a difficult position, with the political responsibility for British participation. In the light of this responsibility, the Foreign Office earned a great deal of criticism by maintaining their refusal to fund the competitors. In a BOA appeal leaflet, for example, Laffan wrote that

the unfortunate official and political aspect given to these Games this year has utterly and entirely prevented any possibility of our withdrawal without definite misunderstanding. We have to compete. We have to find the money.<sup>3</sup>

This pamphlet was prefaced with cutting comments from Edwin Montagu, Secretary for India, and Lord Lee of Fareham, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, who wrote of his regret that British participation may 'have to be abandoned due to lack of funds':

This is a matter in which our national pride, to say nothing of our international credit, is deeply concerned, and I am unwilling to believe that British sportsmen will tamely acquiesce in the non-representation of their country merely

because, in accordance with our usual custom, no financial help will be forthcoming from the Government.<sup>4</sup>

Much of the debate in the Foreign Office over various aspects of the Antwerp Games centred around these twin problems: that attendance had been pledged by a Foreign Office official, so either their failure to appear or their poor performances could show the government in a bad light at home and abroad; and that Lehmann's act of acceptance gave the Foreign Office a degree of liability for the preparations and performances.

Consequently, the involvement of the Foreign Office in these Olympics was on a larger scale than any of the other pre-1948 meetings, excepting only the controversial Berlin Olympics of 1936. This involvement covered a variety of areas. Administrative details over travel to Antwerp<sup>5</sup> and official representation,<sup>6</sup> which were dealt with by the Foreign Office and Baron Moncheur, the Belgian Envoy; while a lengthy and confused debate was conducted between London and consular representatives in Antwerp over a proposed British fête planned for July to coincide with the national day celebrations of the US and French contingents. This plan had a degree of official support, although it was played down by Acting Consul-General Martyn Gurney because of the expense,<sup>7</sup> and positively rejected by Charles Tufton of the Western Department who saw it as a scheme to boost attendances at the Olympics: 'there is no reason whatever why the British community or H.M.Govt. should help to line the Belgian company's pockets.'<sup>8</sup> However, the most important debate over the Antwerp Olympics pertained to the very nature of British



representation, and it was one that critically shaped subsequent Foreign Office attitudes to international sport.

Once again, the debate was started by Cook and his Olympic colleagues. They argued from the quite persuasive premise that Lehmann's acceptance of the Belgian invitation made the Foreign Office liable for a British presence at Antwerp, and from the more abstract idea that successful performances in the Olympic arena were crucial to Britain's standing abroad. The first appeal for help came from Laffan - privately described by Crowe as 'the idle pastor who patronizes [*sic*] this international show'<sup>9</sup> - to Winston Churchill, Secretary for War, a copy of which was sent by Laffan to the Foreign Office on 1 April 1920. Laffan asked Churchill for his support on the Army Council when the BOA applied for the Navy and Army Canteen to feed the British competitors in Belgium:

I do so on the ground that an adequate representation [*sic*] of British athletes at Antwerp is, in view of the King's express desire and the action of the Foreign Office, a matter of National importance, that to this adequate representation there is only one obstacle which appears insuperable, viz: that of catering; and that this obstacle can be removed by your kind intervention.<sup>10</sup>

The request was not greeted sympathetically at either the Foreign Office or the Brussels Embassy, which managed to lose its copy of the letter.

Foreign Office attitudes were clarified a month later. In response to a report from John Mitcheson, Vice-Consul at Antwerp, that the

local press had been critical of the British government and the BOA for not funding the British team sufficiently, Tufton minuted:

I think the less we have to do with Mr. Laffan & all his tribe the better. These games are always the source of international friction, & were British athletes not to participate, I do not believe permanent harm to Anglo-Belgian relations wd. result <sup>11</sup>

to which Sir Eyre Crowe tersely added 'Olympic games are an international farce. No action.'<sup>12</sup> Consequently, the Foreign Office remained as detached as it possibly could, despite Mitcheson's belief that 'the political side of the question is of importance'.<sup>13</sup> His view of the propaganda value of good representation was inspired by the early British success in an Olympic-related flower show, and the pro-British sympathies expressed when Canada won the ice hockey on 30 April.<sup>14</sup> The Foreign Office's detachment was mitigated by the occasional involvement necessitated by Lehmann's commitment, as when Earl Curzon, Acting Foreign Secretary, agreed to write an article on the value of the Games for Cook to publish in *The Field*. But such assistance was performed with an obvious bad grace and a total lack of sympathy. Even Cook's reference to the 'stigma' every Briton would feel 'by the absence of his country from an historic gathering of the world' [*sic*] athletes in which England would be the only nation left unrepresented'<sup>15</sup> was met with a grudging contempt at the Foreign Office. Gerald Villiers, Assistant Clerk in the Western Department, noted 'The deed is done now and we can't get out of it. These Games, far from promoting international amity, breed discord and dissension',<sup>16</sup> while Crowe made a succinct comment that became

something of an informal policy statement for the public view of sport and the Foreign Office in the inter-war years: 'As we seem pledged, I agree. I hope that in future years we may keep H.M.G. out of these sporting events.'<sup>17</sup>

The Foreign Office thus conceded to the wishes of the BOA, and assisted in various ways. These included visa concessions for contestants,<sup>18</sup> diplomatic facilities for the Egyptian team,<sup>19</sup> a grant for the British fête,<sup>20</sup> and an abortive visit by HMS *Cordelia*.<sup>21</sup> But the general attitude demonstrated throughout was one of antagonism towards the BOA, combined with a reluctance at the responsibility, a stance that led to the drastic termination of Cook's Olympic career. The fuss created by the Foreign Office over his persistent requests, which led to Tufton asking him if his agitation had been sanctioned by the BOA,<sup>22</sup> caused Cook some embarrassment, as his appeal for funding and support had been a personal one. He duly resigned from the BOC on 11 June. However, he continued to insist on the importance of the Olympics and the Foreign Office's responsibility in a private capacity, summed up well in his personal letter to Lord Hardinge, Permanent Under Secretary of State, on 11 June. He claimed that the

main issue is that every country in the world except our late enemies will be sending teams to Antwerp supported by their respective Governments, and that either the absence or the inadequate representation of the United Kingdom (when combined with the presence of good teams from all our Dominions and even from India) will be gravely

misunderstood by Belgium, France, the United States and other countries.<sup>23</sup>

This penultimate missive - inaccurate as well as subjective, as only 29 countries were represented at Antwerp - was again met with a mixture of cynicism and reluctance by the Foreign Office. Cook's final correspondence over Antwerp came as something of a pathetic postscript to an unhappy affair. In July, he sent Curzon a copy of a poem he had entered for the Olympic Art Contest, which he requested the Foreign Secretary to present to the King of the Belgians on the opening day, 'should you, if you have the time to look at it, consider it worthy of His Majesty's gracious acceptance.' It was written, he claimed in his covering letter, because

I felt it right to try to do something to show that our real sympathy with Belgium is by no means expressed by the sad fact that, though we could have sent as good a team of athletes (as a whole) to Antwerp as any other nation, we shall be unable, owing to the complete apathy of the public, either to send all our men or to give adequate care to those who go... After this year I hope we shall withdraw from the Olympic movement.<sup>24</sup>

The poem was sent back to Cook, as such a presentation would have been out of protocol.

In the event, British competitors performed well at Antwerp, and the team finished third behind the USA and Sweden. However, such success was not what the Foreign Office claimed to be interested in, and the manner in which the debate over representation and state

support was conducted by senior civil servants demonstrates that the propaganda value of sport was yet to be appreciated by the ruling elite. There were those in decision-making positions who recognised the trends involved, including, in this context, Mitcheson at Antwerp. Moreover, the Foreign Office's historical adviser, James Headlam-Morley, was urging that popular culture could be a valuable location for national self-advertisement:

In a condition of things when the foreign policy of each nation is no longer determined by a small group of men at the head of affairs often in close connection with a court, but is becoming more and more the immediate concern of peoples and parliaments, we cannot ignore the importance of using legitimate means for influencing this opinion.<sup>25</sup>

But, as Philip Taylor has shown, the concept of overseas propaganda and national advertisement was a very low priority in the immediate post-war period.<sup>26</sup> Such urgings to use popular culture as a forum for British projection were not officially acted upon until later in the decade; but even then the administrative result - the British Council - was decidedly elitist in nature, and did not regularly concern itself with sport. Foreign Office policy on international sport was dictated by a desire not to get involved, a desire shaped by the unfavourable experiences of London and Antwerp, and rooted in the Foreign Office's view of such events as peripheral to politics. Thus, despite the partial community of interests between the Foreign Office and such bodies as the BOA, the former was not able to accommodate the crusading zeal of the latter. British policy towards sport was thereby

retarded, developing only as a series of piecemeal and pragmatic semi-official responses to given situations.

## **2. Non-Olympic Sports, 1920-24**

For official British involvement in international sport, the period after the Antwerp Olympics was a formative one. The realisation that sport could be a useful and legitimate tool for impregnational propaganda gradually took root at the Foreign Office, as did the concept that the sporting occasion could be used to demonstrate political approval or disapproval. The spread of this informal policy was very slow, and even at the start of the Second World War the argument that the Foreign Office should have nothing to do with sport still had some powerful supporters. But with the emergence of the militant Fascist sports policy in Italy from 1922, followed later by similar developments in Soviet Russia, the necessity of using sport to promote a preferred image of Britain abroad became too important to ignore. With so many sporting contacts being made, people in other countries were being exposed to the behaviour, techniques, and culture of sections of British society; and, as long as these were unmonitored by the Foreign Office, a number of what were euphemistically called "unpleasant incidents" were prone to occur. By interesting itself, albeit unofficially, the Foreign Office was able to exert some influence to prevent such bad publicity, while the contacts thus made with sports administrators were useful later when specific pressure needed to be brought. There was no minister with responsibility for sport, nor was international sport ever fully and officially entered into any Foreign Office departments' terms of reference, and all incidents of

involvement were of a pragmatic rather than a planned nature. But the early 1920s saw the consistent application of the expediencies of international diplomacy and national publicity to British sport, providing a number of useful precedents for the more public issues of later years.

Just a year after the Foreign Office had rejected the idea that it should involve itself in sporting matters, a significant report arrived from Ronald Graham, British Envoy at The Hague. At the time of the Djambi Oil Bill, which looked set to exclude Britain from an oil rights settlement between Holland, the USA, and Japan, Graham had found some comfort in the fact that Dr. H.A. de Karnebeek, the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs, admired British sport. The value of this interest was increased, in Graham's view, by the excellent reception given in Holland to the sporting gesture made by British rower Jack Beresford to his Dutch rival F. E. Eyken of Delft University in the final of the Diamond Sculls at the Henley Regatta on 3 July. Eyken had 'hit the booms' in the race, and Beresford had slowed down until the Dutchman had got clear: Eyken went on to win the race.<sup>27</sup> This gesture led to Eyken's Rotterdam club singing the British national anthem:

As Rotterdam, the principal rowing centre, is also a well-known centre of German sympathies, the incident is worthy of note. I regard the very considerable sporting element in the Dutch public as a very favourable field for British propaganda, which should on no account be neglected. I have endeavoured to make full use of it and shall continue to do so.<sup>28</sup>

The Dutch connection was also exploited in a military fencing tournament in 1922, when Lieutenant-Colonel Temperley, British Military Attaché, reported to the Foreign Office on the contest at Scheveningen, at which a British team had competed with Dutch, Danish, Belgian, French, Swiss, and Czech opponents. The attitudes demonstrated by Temperley's remarks are characteristic of the idealised amateur view of British sport, whereby the emphasis on the need for British victory was tempered only by the concept of the sporting defeat. A recurrent theme in sporting polemic of this period was that the British were the only people able to take defeat in a proper and dignified manner. Temperley's report is a good illustration of this, suggesting as it does the complexity of the issues of national pride and sporting traditions that were seen to be tied up with British performances. He wrote how he had been told by the organisers that his team's presence was 'essential not so much on account of their fencing abilities, but because the fact of our team being here would raise the whole tone of the meeting.' He claimed that the sportsmanship of his fencers

altered the whole character of the meeting, and even the nations whose standards were the least in accordance with our own showed some glimmerings of fair play when opposed to our team... Scores of Dutch officers and civilians have spoken to me in most glowing terms of our team and I feel sure that the effect upon the Dutch army and the public will be considerable.<sup>29</sup>

The report was endorsed by Sir Charles Marling, British Envoy at The Hague, who re-iterated that British sporting behaviour created a good



impression.<sup>30</sup> A similar message from a political representative abroad on the value of sporting contacts came from Madrid, whence the Military Attaché Lieutenant-Colonel Melvill urged the visit of a British Army football team to demonstrate British support of the Spanish Army at a time of dissatisfaction over Spain's unsuccessful military campaign in Morocco.<sup>31</sup>

These three examples of British representatives abroad reporting that well-performed sport between indigenous representatives and selected Britons was an acceptable way for British interests in those countries to be maintained are interesting for a number of reasons. First, they demonstrate the existence of this view in such an early period, and its acceptance amongst some circles in the military and diplomatic services; and second, the way in which they were dealt with shows the more entrenched Foreign Office view still working. The news of the Dutch fencing event did no more than earn the epithet of 'pleasant reading' from Gerald Villiers, who added rather smugly that this propaganda was free, as the 'British taxpayer has paid nothing in the case of this tournament.'<sup>32</sup> There was no attempt to capitalise on such advice from the various missions, and the Foreign Office's position on sport was not formalised, despite Marling's and Graham's reports. Such a narrow view was shown to be unsuitable for the 1920s when compared with the more planned sport of the Soviet Union; and the warning from Ernest Rennie, British Envoy to Finland, on Soviet-backed 'international militant Communists' in Finnish winter sports tournaments, indicates the political importance that international sport was acquiring in the post-war world.<sup>33</sup> We can thus see the Foreign Office at the time of the Paris Olympics as prepared to welcome any

good done abroad by British sportspersons without wanting to assist that work. At the same time, the Foreign Office was beginning to be made aware of the politicisation of European sport that was to become so important in later justifications of involvement.

### **3 The 1924 Olympic Games, Paris**

Since the end of the War, the IOC had continued to grow in strength and influence, and formalised its headquarters in Lausanne, 'with the primary concern of protecting the Olympic institution by establishing it in a country outside world conflict.'<sup>34</sup> It was also at this time that Coubertin's original conception of a pyramid structure of contests began to be realised, when the Latin American Games commenced in 1922 as part of the base of a movement of which the Olympics were the tip,<sup>35</sup> while Coubertin's ability to adapt to the dominant political environment was demonstrated in his attempt to cultivate the League of Nations, his Lausanne neighbour.<sup>36</sup> This tendency to side with dominant groupings also ensured that Germany, Austria, and Soviet Russia were still left out of the Olympic movement. Another significant aspect of the movement's growth was the institution of the Winter Olympics, the first series of which was held at Chamonix in January 1924.

The BOA was also entering a period of growth and was gaining more widespread legitimacy after the Cook and Desborough administration. The movement was still elitist in management and patronage: Earl Cadogan took the post of Chairman in 1922, the Duke of Sutherland became its first President in 1923, and the King and his sons Edward and Henry enjoyed patron and vice-patron status

respectively.<sup>37</sup> But the attempts at internationalism in European and world politics gave the movement an added attraction, and Olympism was appropriated by some interest groups in Britain for this superficially idealistic gloss. Nowhere is this clearer than in the piece in the BOA's official report for 1924 on the formation and work of the House of Commons Committee of the BOA:

Amongst these [committee members] are those who spend much of their spare time travelling on the Continent - ardent Internationalists one might almost call them - and able, therefore, to appreciate the value and worth to the world of the Olympic Games from the purely international point of view: in other words, men who know and appreciate that Great Britain's prestige cannot be allowed to fall in any respect in the International world, and therefore any movement, which has for its end the maintenance of our prestige, is one worthy of the whole-hearted support of all patriots.<sup>38</sup>

The final sentence of this extract encapsulates the ideological impetus behind British Olympism at this time: that any chance to promote British prestige and interests in an ostensibly neutral international arena should be exploited. While the Foreign Office may have been slow to appreciate this, there were others in positions of power who were quicker off the mark. The membership of the House of Commons Committee at its formation consisted of a group of Unionist and Conservative MPs. These included Park Goff, who was also a Vice President of the BOA at Paris, Tom Hay, Harry Brittan,

and Esmond Harmsworth. Many of the group had vested interests through their business concerns in the promotion of an image of a healthy and successful Britain. This use of the Olympics was positively encouraged by the BOA, where there was an overlap of personnel in any case: not only did it bring in more income, through collections, but it ensured a high profile in influential circles. The concepts of national pride and state benevolence were thus priorities with the BOA at this time, a prioritisation that highlights its political role.

Another political aspect of the BOA's work at this time, but one not acted upon by any government until after the Second World War, was the recommendation that British sport be re-organised and co-ordinated to train potential Olympic champions. The official report called for youth sport to be streamlined at the county level, and that it should be nurtured by the provision of adequate training facilities in schools and universities on a US model. These guidelines were not contemplated at Westminster during the inter-war period: only the 1937 Physical Recreation Act provided any legislative recognition of the value of sport, where it was seen as a necessary part of the general re-armament programme.<sup>39</sup> This relative official indifference was characteristic of the desired policy that sport should be left outside the realm of political intervention. Stephen Jones and others have shown the real scale of state involvement in domestic sport and leisure in the inter-war period, through education, Special Areas legislation, and the municipal provision of facilities; but there was no direct aim in such disparate acts to train Britons to international standards for competitive sport. The emphasis was far more on health and fitness,

and on the maintenance of social order, than on any long-term investment in sporting success.<sup>40</sup>

The 1924 Paris Olympics were held from 4 May until 27 July in an atmosphere of international tension over the Ruhr crisis. The French perception of the USA's lack of commitment to keeping Germany economically weak, as seen by their refusal to support the French military occupation of the Ruhr, led to the hostility of many spectators to the USA's competitors.<sup>41</sup> British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary Ramsay MacDonald made his emergency visit to Paris to discuss the Ruhr with the French Government during the main period of competition,<sup>42</sup> while the Foreign Office also hosted the Allied Conference on the Dawes Plan for reparations during the time span of the Games.<sup>43</sup> Despite this background of vested interest in promoting international stability, British state involvement was minimal after the unhappy experience of Antwerp. The Foreign Office did little but ensure the correct travel arrangements for British military personnel going to Paris from other parts of Europe,<sup>44</sup> discuss the attendance of Prince Henry with the Paris Embassy and Buckingham Palace,<sup>45</sup> and ensure the presence of a British warship at Le Havre for the Olympic Regatta.<sup>46</sup> However, the scale of involvement of military personnel at Paris indicates that, at this level, the British government was happy to allow the nation to be represented by serving troops and officers. David Kanin has suggested, from a North American perspective, that the Olympics entered something of a demilitarised period in the immediate aftermath of the war, not regaining its full 'military aspect'<sup>47</sup> until the entry of the USSR in 1952. But the military nature of some of the events, and of the British

entrants for those events, was very obvious at Paris. 14% of British competitors at Paris were serving in the forces, of which there was a concentration in certain events: while only 5 of the 71 (7%) athletes and 1 of the 24 boxers (4.1%) were military personnel, the more elitist sports attracted larger officer contingents: 20% in yachting, 31.8% in fencing, 40% in shooting, and 100% in both polo and the modern pentathlon. The proportion of serving military personnel at the Winter Olympics at Chamonix was even higher, with 83.3% of the bobsleigh team and 44.4% of the ice hockey players coming from the forces.<sup>48</sup> There were a number of reasons for this over-representation of the forces: access to sports facilities was generally easier in military than in civilian life, and serving troops inherently had a high standard of fitness, for example. But quite apart from the implications that such military representation had for the amateurism issue in the Olympics, whereby an officer entering a shooting contest involved a degree of professionalism, this sizeable proportion of military entrants indicates that overt state representation was seen to be legitimate in this period.

Such representation had a significance for both the international Olympic movement and the British government. For the former, it ensured a continuing relationship with the state structures of various nations, involving a recognition of legitimacy by those governments: indeed, in the British context, this relationship was often initiated by the Olympic movement, as in the BOA's 'request' to the Army to form a Modern Pentathlon Association in July 1923. For the latter, it secured an arena for certain state representatives, who could be relied upon to behave in accordance with the standards expected of British sportspersons abroad and to give a good impression of their country.

In the immediate post-war context, it had an added significance as a display of peacetime co-operation between the armed forces of the victorious powers, particularly at a time of political difficulty. Taken together, these factors ensured that the British government would assist in the smooth operation of the Games for these men by facilitating travel and leave, as well as taking a more long-term interest in the military showcase of the Modern Pentathlon. The Army's special training centres at London, York, Tidworth, Aldershot, and Edinburgh, and its selection championship in May 1924, indicate a concern with good performances.<sup>49</sup>

The Foreign Office's involvement in the Paris Olympics thus centred around military representation. It included co-operation with the War Office, and the Paris Embassy on the travel without passports and in uniform of the equestrian contestants;<sup>50</sup> the Foreign Office helping the Pipe Band of the Cameron Highlanders to travel from their Cologne base to Paris without passports;<sup>51</sup> and the attempt to send a warship to Le Havre.<sup>52</sup> Such co-operation would not have been forthcoming had the attendance of these groups in Paris not been sensed as useful in Whitehall. Further Foreign Office involvement to help to create a good impression centred on the proposed visit of Prince Henry to the Games. This was proposed by the BOA direct to Buckingham Palace - an interesting indication of the BOA's circle of contacts - whence Lord Stamfordham wrote to Crowe asking for the opinions of MacDonald, and the Marquess of Crewe, Ambassador to France:

We are assured that His Royal Highness's attendance would be enthusiastically hailed by the President and French

Government: and, of course, we are further assured that it will tend to improve the relationship between the two countries.<sup>53</sup>

Because of the Ruhr crisis, such a chance to restore friendly relations between the elites of the two nations was seen to be worthwhile by the Foreign Office, MacDonald, and Crewe. The latter wrote from Paris that such a visit would be 'highly desirable and can be strongly recommended.'<sup>54</sup> But apart from these two areas of direct state concern, that of military participation and royal attendance, the Foreign Office did not involve itself with the running of the Paris Olympics. The only other surviving documentation shows the minimal assistance given when a letter from the *Association Française d'Expansion et d'Echanges Artistiques* on the subject of the Olympic art exhibition, which came to the Foreign Office from Paris, was simply passed on to the BOA as it was seen to lie beyond the Foreign Office's scope.<sup>55</sup>

The Paris Olympics took on something of a political complexion, thanks largely to the French feeling of antagonism towards the USA, and, to a lesser degree, Britain, over their failure to support the occupation of the Ruhr. This led to a number of hostile incidents at different events, including some crowd violence during the USA's victory over France in rugby.<sup>56</sup> British tempers were frayed by the quarter final of the middleweight boxing contest, in which French boxer Roger Brousse bit the British defending champion, Harry Mallin, on the chest: Brousse was awarded the match, but was subsequently disqualified for the biting, which caused a hostile demonstration in the arena that needed police intervention. Fuoss has



blamed the aggressive nature of the sport for the hostility of the crowd,<sup>57</sup> but the animosity raised by the issue in the British press was phrased in terms more nationalistic than anthropological. The *Daily Sketch* labelled Brousse as 'a man-eating expert... whose passion for raw meat led him to attempt to bite off portions of his opponents' anatomies',<sup>58</sup> while *The Times* ran a more serious campaign to encourage British withdrawal from the Olympics. The Special Correspondent wrote from Paris that for the Olympics to do any good 'all nations must learn equally to regard sport and politics as two separate and independent spheres',<sup>59</sup> while a leading article argued the case for 'No More Olympic Games':

Miscellaneous turbulence, shameful disorder, storms of abuse, free fights, and the drowning of National Anthems of friendly nations by shouting and booing are not conducive to an atmosphere of Olympic calm... The peace of the world is too precious to justify any risk - however wild the idea may seem - of its being sacrificed on the altar of international sport.<sup>60</sup>

This campaign must be seen in the context of the Allied Conference in London, which *The Times* was supporting. But its existence shows that the test-case Olympics of the post-war world were not free of the problems of international rivalry that had been in evidence at all Games to that date. Sport could not operate in a diplomatic vacuum. The nature of the controversies, while sporting in content, was political in context.

For Britain, the Paris Olympics were fairly successful. Gold medals were won in nine events, including the the men's track triple of

Harold Abrahams, Eric Liddell, and Douglas Lowe in the 100, 400, and 800 metres respectively, which was particularly welcomed by the BOA.<sup>61</sup> However, the Olympic documentation for 1924 contains very little polemic on the decline of British standards. This, coupled with the BOA's avoidance of the Foreign Office during the planning and duration of the Paris and Chamonix Olympics, indicates an attempt at depoliticising the Olympics during the 1920s. The emphasis switched from national standing to sportsmanship and good conduct, involving a move away from a presumed technical superiority of British sport that had been in evidence before the war, and towards an appropriation of moral superiority. This can be seen at its most blatant in the eight-point definition of 'A Sportsman' that was included in a handbook issued to all British competitors at Paris, which concluded:

To play the game is the only thing in life that matters, and with the knowledge that this ideal is uppermost in the minds of every member of the British Team, the Council of the British Olympic Association places with confidence the honour and reputation of Great Britain in the hands of its representatives.<sup>62</sup>

The projection of this image of the sporting British athlete over that of the British athlete presumed to win was a significant development in the ideology of Olympism at this time, during which the myth of political neutrality that it still promotes was born. While there were no approaches to the government for help on the scale of previous Olympics, the relationship between the state and the BOA was maintained through military co-operation, aristocratic control, and

patronage of the Crown and Parliament, a relationship that has endured throughout the years of proclaimed neutrality.

#### 4. Non-Olympic Sport, 1924-28

The mid-1920s was another period of minimal state involvement in international sport, with the informal and *ad hoc* procedures followed over the Paris Olympics generally holding sway until after the Amsterdam Olympics of 1928. However, there were a number of important incidents over which the Foreign Office had to act in some way, and the nature of these incidents set some crucial precedents for the more overtly politicised 1930s. This was the result of the early development of centrally controlled political sport in Fascist Italy and Soviet Russia, which necessitated some Foreign Office involvement when sporting representatives of those countries came into contact with Britons, and the use of sport by German nationalists attempting to avoid the Versailles rulings on armaments, which elicited politically-dictated action from the Foreign Office.

The period began with a familiar argument that Britain was giving an 'unfavourable impression'<sup>63</sup> by not complying with a foreign wish for sporting involvement. This incident concerned the request from the organisers of a Swiss gymnastic contest for the British government to donate a prize, as the governments of France, Italy, and Germany were doing. Lionel Cazalet, the Acting Consul at Geneva, urged the Foreign Office to accommodate the request, as it would be bad for appearances for Britain to be left behind by the other countries in this matter. But the issue was dealt with more critically at home: the minutes show a reluctance to spend money on such a minor matter,

particularly as it might act as a precedent for an expensive trend, while Gerald Villiers, as Head of the Western Department, sarcastically noted that it 'is astonishing how the French *always* have money for anything & everything except their debts' [emphasis in original].<sup>64</sup> Cazalet was duly informed of the Foreign Office's intentions, and was asked to tell the Swiss organisers 'tactfully' that the British Government could not help due to the possibility of a precedent.<sup>65</sup> This fairly insignificant event is of interest for two reasons. First, Cazalet, as the British representative abroad, was well placed to assess any potential good that could come from a British donation: his opinion that Britain could damage its image by being out-stripped by the defeated Germany and the bankrupt France was well-judged, and shows again the belief of the man on the spot in the value of sport as a medium for propaganda. Second, it shows the Foreign Office once more ignoring such advice, and exercising its traditional disdain for the popular sphere of sport.

Of more enduring interest in this period was the way in which the Foreign Office came to a gradual appreciation of how other European governments were becoming structurally involved in sport, and how extra-governmental political groups were also using sport as a propaganda vehicle. Between 1926 and 1928, the Foreign Office was made aware of this trend in relation to Germany, the USSR, and Italy. In Germany, the example was the implication in a nationalistic putsch by a number of nominally sporting 'patriotic societies'<sup>66</sup> in May 1926. Lord D'Abernon, British Ambassador in Berlin, notified the Foreign Office of the militaristic nature of these groups, which boasted such names as *Werwolf Wiking*, *Sportverein Olympia*, and *Östmaerkischer*

*Heimatsbund*, and which had subsequently been dissolved by the Prussian police. The Foreign Office merely copied the letter to the War Office.<sup>67</sup> This compares interestingly with the more frightened reaction to the 1928 news of Soviet sports propaganda, which came to the Northern Department's attention in a report by Sir Francis Lindley, British Envoy in Oslo, on the growth of socialist sporting organisations who based their sport 'on the principles of class warfare.' Lindley reported on the *Spartakiad*, a winter sports festival recently held in Norway organised by the Moscow-based Red Sports International that had attracted competitors from Finland, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Germany, and the Soviet Union, and which had given

a considerable fillip to the growing socialist organisations, and will help to popularise the favourite doctrine of the Norwegian socialists that class warfare must be carried on in every field of human activity.<sup>68</sup>

Admittedly, this event did present a more immediate threat to international stability than the involvement of German sports clubs in an internal coup. The *Spartakiad* was an internationalist event sponsored by Moscow, whose own sports policy for the early Stalinist period had been defined in July 1925 to include 'sporting contacts between worker-athletes of the Soviet Union and other countries [to help] fortify even more the international workers' front.'<sup>69</sup> But the reactions of the Foreign Office to these two qualitatively similar pieces of news suggest that the prospect of Soviet expansion was of greater concern to the Foreign Office than was the prospect of a remilitarised Germany. The lack of comment in relation to the provocative German

groups, contrasted with the hope of Laurence Collier of the Northern Department 'that this sort of thing does not spread beyond Norway!'<sup>70</sup> and the fear of his departmental head, Charles Palairet, of such a 'dreadful prospect',<sup>71</sup> provides a useful insight on the diplomatic concerns of the period. It is also of interest to note that no written comment was made on Sir Odo Russell's despatch from the Legation to the Holy See in May 1928 that the Pope was concerned about Fascist control of physical culture. The Church was worried that 'it was not in keeping with Christian ideals of feminine education for girls to be taught violent physical exercises or how to handle a rifle.'<sup>72</sup>

The problem of Soviet sport was dealt with more directly in August 1927 when a British Workers' Sports Federation (BWSF) football team was invited to the Soviet Union for a series of friendly matches. As an event that the government could have prevented if it had so wished, by refusing the necessary visas to the men, it is significant that that it was allowed to take place. The tour involved some hostile anti-British displays by the team, including the donation of some of the gate money to a Soviet armaments fund as 'Our reply to Chamberlain'.<sup>73</sup> But a watch was kept upon the planning of the tour, and the Passport Office, working in conjunction with the Home Office and Scotland Yard, refused visas to two of the party who were 'known communists'.<sup>74</sup> This incident demonstrates an understanding at the Foreign Office that sport was becoming overtly politicised in the USSR, and that the communist propaganda initiated in Britain by the tour could be threatening: action was thus taken to control the threat, as the more draconian measure of banning the tour may well have been counter-productive.

The few surviving Foreign Office files on sport from this period would suggest that sport was still a low priority in 1928. The traditional disdain that had characterised Crowe's position before the war was still in evidence, even in relation to events in which Britain's diplomatic representatives abroad claimed that positive impressions could be created by some token involvement. It is significant that the majority of the surviving records for the mid-1920s deal with the politicisation of sport abroad, as it was this phenomenon that was generally used as a justification for Foreign Office involvement when it came more readily in the following decade. The reactions of the Foreign Office to this politicisation in its different national settings is also of interest, as it gives the diplomatic historian a microcosm of the expediencies and prejudices of the period, particularly the way in which nationalist soundings from Germany and Italy were given less priority than internationalist moves from the Soviet Union.

##### **5. From Amsterdam to Los Angeles, 1928-32.**

The Games of the IXth Olympiad were by far the largest yet held. 3092 competitors from 44 countries took part, beating the respective figures for Paris by 485 and 15.<sup>75</sup> Philip Noel-Baker's assertion that the 'Olympic Movement (with the help of the British Empire) had taken sport around the world'<sup>76</sup> can be seen by the wide geographical range of countries represented, which included Chile and the Philippines. Germany was re-admitted to the Olympics at Amsterdam and St. Moritz after an eight-year punitive absence, going on to attain second place behind the USA in the unofficial medal table. The comparative British decline since the war continued, falling from

fourth out of 29 with 9 golds at Paris to eleventh out of 44 with 3 at Amsterdam. Canada finished tenth, thereby becoming the first British dominion to beat Britain.<sup>77</sup> In this context, the message of moral over technical superiority that had emerged at Paris continued from the BOA, with the King's message to the team as indicative of this trend: he expressed his confidence that 'they will as ever display, whether in victory or defeat, that spirit of sportsmanship, which is the tradition of their race.'<sup>78</sup>

However, overt state involvement in the Olympics was at something of a low point in 1928. The only record of any facilitating action taken by the Foreign Office was to ensure that the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland were provided with good seats for the opening ceremony.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, there was no British participation in the equestrian events at Amsterdam, as the Army claimed it was unable to release the officers for the necessary training period, and military participation in general was down on Paris: only 5.9% of the British team at Amsterdam were serving personnel,<sup>80</sup> while at the Winter Games at St. Moritz the proportion was 27.3%.<sup>81</sup> This decline can partially be explained by the increased number of women competitors, but even disregarding this wholly non-military portion of the team, the proportions are still lower than 1924, with 6.8% and 30% respectively. The decline was even noticeable in the traditionally military sports. But the low priority given to Foreign Office help by the BOA, and the minimal involvement of the Foreign Office in the Games, indicate that these Olympics were of little importance to the sport and diplomacy dialogue of the inter-war period. There was, of course, a huge significance in the German presence, and the fact that the Foreign



Office made no issue of British participation alongside the defeated power can be seen as a sign of recognition and rehabilitation. But this particular instance of reconciliation was so insignificant to the Foreign Office in the context of other links already established that it did not merit action or comment.

This lack of official interest in the 1928 Olympics contrasts well with the Dutch organisation, which involved a number of high ranking government officials.<sup>82</sup> The linking of the government of the host nation with the Olympics in such an overt manner suggests the perceived importance of the Games as a national platform and a tourist attraction, and firmly linked the success of the Games to the structures of the executive and legislative bodies of Dutch politics. As such, it provides a useful redress to the received idea that only the non-democratic governments of Italy and USSR were involving themselves in sport. The European trend to link the popular phenomena of sport with political structures was widespread by the late 1920s, while the more elitist values of the Foreign Office and the independence-orientated ideology of British sport ensured that Britain was left behind in this process.

While the Foreign Office remained relatively aloof from the Olympic Games in this period, inspired by the entrenched cynicism on the idealistic aims of the IOC and the BOA, the four years preceding the establishment of Nazi power in Germany saw a large amount of Foreign Office involvement in other areas of national and international sport. The period that ended with the Los Angeles Olympics of 1932 was thus full of covert and semi-official intervention. The political and diplomatic ends of such intervention varied, but the activities of the

Foreign Office during these years can be seen to have paved the way for a more firm approach to sport when external forces necessitated it.

The first notable incident after the Amsterdam Olympics came in November 1928, when Thomas Preston, Acting Consul at Turin, informed the Foreign Office of the high standard of the Italian national football team that he claimed was due to meet England. Preston claimed that it would '[behave] our people to put the strongest and best professional combination they can in the field for the forthcoming match':

It might be argued that sport is sport and that it does not matter so much who wins; this is all very well with matches with our colonial teams but not so with continental teams... I am not suggesting that our people should change their attitude towards sport but what I wish to achieve is to warn somebody who is interested in this worthy object to pass on the hint to the proper authority - to the British football impresarios - that the Italians are a first class team and are out to win; moreover that they - the British - look to it that we give them a good game.<sup>83</sup>

The Library dealt with this, and Preston's warning was quickly passed on to the FA, although official pessimism about sports administrations found expression here in Henry Capewell's minute, 'I dont [*sic*] suppose the Football Association will go out of their way to get the best possible team sent out.'<sup>84</sup> He was over-ruled by Stephen Gaselee, the Head of the department, who proposed to approach the FA with a 'semi-official letter'.<sup>85</sup> Gaselee wrote to Frederick Wall, Secretary of the FA, on 7 December, quoting Preston at length and concluding with

the question: 'Do you think that it would be possible to get a hint passed to the right quarter - the organisers of the English team - that it is worth their while to send out a really strong side?'<sup>86</sup> This letter was not referred to in the minutes of the FA Council, which met on 10 December, nor at their later meeting of 28 January 1929 when that summer's continental itinerary was planned: matches were set for France, Belgium, and Spain, but not Italy.<sup>87</sup> This absence from the FA's official version would suggest that the Foreign Office's request was accepted without question, but the destruction of correspondence makes this difficult to verify. No fixture was played against Italy until May 1933.

However, this informal approach by the Foreign Office was raised in a controversial manner in late December 1928 when Frederick Wall was quoted in the *Daily Express* as saying, in relation to a proposed match with Germany:

It may surprise many to learn that the British Foreign Office takes a keen interest in the matter, and urges us to play only our first-class teams on the Continent, as it regards it as essential that British prowess should be well maintained.<sup>88</sup>

This issue was developed into a leading article 'The F.O. and the F.A.' which was highly critical of the political involvement:

The Foreign Office has done some queer things of late, but few as queer as its attempt to regulate "Soccer" football matches between England and Germany on a 1914-18 basis... When the Foreign Office links these friendly encounters with abstract considerations of "British

prowess" and stipulates beforehand for a tolerably certain British victory, it is making itself as absurd as that particularly unpleasant type of small boy who "won't play" unless he wins.<sup>89</sup>

Despite the fact that this was all based on a misunderstanding, as the Foreign Office had approached the FA over Italy, not Germany, it was felt necessary to respond immediately with an explanatory memorandum on the warning from a Consul in an unnamed country and the subsequent private letter.<sup>90</sup> The issue survived in the press for a few days: the next day's *Express* carried a report of Wall's regret at bringing the Foreign Office in, and reported his view that the Foreign Office could legitimately concern itself with football as foreign citizens did tend to 'rate another country's national quality by the prowess of its representatives at international sports gatherings'.<sup>91</sup> *The Times* devoted a leader to 'Football and International Politics' on 2 January 1929:

Football to Englishmen is a recreation, an amusement, a help to physical fitness. There is certainly no case for official interference by the British Government; and, of course, there has never been any.<sup>92</sup>

A number of valuable points can be drawn from this debate between the Foreign Office and the FA, based around the former's attitude, their willingness to act, and the covert nature of that activity. First, the pessimistic attitude with which the Foreign Office first approached the whole question of football after Preston's letter is interesting. It shows a continued distrust of the sport's governing body

to act in the government's interests, and the language used indicates an ignorance of the management of the game. Preston referred to the 'British football impresarios', with no regard to the fact that the four British countries had separate FAs; Capewell was unsure who was sending the team to Italy, stating that it was 'probably' the FA;<sup>93</sup> while a patronising attitude came out clearly in Clifford Norton's minute of 2 January, which stated that 'some good may have been done as Mr. Wall has evidently got into his head the general consideration... that it does harm to send inferior teams abroad.'<sup>94</sup> Second, the Foreign Office's decision to act, albeit semi-officially, indicates that there was a governmental concern that British sporting performances abroad should be good. Italy were a leading continental side at this time, having finished in third place at the 1928 Olympics. With such a record, the worry of Preston and the Foreign Office that England might be beaten was appropriate. Preston's action in warning the Foreign Office thus shows a belief in the value of state intervention in sporting matters. Finally, the covert and semi-official nature of the exercise demonstrates a desire that such involvement should not be seen or appreciated outside the immediate circles of the Foreign Office and the leadership of the FA. The editorial line pursued by *The Times* is significant here, as it criticised the very concept of state involvement and declared the Foreign Office innocent of it while supporting Preston's view that only the best teams should go abroad. An interesting postscript to this incident is that Frederick Wall was knighted in 1930.<sup>95</sup>

While this involvement with the FA was related more to the image of Britain being promoted abroad than to any immediate

political concerns, the Foreign Office's dealings with the Society of Miniature Rifle Clubs (SMRC) over shooting contacts with Germany were rich in diplomatic significance. These dealings started in January 1929, when the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the SMRC, Lieutenant-General Sir Alfred Codrington, wrote to Sir Ronald Lindsay, the Permanent Under Secretary of State, for advice on 'the desirability, from the point of view of the Foreign Office' of a small bore rifle contest with a German shooting society, the *Deutsches Kartell für Jagd und Sportschiessen*. He also referred to the possibility of formalising links with the Germans through the establishment of an international committee. He pointed to the precedent of the 1927 postal contest between teams based in London and Berlin, at which the British Consul George Lyall had been the Berlin observer, but was prepared to decline this challenge 'on the ground of expense and lack of interest on the part of our members' if the Foreign Office was against the idea.

Codrington was clearly keen to be involved as long as such other nations as Belgium, Denmark, France, Spain, and Sweden were included, but wanted 'confidential information' on the composition and political complexion of the German club, as well as Foreign Office guidance.<sup>96</sup> The Central Department saw nothing against the proposal in principle: as long as the shooting clubs were civilian, and were not entered in any service competitions, then Article 177 of the Treaty of Versailles would not be violated. Orme Sargent, the Head of the Central Department, wrote to the War Office for their views on 12 January,<sup>97</sup> and when the Army Council gave their approval on 17 January,<sup>98</sup> he wrote to Sir Horace Rumbold, British Ambassador to Germany, for information on the personnel of the *Kartell*.<sup>99</sup> Thus, the

view from Whitehall of British involvement with an inherently militaristic German sports club was one of encouragement, indicating the diplomatic need for a rehabilitated Germany as a key to European stability. But the view from Berlin was not so positive. Lyall wrote that the *Kartell*, like its British counterpart, had 'some sort of political complexion... operating, more or less semi-officially, under the national and patriotic movement for the development of sports and athletics'.<sup>100</sup> Consequently, the Chancery advised against British involvement, claiming that the possible advantages for commerce and 'international friendship' were outweighed by 'the danger of British participation being exploited by the German association in any evasion of treaty restrictions which they may contemplate now or later on.'<sup>101</sup> The genuine concern of Britain's representatives that such sporting organisations were part of an informal remilitarisation programme thus won over the mild worries of Whitehall, and the contest was advised against.

At the end of 1929, football again became the subject of informal Foreign Office involvement. This incident concerned the first World Cup competition, which was organised to take place in Montevideo in July 1930, and it came to the attention of the Foreign Office after a personal interview between Geoffrey Thompson of the American Department and Dr. Roberto MacEachen, First Secretary of the Uruguayan Embassy, on 24 December 1929. The Uruguayan Government approached the Foreign Office to secure English participation in the tournament because it had received negative replies from the FA and the Football League. The FA was in its isolationist phase at this time, having left FIFA in 1928 over the unacceptably

loose definition of amateurism applied for the football contest of the Amsterdam Olympics, and all of England's non-British internationals were based on friendly, not competitive, terms. The World Cup was established by FIFA to offer a more realistic stage for international footballing supremacy than the Olympic Games, and Uruguay was chosen to host the first contest to co-incide with its centenary celebrations. The FA's refusal to send a team precipitated the Uruguayan request to the Foreign Office, such pressure being deemed necessary because the presence of a team from the game's country of origin would have added credibility and legitimacy to the tournament. MacEachen thus 'rather hinted that they [the Uruguayan government] might be offended if nothing could be done to meet their wishes.' He was discouraged by Thompson, who claimed that the Foreign Office was 'rather chary' of intervening in football, as the bad behaviour of some professional football teams abroad had reflected poorly on Britain; the more practical disincentives of the tournament being played in the close season and at such a distance were also pointed out.<sup>102</sup> The Foreign Office then formally excused itself, with Sir Arthur Willert, the Head of the News Department, writing to MacEachen on 3 January 1930:

I very much regret that we are unable to help in this matter. The Football League and Association would not be likely to re-consider their decision in view of anything that we might say. They are, indeed, a law unto themselves and I fear we must accept their decision as final.<sup>103</sup>



The FA's refusal must be seen in the wider sporting context. Only the national sides of Belgium, France, and Roumania made the trip to Montevideo from Europe, so the isolationism of the FA was shared, to a certain extent, by the significant footballing nations of Germany, Austria, Italy, and Hungary. Distance and time of travel were factors in this isolation.<sup>104</sup> But it is important to note that the Foreign Office felt unable to influence the FA, and that the cynical attitude that had been exacerbated by the *Daily Express* reports of the previous year clearly influenced Willert's decision to remain uninvolved. This aspect of the Foreign Office's relationship with the FA was to change in the 1930s with the administration of the more co-operative Stanley Rous at Lancaster Gate.

The problem of German military sport recurred in March 1930, when Foreign Secretary Arthur Henderson was contacted by Captain Herbertson of the Inter-Allied High Command at Wiesbaden. Herbertson sent some information, gathered by his French colleagues, on the *Reitervereine*, an equestrian based sporting organisation perceived by the French and Belgians as a military threat. He asked for guidance on whether they should be banned before the evacuation of the third zone of the Rhineland. The British stance, as summed up by Herbertson, was less alarmist than that of the French and Belgians. He likened the supposed military training given by the *Reitervereine* as no more insidious than the physical fitness 'attained by membership of football and athletic clubs', and cited the Ambassador's view that once the predilection of the German for doing everything in organised bands and in distinctive clothing was taken at its face value, there would appear to be no other course

than to regard the "Reitervereine" as one form of many healthy physical recreations, and to take action against it only when clear evidence was produced showing that it was being clearly abused.

Herbertson indicated that the French believed that the groups were becoming more openly militaristic, citing 'carbine practice... [and] the attention paid to group rather than to individual instruction',<sup>105</sup> but the Central Department was less ready to condemn. Edward Carr minuted on their 'innocent character' and the irrelevance of the French claim that their troops were in any way threatened by the *Vereine*,<sup>106</sup> while the Army Council saw no grounds on which to support the French view.<sup>107</sup> Accordingly, Herbertson in Wiesbaden and British Ambassador to France, Lord Tyrell, were instructed to tell their respective French colleagues that Britain would not support any Franco-Belgian action on this matter,<sup>108</sup> and the problem of Germans evading the Treaty of Versailles through sports clubs was deferred. This incident must be seen in the context of the natural French fear of a re-militarised Germany, exemplified by the commencement of the building of the Maginot Line in 1929, whereby the tendency to suspect German riding clubs of martial intent was much higher than it was across the Channel. Similarly, the timing of this episode puts it into the period of attempted rehabilitation of Germany by Britain, and the risk of slightly offending the French was deemed to be worth the guarantee of not alienating the Stresemann Government.

One of the reasons for this friendly policy towards Germany, that is the need to keep Soviet influence out of Europe and the Balkans, was the context of another example of governmental involvement in sport

in the same month. The British Workers' Sports Federation had invited a Soviet factory football team to take part in a Red Sports Day in Britain, which prompted the Home Secretary, Samuel Clynes, to refuse visas to the touring side and so bar their entry. Kingsley Wood raised the matter in the House of Commons in April 1930. Clynes, defended the move on the grounds that the tour was a Communist propaganda exercise, and was not for 'the purpose of genuine sport'. He pointed to the Soviet Union's official policy on sport which included, in a resolution quoted by Clynes, the need to use sport to 'crystalise the basic kernel for strike pickets, proletarian self-defence, workers' fighting committees and Red Guards'.<sup>109</sup> Sport was coming under closer central control in the USSR at this time, with the Party Central Committee resolution of September 1929 creating the All-Union Physical Culture Council as 'a ministry for sport, in effect'.<sup>110</sup> This overt politicisation of Soviet sport had implications for their teams touring abroad, and given the political need to keep the USSR isolated, the Home Secretary's action was natural. The propaganda aspect of the proposed trip was a real concern: it was noted that the team, in its other matches on the Continent, had entered the pitch carrying a red flag and leading the crowd in the *Internationale*,<sup>111</sup> a leftist provocation that the Home Office could well do without so soon after the General Strike. The debate in the Commons ended in something of a joke at Clynes' expense when Ernest Brown asked: 'Does this team wear red jerseys, like Woolwich Arsenal?'<sup>112</sup> But the action of the Home Office in banning a foreign sports team from visiting Britain was an important precedent which was used against the National Government in 1935 in connection with an England football match

against Germany. That such action was taken by the Home Office against a political team from the USSR at the same time as the Foreign Office and the military were displaying relative indifference towards political sports clubs in Germany provides a neat microcosm of the diplomatic expediencies at work at the start of the 1930s.

Another development that was to influence later Foreign Office stances on sport came in 1930, when the first tentative moves towards an official cultural propaganda policy were made. This was felt to be necessary to promote a positive image of Britain abroad in the light of the high priority that such activities were gaining in France and Italy, and the reluctant Treasury was finally persuaded to release funds in June 1930. The funding was formalised in December 1930, when the Treasury recommended that a grant of £2,500 be made annually for books, films, and lectures to promote approved aspects of British culture.<sup>113</sup> Although sport was not recognised as part of this work, the circular sent out by Rex Leeper of the News Department to the Heads of British Missions in April 1931 left £200 of this annual grant under the heading of 'miscellaneous'. This was left so that Missions, which were to carry out the cultural work, would not be 'tied down too closely',<sup>114</sup> and so that the propaganda work could be adapted, according to local demands and circumstances, to supplement the approved heads of books, lectures, and films. As this informal cultural propaganda network evolved over the next four years into the British Council, so certain sporting matters came under its control in a governmental bid to present 'this country's affairs... to foreign peoples in the most favourable light possible' during 'the present period of economic and financial depression, when misunderstanding and

misinterpretation of this country's position are likely to be frequent.'<sup>115</sup>

An example of the need for such publicity with regard to sport was highlighted at this time by Sir Francis Lindley's report on his first impressions of Tokyo on his first posting there since 1908. He commented on the rise of baseball as the popular sport in a period when US influence in education, trade, and politics was rising, while cricket 'is, I am sorry to say, in a somewhat less satisfactory condition than it was twenty-five years ago; and the decline of the British colonies has unavoidably reduced the interest in our national game.'<sup>116</sup> Here was a prime case for cultural propaganda as it was envisaged in this primary stage. Japan was a nation with which Britain was interested in maintaining a good relationship, both for commercial reasons and for the protection of imperial interests in the Far East, and the growth of US culture and influence was seen to be undermining that relationship. A propaganda programme based on the cultural example could be useful in any attempted restoration of British primacy, and sport, as an area of mass appeal, could help this.

The achievement of a positive political impression was the motivation in another incident of Foreign Office sporting involvement in early 1932, this time in relation to Palestine. The Foreign Office was informed by the Colonial Office that 2000 athletes and 3000 family supporters had applied for group visas for Palestine, so that they could attend the World Union of Jewish Gymnasts and Sports Clubs in Tel Aviv.<sup>117</sup> The proposal was supported by Barnett Janner, Liberal MP for Whitechapel and a frequent activist on Jewish matters.<sup>118</sup> Philip Cunliffe-Lister, the Colonial Secretary, also

supported the request, as did the Foreign Office's Treaty Department, with George Rendel recalling the previous Foreign Secretary's aim in his note that 'there may be some Jewish & Zionist resentment if it is not made. Mr Arthur Henderson was very anxious to avoid giving the Zionists any further grievance'<sup>119</sup> While this political reason for supporting the idea was, at Rendel's own admission, weak, Henderson's successor of three months standing, John Simon, approved of the visas for the competitors, but rejected the applications for the families for financial reasons.<sup>120</sup> This mild support turned to full backing when O. Williams of the Colonial Office wrote to Vansittart on 6 February stressing Cunliffe-Lister's anxiety that the request be met in full:

He has already received representations in favour of this request from a representative of the Jewish Agency and other supporters of Jewish interests in Palestine, and he considers that the grant of some concession would be most desirable from the point of view of the promotion of good relations with the Jewish community.<sup>121</sup>

Williams also raised the commercial advantage that would come from large numbers of British citizens visiting Palestine, but agreed that it would be difficult to accommodate the families of the athletes. However, the whole scheme was aborted when the Treasury refused to sanction the £2000 necessary for the visas.<sup>122</sup> The willingness of both the Foreign and the Colonial Office to assist Palestine and the Jewish community in this fairly minor cultural matter, at a time when the MacDonald Government was trying to quell the anti-British feelings aroused in Palestine during Lord Passfield's time as Colonial

Secretary, provides another example of the manner of involvement that the government had with sport at this time.

The final sporting event of major international importance in this period was the Los Angeles Olympic Games of 1932, a celebration openly patronised by the Hoover Administration as something of 'a Hollywood extravaganza' and an 'impressive diversion from the depression.'<sup>123</sup> Hoover was the Honorary President of the election-year Games, which were opened by his Vice-President, Charles Curtis, while all invitations were issued through the State Department and the Heads of Missions abroad.<sup>124</sup> But official British involvement was virtually non-existent. The only real debate that has survived was over the relatively trivial matter of whether Consul Wentworth Gurney should be awarded an entertainment allowance of £50 for a reception for the 'visitors of note': claiming that his failure to entertain would invoke 'much unfavourable comment about the British Empire', he expressed his anger that he would 'personally be put to very considerable expense anyhow by the unavoidable entertainment on account of these confounded games'.<sup>125</sup> This sum was forthcoming: as Henry Kelsey of the Chief Clerk's Department noted, the 'occasion is a special one & it would be very awkward for Mr. Gurney if his emoluments did not enable him to do the right thing.'<sup>126</sup> But it is worth noting Scott's minute expressing his fear of the auditors as 'there is no such official participation in (or even recognition of) the Olympic games.'<sup>127</sup> Such a claim made at this time, on the eve of the arrival of the Nazi sports policies that were to bring the British state into a more regular relationship with the country's sport, is very telling of the attitudes still prevalent at the Foreign Office.

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## Notes on Chapter Two

<sup>1</sup> See *The Times*, 23-27 June 1919.

<sup>2</sup> FO 371/3647, 199995.

<sup>3</sup> Richard de Courcey Laffan, *The Olympic Games at Antwerp. VIIth Olympiad* (London: n.d.) p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, frontispiece.

<sup>5</sup> FO 371/3647, 186747.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 189349.

<sup>7</sup> Martyn Gurney to Francis Villiers, 1 April 1920. *Ibid.*, 193394.

<sup>8</sup> Minute, 6 April 1920. *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Minute, 7 April 1920. *Ibid.*, 189349.

<sup>10</sup> Richard de Courcey Laffan to Winston Churchill, 1 April 1920. *Ibid.*, 189761.

<sup>11</sup> Minute, 10 May 1920. *Ibid.*, 196763.

<sup>12</sup> Minute, 10 May 1920. *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> John Mitcheson to Francis Villiers, 3 May 1920; copy to Foreign Office, 11 May 1920. *Ibid.*, 198005.

<sup>14</sup> David Wallechinsky, *The Complete Book of the Olympic Games* (London: 1988) p. 607.



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<sup>15</sup> Sir Theodore Cook to Earl Curzon, 20 May 1920. *FO 371/3647*, 199995.

<sup>16</sup> Minute, 27 May 1920. *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Minute, 27 May 1920. *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 208247, 209278, 211401.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 211047.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 206899, 207693, 210427.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 204760, 204951, 207804, 207843, 208312.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Tufton to Sir Theodore Cook, 7 June 1920. *Ibid.*, 199995.

<sup>23</sup> Sir Theodore Cook to Lord Hardinge, 11 June 1920. *Ibid.*, 203363.

<sup>24</sup> Sir Theodore Cook to Earl Curzon, 28 July 1920. *Ibid.*, 210206.

<sup>25</sup> Minute, 28 October 1919. *FO 371/4382*, 616. Quoted in Philip Taylor, *The Projection of Britain: British overseas publicity and propaganda 1919-1939* (Cambridge: 1981) p. 54.

<sup>26</sup> Philip Taylor, *op cit.*

<sup>27</sup> *The Times*, 4 July 1921, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> Ronald Graham to Earl Curzon, 12 July 1921. *FO 371/7087*, W 7671/67/29.

<sup>29</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Temperley to Director of Military Operations and Intelligence, The Hague, 23 May 1922; copy to Foreign Office, 29 May 1922. *FO 371/8360*, W 4530/2389/29.

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<sup>30</sup> Sir Charles Marling to Arthur Balfour, 29 May 1922. *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Melvill to War Office, 7 January 1922; copy to Foreign Office, 7 January 1922. *FO 371/8390*, W 294/294/41.

<sup>32</sup> Minute, 1 June 1922. *FO 371/8360*, W 4530/2389/29.

<sup>33</sup> Annual Report, 1922. *FO 371/9297*, N 996/996/50.

<sup>34</sup> Monique Berlioux, 'The History of the International Olympic Committee', In Lord Killanin and John Rodda (eds) *The Olympic Games* (London: 1979) p. 25.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27.

<sup>36</sup> David Kanin, *The Politics of the Olympic Games* (Boulder, Colorado: 1981) p. 45.

<sup>37</sup> British Olympic Association, *The British Olympic Association and the Olympic Games* (London: 1987) p. 6; British Olympic Association, F.G.L. Fairlie (ed.). *The Official Report of the VIIIth Olympiad, Paris 1924* (London: 1925) p. 11.

<sup>38</sup> British Olympic Association, F.G.L. Fairlie (ed.). *Op. cit.*, pp. 65-6.

<sup>39</sup> See Peter McIntosh, *Sport in Society* (London: 1963), p. 109.

<sup>40</sup> Stephen G. Jones, 'State intervention in sport and leisure in Britain between the wars', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1987, pp. 163-82; -----, *Sport, Politics and the Working Class: organised labour and sport in inter-war Britain* (Manchester: 1989).

<sup>41</sup> Peter J. Beck, 'Politics and the Olympics: the lesson of 1924', *History Today*, vol. 30, no. 7, July 1980, pp. 7-10; Donald Fuoss, 'An analysis of the incidents in the Olympic Games from 1924 to 1948,

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with reference to the contribution of the Games to international good will and understanding', D.Ed. dissertation, Columbia University, 1952; John Lucas, 'France versus U.S.A. in 1924 Olympic Games Rugby: efforts to assuage transnational tension', *Canadian Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 19, no. 1, May 1988, pp. 15-27.

<sup>42</sup> *The Times*, 9 July 1924, p. 15; 10 July 1924, p.15.

<sup>43</sup> *The Times*, 17 July 1924, p.15.

<sup>44</sup> FO 371/ 10542, W 4886, 5357, 5391, 5542, 5907/2343/17.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, W 2815, 2911/2343/17.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, W 4664, 5053/2343/17.

<sup>47</sup> David Kanin, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

<sup>48</sup> Compiled from British Olympic Association, F.G.L. Fairlie (ed.), *op. cit.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p.211.

<sup>50</sup> FO 371/10542, W 4886/2343/17.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, W 5357/2343/17.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, W 4664, 5053/2343/17.

<sup>53</sup> Lord Stamfordham to Sir Eyre Crowe, 31 March 1924. *Ibid.*, W 2815/2343/17.

<sup>54</sup> Marquess of Crewe to Ramsay MacDonald, 4 April 1924. *Ibid.*, W 2911/2343/17.

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, W 2343/2343/17.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Beck, *op. cit.*; Donald Fuoss, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-6; David Wallechinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 594; John Lucas, *op. cit.*

<sup>57</sup> Donald Fuoss, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-65.

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in David Wallechinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

<sup>59</sup> *The Times*, 22 July 1924, p. 14.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>61</sup> British Olympic Association, F.G.L. Fairlie (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 90.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix II.

<sup>63</sup> Lionel Cazalet to Austen Chamberlain, 16 July 1925. *FO 371/11103*, W 6868/6868/43.

<sup>64</sup> Minute, 20 July 1925. *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Gerald Villiers to Lionel Cazalet, 21 July 1925. *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Lord D'Abernon to Foreign Office, 12 May 1926. *FO 371/11280*, C 5624/234/18.

<sup>67</sup> Minute by Orme Sargent, 12 May 1926. *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Sir Francis Lindley to Austen Chamberlain, 28 February 1928. *FO 371/13299*, N 1339/1147/30.

<sup>69</sup> 'On the Tasks of the Party in Physical Culture', 13 July 1925; quoted in James Riordan, 'The U.S.S.R.', in James Riordan (ed.), *Sport*

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*Under Communism: The U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia, The G.D.R., China, Cuba* (London: 1978) p. 21.

<sup>70</sup> Minute, 8 March 1928. *FO 371/13299, N 1339/1147/30.*

<sup>71</sup> Minute, 8 March 1928. *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Sir Odo Russell to Austen Chamberlain, 11 May 1928. *FO 371/12957, C 3647/1113/22.*

<sup>73</sup> Translation from *Izvestiya*, 31 August 1927. *FO 371/12606, N 3771/3771/38.*

<sup>74</sup> Minute by Alvary Gasciogne, 8 August 1927. *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> British Olympic Association, *op. cit.*, (1987) p. 21.

<sup>76</sup> Philip Noel-Baker, 'IX Amsterdam 1928', in Lord Kilanin and John Rodda (eds), *op. cit.*, p. 89.

<sup>77</sup> David Wallechinsky, *op. cit.*, pp.xv-xvi.

<sup>78</sup> Quoted in British Olympic Association, Harold Abrahams (ed.), *The Official Report of the IXth Olympiad, Amsterdam 1928* (London: 1929) p. vii.

<sup>79</sup> *FO 370/285, L 4100/4100/405.*

<sup>80</sup> Compiled from British Olympic Association, Harold Abrahams (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 12-20.

<sup>81</sup> Compiled from *ibid.*, pp. 21-2.

<sup>82</sup> Netherlands Olympic Committee, G. van Rossem (ed.), *The Ninth Olympiad, being the Official Report of the Olympic Games of 1928 celebrated at Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: 1931) pp. 27-9.

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<sup>83</sup> Thomas Preston to Consular Department, 30 November 1928. *FO 370/289, L 7516/7516/405.*

<sup>84</sup> Minute, 6 December 1928. *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Minute, 6 December 1928. *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Stephen Gaselee to Frederick Wall, 7 December 1928. *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Football Association International Selection Committee, 10 December 1928, 28 January 1929. FA Archives.

<sup>88</sup> *Daily Express*, 31 December 1928; cutting on *FO 395/434, P 4/4/150.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> 'Foreign Office & Football Association', 31 December 1928. *FO 395/434, P 4/4/150.*

<sup>91</sup> *Daily Express*, 1 January 1929; cutting in *ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *The Times*, 2 January 1929; cutting in *ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Minute, 6 December 1928. *FO 370/289, L 7516/7516/405.*

<sup>94</sup> Minute, 2 January 1929. *FO 395/434, P 4/4/150.*

<sup>95</sup> *Who Was Who, 1941-1950*, p. 1193.

<sup>96</sup> Lieutenant-General Sir Alfred Codrington to Sir Ronald Lindsay, 6 January 1929. *FO 371/13628, C 172/172/18.*

<sup>97</sup> Orme Sargent to War Office, 12 January 1929. *Ibid.*

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<sup>98</sup> War Office to Sir Ronald Lindsay, 17 January 1929. *Ibid.*, C 471/172/18.

<sup>99</sup> Orme Sargent to Sir Horace Rumbold, 24 January 1929. *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> George Lyall to Berlin Chancery, 25 February 1929. *Ibid.*, C 1969/172/18.

<sup>101</sup> Berlin Chancery to Central Department, 13 March 1929. *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> Minute, 24 December 1929. *FO 395/434*, P 1900/4/150.

<sup>103</sup> Sir Arthur Willert to Dr. Roberto MacEachen, 3 January 1930. *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> Brian Glanville, *The History of the World Cup* (London: 1980) pp. 15-21.

<sup>105</sup> Captain Herbertson to Arthur Henderson, 5 March 1930. *FO 371/14372*, C 1882/1882/18.

<sup>106</sup> Minute, 17 March 1930. *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> War Office to Sir Ronald Lindsay, 27 March 1930. *Ibid.*, C 2427/1882/18.

<sup>108</sup> Owen O'Malley to Captain Herbertson, 31 March 1930. *Ibid.* Orme Sargent to Lord Tyrell, 7 April 1930. *Ibid.*, C 2601/1882/18.

<sup>109</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, 5th Series, House of Commons*, vol. 238, 1 May 1930, cols. 349-50. Cutting in *FO 371/14883*, N 2923/2923/38.

<sup>110</sup> James Riordan, (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 23. See also James Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society* (Cambridge: 1977) p. 122.

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<sup>111</sup> L. Baggaley, minute, 28 April 1930. *FO 371/14883, N 2923/2923/38.*

<sup>112</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, op. cit.*, col. 350.

<sup>113</sup> 'Correspondence and Relative Papers Respecting Cultural Propaganda, Part 1, 1919 to 1935', Introductory Memorandum, n.d. *FO 431/1.*

<sup>114</sup> Rex Leeper to Heads of Missions, 2 April 1931. *FO 395/449, P 772/4/150.*

<sup>115</sup> Lord Reading to representatives abroad, 26 September 1931. *Ibid.*, P 2217/4/150.

<sup>116</sup> Sir Francis Lindley to Foreign Office, 23 July 1931. *FO 371/15521, F 4555/1975/23.*

<sup>117</sup> Colonial Office to Sir Robert Vansittart, 6 January 1932. *FO 372/2831, T 734/214/378.*

<sup>118</sup> Minute, Michael Wright, 28 January 1932. *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> Minute, 1 February 1932. *Ibid.*, T 1201/214/378.

<sup>120</sup> George Warner to Colonial Office, 4 February 1932. *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> O. Williams to Sir Robert Vansittart, 6 February 1932. *Ibid.*, T 1627/214/378.

<sup>122</sup> Minute, Michael Wright, 2 March 1932. *Ibid.*, T 1715/214/378.

<sup>123</sup> David Kanin, *op. cit.*, p. 51.



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<sup>124</sup> Tenth Olympiad Committee of the Games of Los Angeles, USA, 1932 Ltd., *Xth Olympiad: Los Angeles 1932, Official Report* (Los Angeles: 1933) pp. 45-6.

<sup>125</sup> Wentworth Gurney to Consular Department, 7 June 1932. *FO* 369/2295, K 7486/7486/245.

<sup>126</sup> Minute, 25 June 1932. *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> Minute, 27 June 1932. *Ibid.*

**PART TWO**

**SPORT AND THE APPEASEMENT OF GERMANY,  
ITALY, AND JAPAN, 1933-1939**

**'A ridiculous time for the playing of Rugby'**

## Chapter Three

### Sport and Diplomacy in the First Years of Nazism, 1933-1935

It was during the period that started early in 1933, when the Nazi Party came to power in Germany, that the generally reticent attitude of the Foreign Office towards sport was gradually altered into one of more open interest. This interest was partially rooted in the broader development of a coherent programme of cultural propaganda that led to the establishment of the British Council in 1935,<sup>1</sup> a recognition of the fact that German and Italian propaganda were damaging Britain's standing overseas. Within this trend, an interest in the popular and ephemeral area of sport was never a fully defined policy, but was at least a legitimate response.

Of more basic relevance here were the more urgent needs of British foreign policy once Germany had adopted a nationalistic and revisionist government, posing a potential threat both to the stability of Europe and to the management of colonies: attempts to keep Nazi influence contained were always of great importance. The prospect of another war with Germany was not a welcome one, particularly with the growing likelihood of a Japanese-German alliance threatening Britain's Far Eastern interests, and of a close relationship between Hitler and Mussolini raising problems for British needs in the Mediterranean and Suez. British foreign policy from 1933 was thus built around the contradictory demands of preparing for a war with Germany, while taking any steps possible to accommodate Germany.

Trying to keep Germany divided from Italy and Japan were aspects of this policy, designed to prevent an unwinnable three-front war from occurring. These positions became clearly defined during the period in question. In February 1934, the Defence Requirements Committee identified Germany as the 'ultimate potential enemy' and urged a 'policy of accommodation with Japan';<sup>2</sup> while in May 1935, Maurice Hankey urged Sir Robert Vansittart, Permanent Under Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, that the Government 'must avoid anything calculated to hurt or wound [Germany], and try and make a fresh start.' Such concerns were central themes in British policy in response to the increasingly belligerent stand of Nazi Germany, leading, in Hankey's words, to a 'whole-hearted effort... to bring about a more peaceful atmosphere and outlook'<sup>3</sup> in which, as Vansittart replied, 'we must try every chance... and do our best to make unpromising chances more solid if possible.'<sup>4</sup>

Sport, in which both Germany and Italy placed a great deal of political value and state sponsorship, became an unofficial part of the cultural effort to keep the fascist states friendly. This led to a number of Foreign Office policy moves in the later part of the decade, most notably in the decision not to press the BOA to boycott the 1936 Berlin Olympics, and in the 1936 pressure on the BOA to withdraw London's bid for 1940 in favour of Tokyo. But during the first two years of sporting appeasement, numerous occasions arose that necessitated the application of foreign policy expediencies to sport, culminating in the Home Office and Foreign Office involvement in the 1935 England v Germany football match. Alongside this development, other themes can be identified, notably the identification of sport as a part of the

nascent cultural propaganda scheme. But the surviving documentation is predominantly concerned with contacts with Italy and Germany.

### 1. Sport with Italy and Germany

The period began with some correspondence over the Italy v England football match, drawn 1-1 at Rome on 13 May 1933. It was initiated by Sir Harry Luke, the Lieutenant-Governor of Malta, who wrote to the Colonial Office in March to express his fears over the Italian propaganda value of the match, which had been arranged by the FA in January with no sign of political concern.<sup>5</sup> Luke asked that the Foreign Office be requested to

suggest that, if possible, and if thought desirable, a word might be conveyed to the proper football quarters of the importance from the point of view of national prestige, especially as it affects places like Malta, of leaving no stone unturned to see that the very best available team is sent to Rome.<sup>6</sup>

In this instance, the role of sport in promoting a positive image of Britain was not prioritised, with the Foreign Office generally falling back on the cynical attitude that had been so strongly re-inforced by Wall's comments to the press in 1929. Charles Duff of the News Department urged that the Foreign Office should 'leave sport clean', but not for sporting reasons:

I think myself that, the less we do to put diplomatic pressure on football, the better. Imagine the damage to our prestige if it leaked out that we had interested ourselves in this - in other words if we had attempted to make politics of

sport - and if afterwards our footballers were thoroughly beaten... We should lose far more in such circumstances than we are ever likely to gain by any representations we might make.<sup>7</sup>

John Perowne, of the Central Department, expressed his awareness of the Italian emphasis on victory, and how an English defeat could 'give an enormous fillip to the Italianising influences' in Malta,<sup>8</sup> but did not advocate any formal pressure on the FA to produce a side of certain winners. However, unofficial pressure was exerted through Howard Marshall, a sports journalist, while Orme Sargent, Head of the Central Department, expressed his reluctance to act publicly in terms obviously informed by the 1929 controversy. In his reply to the Colonial Office, after noting the Italian emphasis on winning, he wrote:

Unfortunately, the Football Association here is not quite as intelligent in these matters as we should like them to be, and we are afraid to trouble them too much. You will realise, I am sure, the hubbub there would be in the press if it should leak out that the Foreign Office, "for reasons of British prestige abroad", was bringing pressure to bear upon those responsible for the government of football! If this should ever become publicly known (we very nearly had a case once) and should then be telegraphed abroad, our position would be rather ridiculous.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, no official pressure was exerted upon the FA, deemed to be untrustworthy after the earlier incident. But the informal use of Marshall is telling: it shows that the pleas to 'leave sport clean' were not based around any games-ethic based idealism, but purely around what the Foreign Office could be seen to get away with in this area popularly held to be free of governmental interest. It was at this match that Eddie Hapgood, the England captain, claims to have kicked the ball into the crowd in a clearance and hit Mussolini, 'just above his lunch.' Writing in 1945, it is not surprising that he ended this anecdote with the wish that it had been something more lethal than a football that I kicked into his lap that afternoon.<sup>10</sup> However, there were no doubts expressed at the time of the match by the football authorities about any political implications of playing Italy, although the national side was clearly state-sponsored.

The Foreign Office's disinclination to become directly involved in the Anglo-Italian footballing contact compares interestingly with their willingness to assist with a contact in rugby, the more respectable of the footballing codes. In July 1933, Vansittart's Private Secretary Clifford Norton received a letter from William McClure, the Press Officer at the Rome Embassy, asking the Foreign Office to 'exercise any influence towards the sending of a University Rugby Team' from Britain to participate in the International University Games at Turin in September. McClure himself was cynical about the idea, noting that 'it seems a ridiculous time for the playing of Rugby in Italy, or anywhere in the N. Hemisphere', but he backed the scheme to a degree by stressing the elitist nature of Italian rugby, which was 'not to be extended to "the people" till a right tradition of clean and fair play has

been established', and that a combined Oxbridge side would do well to enter.<sup>11</sup> This scheme proved impossible, due to the request's arrival during the universities' vacations. But Charles Duff did attempt to facilitate it, contacting the Universities Board of the British Empire, and he expressed his 'very great pity that Mr. McClure did not write to the Department about it in good time.'<sup>12</sup> Thus, even though this attempt at an officially-supported sporting contact with Italy came to nothing at this time, the willingness of the News Department to arrange it, and Duff's sadness at its impossibility, indicate a different style of approach from the football incident. The unstated social assumption was that the universities, playing the more bourgeois sport, could work with the Foreign Office in a manner that the FA could not, and that the probable behaviour of the Oxbridge students was more in keeping with the desired sporting image than that of the England professional football team. The political assumption of keeping on friendly terms with Mussolini's Government did not need stating either.

The flexible and often contradictory course of Foreign Office attitudes towards sport was again stressed by an incident in early 1934, based once more around Italian rugby. The newly knighted Sir William McClure wrote from Rome in January, informing Leeper that he had been approached by the *Gruppo Universitario Fascista* asking him to help set up a match with Oxford University. The idea of the elitist development of the Italian game, mentioned in the earlier letter, was again stressed, as was the idea that it was specifically Britain that the Italians wanted to learn their rugby from:



they want to play British Rugby, and not French Rugby... they are desperately afraid of French influence, for they know the French game has been very dirty. They are rejecting offers of matches [*sic*] with French teams, which are very convenient, geographically and financially, for this reason.

McClure subsequently condoned the Italian approach, asking for 'official approval',<sup>13</sup> but the attitudes of Duff and Leeper were far more cautious. Duff's minute, in particular, is worthy of lengthy quotation for the attitudes it indicates on Anglo-Italian sport in the contemporary political context:

I am very doubtful whether we should ever take more than a vague interest in sport: there are so many "snags". Sporting events so often end with the creation of violent ill-will between the participants and among spectators, even in our own sporting country. Games between our people and Latins are frequently responsible for riots. Then, to take the Italian case, if they happen to win a game (and they work, almost fight to do so) it surely proves to a vast assembly of people, including perhaps Il Duce and his supermen, that the Fascist system produces a finer type of homo sapiens than the decaying system of Parliamentary Government. Football becomes a sub-section of the creed.

But, in keeping with the consensus of semi-official action, he stressed the inadvisability of 'the giving of official blessings to any form of sport - anywhere':

I should be in favour of letting it [sport] work for itself, and avoid like the plague any attempt to glorify it into an activity of national or international importance: but I realise that sportsmen may not agree with this view.<sup>14</sup>

Leeper agreed with this stance, even after Third Secretary James Lambert, who had recently returned from a two year posting to Rome, asked:

could not something be done *unofficially* to bring the two University teams together? After all, the Italians want to play rugger according to our methods. If we refuse to play with them may they not say that we are afraid of displaying our inferiority? [emphasis in original]<sup>15</sup>

Leeper's negative reply was sent to McClure on 2 February, stating that the Foreign Office preferred not use any official influence:

Our past experience as regards professional football has been far from happy & we are satisfied that these contests have done more harm than good. University football is, I admit, not open to the same objections, but all the same we are not disposed to encourage sport as a means of propaganda.<sup>16</sup>

A number of aspects of this unsuccessful attempt to involve the Foreign Office are remarkable. First, the very fact that an official British representative was attempting to facilitate sporting contact between Britain and Fascist Italy, at a time when sport in Italy was under the central control of a government whose political complexion was generally not kindly regarded in Britain is interesting. Despite

Duff's sarcastic remarks on 'Il Duce and his supermen', there was no challenge to this basic premise in the way that sport with the Soviet Union was challenged. Second, there is no real differentiation in the News Department's perception of the FA's footballers and Oxford's rugby players: Leeper admits some qualification, but the final decision not to help indicates an interesting shift since the previous year. Third, the fact that McClure was concerning himself with this project while Leeper was writing on the Foreign Office not being disposed to use sport is interesting, as it shows the lack of a clearly co-ordinated policy which compared unfavourably with the Italian and German models of sports policy. A final point of interest here is the recognition that sport could act as useful propaganda if 'left to itself', but that overt state intervention would only be counter-productive. Even the semi-official pressure exercised on so many previous occasions was dismissed this time. This roughly fitted in with Leeper's plans for the publicity work to be conducted by private organisations fund and supported by the Foreign Office and industry.<sup>17</sup>

But this non-interventionist mood in the News Department, the unit most responsible for overseas propoganda before the formation of the British Council, was not matched in the political departments and the Library. Many of these continued to involve themselves with sport to varying degrees, and this is indicative of the unclear definition of responsibility and policy highlighted above. Between February and May 1934, for example, the Library assisted in communications between the National Rifle Association and civilian rifle clubs in Egypt to set up a .303 postal match,<sup>18</sup> while in February, Sargent contacted Sir Eric Phipps, British Ambassador to Germany, on behalf of Lord

Hamilton of Dalzell of the Jockey Club, on the question of the control of German horse racing under Nazi rule.<sup>19</sup> Such pragmatic involvement obviously continued, particularly with regard to the Olympic Games and Anglo-German contacts.

Another sporting trend of this period that was important to subsequent Foreign Office actions was the continued politicisation of sport in Italy and the Soviet Union, and the emergence of Nazi sport in Germany. With regard to Italy, reference has already been made to the 'supermen' of Fascism for whom sport was a useful propaganda tool. Victoria de Grazia has shown how sport was 'lavishly subsidised and from the late twenties increasingly propagandised by the fascist regime.' These developments were formalised by the Sports Charter of 1929, which cemented links between the Government's central leisure organisation, the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (OND) and the national Olympic Committee.<sup>20</sup> The Foreign Office was kept informed of the general trends by various despatches from Rome. These were exemplified, at a time when the England football team were about to entertain Italy at Highbury, by Ambassador Sir Eric Drummond's note from Rome of 9 November 1934 on the involvement of 15,000 athletes in the celebrations of the 12th anniversary of the March on Rome. Mussolini addressed them in terms that clarified the link between sport and militarisation in fascist politics:

You Athletes of all Italy have particular duties. You must be tenacious, chivalrous and daring. Remember that when you take part in contests beyond our borders, there is then entrusted to your muscles, and above all to your spirit, the honour and the prestige of national sport. You must hence

make use of all your energy and of your willpower in order to obtain primacy in all struggles on the earth, on the sea and in the sky.<sup>21</sup>

No mention of the central control over Italian sport was made at the Foreign Office when the FA invited them to send a representative to the England v Italy match of 14 November, played at Arsenal's ground.<sup>22</sup> Paul Mason, Foreign Secretary Sir <sup>John</sup> Simon's Assistant Private Secretary, accepted the invitation,<sup>23</sup> and the only counsel against his attendance was couched in the traditional terms of avoiding sport in general, not in terms of disagreement with the Italian sport system. Owen St. Clair O'Malley, Head of the Southern Department, warned:

If we agree to be represented at this match, there will be a cast iron precedent for representation at all international football matches & the precedent may well spread to cricket lacrosse basket ball ping pong & goodness knows what else.

I think to [*sic*] F.O. will sooner or later regret this.<sup>24</sup>

Simon was unable to attend, however, and the Foreign Office was represented by James Lambert of the Southern Department.<sup>25</sup> This match, which England won 3-2, became infamous as the "Battle of Highbury", due to the violent nature of the play. Brian Glanville, writing in 1955, described how 'it is still regarded as one of the roughest and most unpleasant matches ever played on a British football field',<sup>26</sup> while England captain Eddie Hapgood, who had his nose broken by a flailing Italian elbow, commented later 'it's a bit hard to play like a gentleman when somebody closely resembling an

enthusiastic member of the Mafia is wiping his studs down your leg, or kicking you up in the air from behind.'<sup>27</sup> It is clear that the propagandist goal of beating England at home, coupled with the material incentives given to the Italian team, gave this match such a violent edge, and the play at Highbury became something of a yardstick for judging the sporting nature of the visiting Germans in the following season. But at no point was any political objection raised by the Foreign Office, despite the Home Office precedent with the Soviet team 1930 of barring a football team believed to be playing for propaganda. Moreover, a legitimacy was added to the event by official representation, although the invitation to the post-match banquet was refused.<sup>28</sup>

In Germany, sport was re-organised from May 1933 with the appointment of Hans von Tschammer und Osten as *Reichsportsführer* under the Ministry of the Interior, and it became increasingly based around the concepts of racial purity and military preparedness. Gerald Carr has shown how 'sports clubs were forced by law to include in their programmes, military and para-military defense and attack sports',<sup>29</sup> and how ideological training was also included. This control of sport was designed to help the consolidation of the Nazi Government, and to help the undermining of the youth and recreational work of various religious, labour, and left-wing agencies. Information on these sports policies came to the notice of the Foreign Office from the anti-Nazi British Ambassador to Germany, Sir Eric Phipps. In January 1934, he wrote to Simon with a report of Tschammer und Osten's recent interview in the *Völkischer*

*Beobachter*, in which he criticised the newspapers which had attacked the selection of the German football team for a match against Hungary:

He points out that he, and not the press, is solely responsible for the selection and that the application of the "Führerprinzip" to sport is a guarantee of the highest success. Criticism can and must in no circumstances be allowed to undermine confidence in the sport leadership, but most [*sic*] be devoted to strengthening the moral [*sic*] of German teams in the worthy, and even politically important, tasks before them. He gives warning that for the future he will take ruthless steps against any who, in the National Socialist state, adopt "liberal usages" in their sports criticism and so impede the work of the German sport authorities.<sup>30</sup>

This fact of central control over German sport was understood at the Foreign Office, and played a part in the debate over the England v Germany football match, played at White Hart Lane on 4 December 1935,<sup>31</sup> and referred to by one later commentator as 'the greatest ever triumph of the Keep Politics Out Of Sport brigade.'<sup>32</sup> The match became controversial in the months preceding it, as various protests arrived at the Foreign Office and the Home Office from trade union groups and Jewish protesters, angry at the location of the game at the North London home of Tottenham Hotspur, a club with a traditionally large Jewish following. The FA organised the match with no reference to any political problems being recorded in the minutes,<sup>33</sup> but the protests started arriving at the Foreign Office in October, urging the Government to stop the match as it would only be a propaganda

vehicle for Nazi Germany. The accuracy of this claim is suggested by the fact that 10,000 German followers came to Britain for the game. The *Daily Worker* referred to them as a 'Hallelujah chorus of several thousand picked Nazi cheerers';<sup>34</sup> and at the Foreign Office Sargent, who found the idea of so many German supporters arriving in Britain 'objectionable', astutely noted that such 'an exodus from Germany could never take place except by the granting of special financial facilities by the German Government.'<sup>35</sup> But the need to remain on good terms with Germany was paramount: as Ralph Wigram, the Head of the Central Department, reported to the Home Office after a conversation with a Baron Marschall of the German Embassy, 'I told him that our wish was that the match should help to promote friendly relations between our two countries'. He had therefore appealed to the Embassy to ensure that the German supporters did not behave in a provocative manner, 'because we wanted the match to pass off well.'<sup>36</sup>

As the pressure for governmental action mounted, and the prospect of disruptive strikes and demonstrations in London became real, Home Secretary Sir John Simon intervened. On 18 November, he wrote a detailed minute in which he stated 'there seems to me to be a strong reason to believe that it is really a piece of political propaganda in the interests of the Nazis', and urged the Foreign Office to ban the match.<sup>37</sup> He was temporarily calmed by police assurances that they could cope with any crowd problems, but he re-entered the debate two days later after receiving a letter of protest from Walter Citrine, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), who argued that the proposed presence of the 10,000 Germans would be



interpreted by many people as a gesture of sympathy from the British Government to a movement whose aims and methods have evoked the strongest condemnation from every section of public opinion in the country, including the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet.<sup>38</sup>

This appeal led Simon, through his assistant Sir Russell Scott, to contact Vansittart for guidance in this foreign policy matter, as it seemed to Simon 'that a decision not to intervene will need to be defended primarily on grounds of international policy', and he needed 'the necessary material for an answer in this sense.'<sup>39</sup>

In response to this, Wigram noted the problems of framing a public statement that took the real factor of not wishing to offend Germany into account;<sup>40</sup> Foreign Secretary Samuel Hoare urged that the Government should 'say as little as possible and intervene as little as possible';<sup>41</sup> and Vansittart advised Simon to promote the line that the match was 'a private affair arranged by private individuals'.<sup>42</sup> Simon adopted this view, with his Private Secretary stating in a letter to Hoare's Private Secretary, Horace Seymour, on 29 November:

What Sir John would like would be for the German Ambassador and the German Government to co-operate with us in treating this football fixture as a purely private and unofficial sporting engagement.<sup>43</sup>

However, the TUC pressed for a meeting on the matter, which took place at the Home Office on 2 December. Simon stuck with Vansittart's advised phrase on the privacy of the fixture and the apolitical nature of sport, while the TUC delegation argued that while sport should be apolitical, Nazi sport policies made this a special case. Claiming that

the 'team that will come over here to play is as directly representative of the Nazi Government as the Ambassador in London',<sup>44</sup> they argued - sometimes quite heatedly - that the Government's refusal to act against the match could only be seen as indication of the closer ties with Germany that were being pursued.

The match took place as planned, although numerous protesters converged on North London to make a stand against the visiting crowds, and there were seven arrests for obstruction and minor public order offences. But the match, which England won 3-0, was also used by extra-governmental political agencies of the right. Fleet Street jumped on the chance of attacking a favourite enemy when the union movement proved to be concerning itself with sport: as the *Morning Post* rhetorically asked:

Since when has anybody, except the T.U.C. considered it necessary for foreigners to submit to a test of political rectitude before being permitted to watch their countrymen playing football in these islands? Sir JOHN SIMON very properly reminds his petitioners that sport and politics have nothing whatever to do with one another.<sup>45</sup>

The 'mischief-makers of the Trades Union Congress'<sup>46</sup> were cast as the enemies of British sporting ethics by trying to raise political issues. With most of the contemporary mainstream press 'reluctant to exacerbate international affairs by adopting a hard line towards' Germany,<sup>47</sup> the broad condemnation of the boycott campaign was an attempt to discredit the TUC at a time when the animosity the unions were trying to raise against Nazism could have had a negative impact on Whitehall's priorities. More activity from the more extreme

sections of the political right included the publicity aroused by Edward Doran, the National Conservative MP for North Tottenham who attacked the Jewish attempts to disrupt the game during his election speeches in October and November.<sup>48</sup> He lost his seat to Labour, but re-appears in the Home Office files on this match as a member of the Lock of the White Knights of Britain who were threatening to march to Tottenham with the German supporters.<sup>49</sup> The match aroused other anti-Semitic sentiments in North London. The *Tottenham and Edmonton Weekly Herald* carried letters encouraging the Jewish supporters to leave White Hart Lane for good: for example, 'Spurs will always find enough English support without worrying about the "Yidds"...it will be very nice to watch an English match with only English supporters'<sup>50</sup> And on the day of the match, 'interested organisations had painted swastikas with the words "Perish Judah" on hoardings outside the ground.'<sup>51</sup> Lord Mount Temple's Anglo-German Fellowship was launched on 5 December, with a dinner attended by, among others, Hans von Tschammer und Osten and German Olympic Committee President Theodor Lewald, who were over for the match, along with the German Ambassador, Lord Aberdare of the BOA, and athletes Guy Butler and Douglas Lowe.<sup>52</sup> The overt identification of the football match with German overtures towards Britain was clear here, as exemplified by Mount Temple's description of the game as 'the turning point of the good feeling between the two countries.'<sup>53</sup> The more pragmatic staff of the Foreign Office might not have described it thus, but the involvement of their office, and the personal intervention of the Home Secretary to ensure the smooth passage of the

game, indicate that it was allowed to play a minor cultural part in the general trend of a friendly policy towards Germany.

## **2. Sport and Cultural Propaganda**

Moves to formalise the emerging system of cultural propaganda accelerated in early 1934, when Rex Leeper wrote on the Department of Trade's efforts to attract overseas students that 'little progress is likely unless a wider form of cultural propaganda is taken.'<sup>54</sup> He argued that industry should help the Foreign Office to fund existing independent organisations which were already working for such goals. These aims were elucidated in June, firstly in Leeper's 'Memorandum on Cultural Propaganda', and secondly in his paper on the need for sponsorship of the newly-formed Cultural Relations Committee. These papers share the theme that propaganda should be conducted 'through private organisations which should be encouraged to stand on their own feet'<sup>55</sup> with help from the Foreign Office, the Board of Education, and the Department of Overseas Trade; while in his appeal to industry, he argued for subtlety, claiming that the 'propaganda should be neither excessive nor too blatantly self-seeking.'<sup>56</sup> This plan won immediate support from industry, with Guy Locock of the Federation of British Industry expressing himself 'one hundred per cent in favour of what is proposed.'<sup>57</sup> The Department of Overseas Trade was equally supportive, and the first meeting of the British Committee for Cultural Relations with Other Countries was held on 5 December 1934. Those present included Lord Tyrell of Avon in the chair, industrialists, educationalists, and governmental representatives from the Foreign Office, the Board of Education, and the Department

of Overseas Trade.<sup>58</sup> An Executive Committee was formed, which met on 12 February 1935 to co-ordinate finances, and the organisation took on the more manageable name of the British Council. Despite its original aim of using industry and private donations for income and the Foreign Office for advice,<sup>59</sup> Leeper was suspicious of this at an early stage. He wrote to Vansittart in March 1935 to ask for more central funding, claiming:

For my own part I have very little faith in the vision or imagination of our industrialists. They will be influenced mainly by the desire for commercial rather than political results and I am convinced that our aim should be political rather than commercial and that the Foreign Office should have the major say in the policy of the Council.

The cultural work was seen as a 'very definite political instrument' going 'hand in hand with our foreign policy'.<sup>60</sup>

The elitist orientation of the British Council's work can be seen from the Advisory Committees and Panels that were established in this formative period. Apart from the specific geographical section, Ibero-American, its 1935 committees were Books and Periodicals, British Education Abroad, Fine Arts, Lectures, Students, and Music.<sup>61</sup> But the flexibility of its terms of reference allowed for more popular areas of culture, such as sport, to be included according to local tastes and factors, and some examples of this type of work can be seen in this period. In April 1933, for example, the British Consul at Vigo, Francis Patron, requested the News Department to send out articles on golf in Britain to cater for the growing interest in that sport among the Spanish, as 'it strikes me that it would not be a bad way of doing some

British propaganda'.<sup>62</sup> The Department was unable to fund this, and Leeper was concerned that anything sent to Spain would not have a wide enough appeal to justify the expense, so some press cuttings were sent,<sup>63</sup> although these proved to be too 'detailed and technical'.<sup>64</sup> In a similar vein, the news of the Harmsworth Trophy for motor boat racing being won in Detroit by H. Scott-Paine in a boat with a British-made Napier engine was proudly boasted by Leslie Hughes-Hallett, the British Consul at Detroit,<sup>65</sup> while the best example of sport as cultural propaganda came from Argentina. Eugen Millington-Drake, Counsellor at the Buenos Aires Embassy, wrote in November of the "'British belt'", a prize in boxing donated by himself and two other Britons in 1930, won in September by Alfredo Bilanzone in Rosario, and presented by Millington-Drake. He sent cuttings from the Buenos Aires and Rosario press, 'which will show that the general object of promoting Anglo-Argentine sporting relations was fully attained.'<sup>66</sup> Argentina was an important country for Britain to remain on good terms with, due to trade links and the strategic importance of the Falkland Islands, and Duff noted the value of the British-sponsored boxing in this context: 'This may appear a very unimportant affair. But I cannot help feeling that these efforts of Mr Millington Drake [*sic*] are of incalculable value in Anglo-Argentine relations.'<sup>67</sup>

In September, an example of the promotion of elite sport to display qualities supposedly inherent in the British nation came from Colombia, whence British Envoy Spencer Dickson reported on the local contest in polo for the Auld Lang Syne Cup, donated by himself and his wife in 1931. Those present at the match included President Dr. Alfonse de López and diplomatic representatives from Peru,

Bolivia, and Ecuador, and Dickson reported on the 'kindly atmosphere' and the 'promising repercussions' of the match,<sup>68</sup> at which his speech contained the polemical comment: 'The match which we have witnessed today means a great deal more, very much more, than a matter of sticks, balls and goals. It means "*playing the game*"'[emphasis in original].<sup>69</sup> A similar aim of advertising British sport was evident in the request from the Montevideo Chancery for information on the Henley Regatta in July 1934.<sup>70</sup>

Leeper's paper of 8 June 1934 defined a new framework of cultural propaganda within which such sporting contacts as the Millington-Drake Trophy and the Harmsworth Cup could function. Taking Stephen Tallents' influential work, *The Projection of England*, as something of a foundation,<sup>71</sup> it soon became clear that any advertisement of Britain's customs, institutions, and culture could fit into this scheme of projection. The emphasis was on protecting British interests abroad from the impregnational propaganda being performed by Germany, Italy, and France, and Leeper stressed the 'need for advertising not merely our markets but our culture, for making known our literature, art, science, education and institutions, thereby removing ignorance, misunderstanding and prejudice.'<sup>72</sup> It is well to note here that Tallents had included: '*a reputation for fair play*'[emphasis in original]<sup>73</sup> in sport as part of the 'raw material of England's esteem in the world'.<sup>74</sup> By the end of 1934, a few instances of the way in which sport could contribute to the nascent programme of cultural propaganda were evident. These examples provide some background, in the sporting context, to Leeper's efforts at formalising and co-ordinating the projection of Britain.

The involvement of the British government in sport during these crucial years can thus be seen to have been of a greater importance than previously. The main reason for this was external: with the governments of Italy and Germany investing their countries' sport with political and propagandist significance, some amount of state involvement was essential from Britain to keep the political context of sport with those countries under control. However, the trend towards involvement in sport must be seen in the context of the general development of the machinery for cultural propaganda, a process in which the Foreign Office formalised its commitment to using the media of education, broadcasting, and the arts to projecting a desired image of Britain in certain key countries where the nation's prestige was perceived to be in danger. Sport was not officially brought into this machinery at this stage, but its casual employment as an area of popular culture was more evident in this period. 1936 saw the next logical step in these developments towards involvement, when the Foreign Office putting direct pressure on a sports organisation to act in accordance with British foreign policy expedients. But the Foreign Office's activities over the Berlin Olympics and the location of the 1940 Olympics were rooted in the trends of the first two years of dealing with Nazi and Fascist sport.



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## Notes on Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup> Philip M. Taylor, *The Projection of Britain: British overseas publicity and propaganda, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: 1981); Frances Donaldson, *The British Council- the first fifty years* (London: 1984).

<sup>2</sup> 'Imperial Defence Policy: Report of the Defence Requirements Committee', 28 February 1934, summary (1), p. 33. *CAB 16/110*, CP 64(34); quoted in Wesley Wark, *The Ultimate Enemy: British intelligence and Nazi Germany, 1933-1939* (Oxford: 1986) p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Hankey to Sir Robert Vansittart, 24 May 1935. *CAB 21/540*, 14/2/23(Part 1).

<sup>4</sup> Sir Robert Vansittart to Robert Hankey, 27 May 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> FA International Selection Committee Minutes, 16 January 1933. FA Archives.

<sup>6</sup> Sir Harry Luke to A.J. Dawe, Colonial Office, 9 March 1933; copy sent by Colonial Office to Orme Sargent, 15 March 1933. *FO 395/492*, P 673/673/150.

<sup>7</sup> Minute, 18 March 1933. *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Minute, 20 March 1933. *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Minute, 20 March 1933. *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Eddie Hapgood, *Football Ambassador* (London: 1945) p. 33.

<sup>11</sup> William McClure to Clifford Norton, 19 July 1933. *FO 395/492*, P 1769/673/150.

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<sup>12</sup> Minute, 25 July 1933. *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Sir William McClure to Rex Leeper, 13 January 1934. *FO 395/515*, P 165/165/150.

<sup>14</sup> Minute, 19 January 1934. *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Minute, 25 January 1934. *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Draft reply, Rex Leeper to Sir William McClure, 2 February 1934. *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Rex Leeper, 'Cultural Propaganda', 18 June 1934. *FO 395/505*, P 1887/9/150.

<sup>18</sup> *FO 370/458*, L 1257, 2425, 2846/1257/405.

<sup>19</sup> *FO 371/17762*, C 1135, 1472/1135/18.

<sup>20</sup> Victoria de Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: mass organisation of leisure in fascist Italy* (Cambridge: 1981) pp. 170-9.

<sup>21</sup> Translation, sent by Sir Eric Drummond to Sir John Simon, 9 November 1934. *FO 371/18427*, R 6327/162/22.

<sup>22</sup> Stanley Rous to Foreign Office, 26 October 1934. *FO 371/18439*, R 6262/6262/22.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Mason to Stanley Rous, 3 November 1934. *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Minute, 30 October 1934. *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Minute, 15 November 1934. *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Brian Glanville, *Soccer Nemesis* (London: 1955) p. 88.

<sup>27</sup> Eddie Hapgood, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

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<sup>28</sup> Minute by Paul Mason, 7 November 1934. *FO 371/18439*, R 6262/6262/22.

<sup>29</sup> G.A. Carr, 'Sport and Party Ideology in the Third Reich', *Canadian Journal of the History of Sport and Physical Education*, vol. 5, 1974, p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> Sir Eric Phipps to Sir John Simon, 16 January 1934. *FO 371/17758*, C 502/502/18.

<sup>31</sup> Brian Stoddart, 'Sport, Cultural Politics and International Relations: England versus Germany, 1935', in Norbert Müller and Joachim Rühl (eds), *Olympic Scientific Congress 1984 Official Report: Sport History* (Niedernhausen: 1985) pp.385-412.

<sup>32</sup> Simon Hoggart. 'When the Nazis came to Tottenham', *The Observer*, 14 March 1982, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> FA International Selection Committee minutes, 26 August 1935. FA Archives.

<sup>34</sup> *Daily Worker*, 30 November 1935, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Minute, 21 October 1935. *FO 371/18884*, C 7348/7175/18.

<sup>36</sup> Ralph Wigram to Home Office, 8 November 1935. *HO 45/16425*, 688144/3.

<sup>37</sup> Minute, 18 November 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Walter Citrine to Sir John Simon, 18 November 1935. Copy on *FO 371/18884*, C 7757/7175/18.

<sup>39</sup> Sir Russell Scott to Sir Robert Vansittart, 20 November 1935. *Ibid.*

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<sup>40</sup> Minute, 21 November 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Minute, 24 November 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Sir Robert Vansittart to Sir Russell Scott, 27 November 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> A.S. Hutchinson to Horace Seymour, 29 November 1935. *Ibid.*, C 7975/7155/18.

<sup>44</sup> Walter Citrine, quoted in 'Notes of Deputation from the Trades Union Congress to the Home Secretary', 2 December 1935. *HO 45/16425*, 688144/21.

<sup>45</sup> *Morning Post*, 30 November 1935, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> *Daily Mail*, 29 November 1935, p.12.

<sup>47</sup> Franklin Reid Gannon, *The British Press and Germany, 1936-1939* (Oxford: 1971) p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Tottenham and Edmonton Weekly Herald*, 1 November 1935, p. 9.

<sup>49</sup> Note by A. Canning, Superintendent of Special Branch, 19 November 1935. *HO 45/16425*, 688144/3. See also Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right: British enthusiasts for Nazi Germany, 1933-1939* (Oxford: 1983) pp. 81-3.

<sup>50</sup> Letter by 'England for England', *Tottenham and Edmonton Weekly Herald*, 25 October 1935, p. 3.

<sup>51</sup> *Morning Post*, 4 December 1935, p. 11.

<sup>52</sup> Richard Griffiths, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

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<sup>53</sup> Quoted in *The Times*, 6 December 1935, p. 18.

<sup>54</sup> Minute, n.d.; sent by Cecil Pickthall, Secretary of the Department of Overseas Trade, to William Rootes, Vice-President of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, 17 May 1934. *BW 82/6*.

<sup>55</sup> Rex Leeper, 'Cultural Propaganda', 18 June 1934. *FO 395/505*, P 1887/9/150.

<sup>56</sup> Rex Leeper, 'Cultural Relations Committee', paper presented to meeting of Cultural Relations Committee, 28 June 1934. *BW 82/6*.

<sup>57</sup> Guy Locock to William Rootes, 5 July 1934. *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Minutes of first meeting of a Committee, 5 December 1934. *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> 'Statement for the Press: British Committee', 19 March 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Rex Leeper to Sir Robert Vansittart, 14 March 1935. *BW 82/5*.

<sup>61</sup> Frances Donaldson, *The British Council: the first fifty years* (London: 1984) pp. 377-81.

<sup>62</sup> Francis Patron to Rex Leeper, 27 April 1933. *FO 395/497*, P 1105/1105/150.

<sup>63</sup> Rex Leeper to Francis Patron, 17 May 1933. *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Francis Patron to Charles Duff, 18 July 1933. *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Leslie Hughes-Hallett to Foreign Office, 13 September 1933. *FO 395/501*, P 2218/2218/150.

<sup>66</sup> Eugen Millington-Drake to Sir John Simon, 10 November 1933. *FO 395/503*, P 2824/2824/150.

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<sup>67</sup> Minute, 8 November 1933. *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Spencer Dickson to Sir John Simon, 20 September 1934. *FO 371/17514, A 8257/8257/11.*

<sup>69</sup> 'Rough Draft in English of Mr. Spencer S. Dickson's Speech (Delivered in Spanish) on the Occasion of the Auld Lang Syne Cup match, played on the ground of the Polo Club of Bogotá, on September 16th 1934'. *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Montevideo Chancery to News Department, 18 July 1934. *FO 395/508, P 2375/45/150.*

<sup>71</sup> Stephen Tallents, *The Projection of England* (London: 1932).

<sup>72</sup> 'Cultural Relations Committee', paper presented to meeting of Cultural Relations Committee, 28 June 1934. *BW 82/6.*

<sup>73</sup> Stephen Tallents, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15.

## Chapter Four

### Appeasement and the Olympic Games

The diplomatic tone for 1936 was set by the National Government's continuing policy of appeasement, militarily necessary with regard to Germany, Japan, and Italy. The style of this policy was summed up in the memorandum, by Duff Cooper, Secretary of State for War, of January 1936, 'The Importance of Anglo-Japanese Friendship'. This argued that British interests, particularly in Singapore, were being threatened by Japanese economic penetration, but that punitive steps would only push the Japanese military government towards Germany:

It would seem a reasonable precaution, therefore, to try, by every means and even at some cost, to safeguard, by an amicable agreement with Japan, interests which we are unable to protect by military measures.<sup>1</sup>

The German situation was worsened by increasing militarisation, heralded by the occupation of the Rhineland on 7 March 1936, while Italian aggression was evident in Northern Africa. With France moving closer to the Soviet Union, the polarisation of European politics that found a contemporary symbolism in the Spanish Civil War in the summer of 1936 was becoming more obvious. British interests were dictated by the need to promote stability and friendship with the strong, central powers, and the examples of diplomatic intervention and involvement in sport were symptomatic of this. The two major examples were based around the Olympic Games, and they provide microcosms of appeasement at work: the Foreign Office's positive

attitude towards the Berlin Olympics of 1936, despite the pressures for a boycott; and their pressure on the BOA and the City of London to withdraw their application for the 1940 Games in favour of Tokyo. While these affairs were often overlapping chronologically, they will be dealt with separately in order to show the development of policy.

## **1. The 1936 Olympic Games, Garmisch-Partenkirchen and Berlin**

The 1936 Olympics has been one of the most popular areas of study for historians of sport and politics, as it provides the prime example of the overt state employment of supposedly neutral sport for political and propagandist purposes. Richard Mandell, writing soon after the political traumas of repressive policing and Black Power activity at the Mexico City Olympics of 1968, used the Berlin example as a focus for his hopes that 'international sportsmen' would 'labor to remove some of the patriotic rites from the modern Olympics':

Anthems, flags, point systems, ranked victory platforms, medals... have played roles that are more dangerous than they are irrelevant. The world would be better off... if the Olympics centred on the athletes and the sporting contests rather than on collectives that have only the weakest ties with sport's outstanding personages and teams.<sup>2</sup>

The controversial 1980 Moscow Olympics also prompted revisions and reconstructions of Berlin, particularly amongst journalists. Duff Hart-Davis of the *Sunday Telegraph* wrote his history of the 1936 Olympics as something of an anti-Soviet polemic informed by the propagandist nature of the Moscow Games;<sup>3</sup> Edward Marston in the *Spectator*



compared the two Olympiads as 'the continuation of politics by other means';<sup>4</sup> Hugh Greene asked in the *Daily Telegraph* 'Would an Olympics ban have stopped Hitler?';<sup>5</sup> while Christopher Booker of the *Daily Mail* recounted in his Moscow journal how, at the height of the boycott debate in Britain, he visited his newspaper's library and 'read the yellowing cuttings from 1936 - and was fascinated to find an immediate echo.'<sup>6</sup> The structure of such works is also telling, with the immediate identification of the Games with their political context, not their sporting nature: *Hitler's Games*, *The Nazi Olympics*, and Judith Holmes' *Blaze of Glory for Hitler's Reich*.<sup>7</sup>

The propagandist nature of these Olympics cannot be doubted. The 1936 Olympics were awarded to republican Berlin in 1932, to be held twenty years after the that city's scheduled 1916 Games, which had been cancelled because of the war; but their organisation was appropriated by the Nazi Government soon after it came to power. Hitler pledged his support in March 1933, when he met Theodor Lewald of the Berlin Organising Committee and Mayor Sahm of Berlin,<sup>8</sup> an act which caused an immediate controversy amongst sporting administrators and sportspersons, particularly in the USA. In June, the IOC requested the German Olympic Committee to give assurances that they would not exercise any political, racial, or religious bias in their selection and treatment of competitors. Despite the insistence of the American Olympic Committee's (AOC) President Avery Brundage that a boycott was ill-advised and that the USA should participate, the US Amateur Athletic Union passed a motion condemning Nazi sports policy towards Jewish athletes in November 1933.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, with the various vested interests of the German

Government wishing to mount a successful propaganda exhibition, the Olympic movement wishing to maintain the neutrality of sport, and left wing and Jewish pressure groups calling for a boycott, the 1936 Olympics became 'the prize in a tug of war for control'.<sup>10</sup>

The signs of a Nazi appropriation of the Games continued through 1934. In January, the Foreign Office received official invitations to the Winter and Summer Games from Dr. Leopold von Hoesch, the German Ambassador in London, in terms that left little doubt as to the centralisation of German control:.

The German Government regard the Olympic Games as one of the most important organisations to lead to reciprocal understanding amongst the youth of all countries and to evoke the feeling of reciprocal regard. They have, therefore, made it their task to promote with all their resources the carrying through of the Games.<sup>11</sup>

The subsequent Foreign Office action of copying this invitation to Berlin and trying to find precedents on how to reply to an Olympic invitation revealed that the documentation for Los Angeles had not been kept, but no comment was made on the Nazi Government's structural involvement with this sports event. The Foreign Office was made aware of the extraordinary political conditions surrounding the Berlin Games in May 1934, when the IOC met in Athens for its 31st Assembly and heard the German pledges that there would be no prejudice against competitors on racial grounds. This was duly reported to the Foreign Office by Sydney Waterlow, British Envoy in Athens, along with a note that the British and US members of the IOC

would 'refuse to sanction the participation of their respective teams' if such guarantees were not forthcoming.<sup>12</sup> The German pledges given were seen as valid by Brundage, and formed the basis of his attack on the boycott movement in his country, although the non-selection of various Jewish sportspersons and the tokenist inclusion of fencer Helen Meyer and high-jumper Gretel Bergmann would suggest the cosmetic nature of such pledges.<sup>13</sup> The TUC's general goods and services boycott was being promoted at this stage, along with a British campaign against participation, but the Foreign Office maintained its non-interventionist line to ensure British presence at Berlin.

This view was expressed in March 1935, when the German Organising Committee asked the Foreign Office if it would be sending an attaché for the duration of the Games. Harry Capewell of the Library minuted: 'We have consistently declined to have anything whatever to do with the Games officially'.<sup>14</sup> His colleague Richard Bloore was more thorough:

For years past we have carefully refrained from any action which might give rise to a suggestion of official support to or connexion with these Games. We have therefore studiously avoided communicating with the British Committee. This attitude we wish to maintain.<sup>15</sup>

The Berlin Embassy was duly asked to discourage the idea of governmental involvement. This move was made as the political controversy around the Olympics was developing. In February, the Foreign Office had received a letter from the Joint Foreign Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association, urging the Government to act on the plight of German

Jewry.<sup>16</sup> While this letter was merely acknowledged, reports of ill-treatment of Jews continued to come from Phipps. The Foreign Office's general response to the problem at this stage can perhaps be summarised in the ascerbic and cynical minute on one report by Creswell of the Central Department: 'The plate-glass industry must be having a boom.'<sup>17</sup>

Specific pressure for an Olympic boycott was also placed upon the BOA in May when William Ebor, the Archbishop of York, wrote:

We have now an opportunity to achieve something of greater value than any victory in the Olympic Games, victory for justice and humanity. We can achieve, what others have failed to achieve, some mitigation and perhaps a complete cessation of the present persecution in Germany.<sup>18</sup>

The Foreign Office received a copy of this letter, sent to it by the Yacht Racing Association,<sup>19</sup> while Ebor also wrote a polite letter to Hitler urging him to release all religious and racial prisoners (though not, interestingly, political) so that the Olympics could be held in a friendly atmosphere conducive to international reconciliation. The Foreign Office merely reacted by re-stating its non-involvement: Stephen Gaselee, Head of the Library, noted their 'strict rule of abstention from any official intervention in any matter connected with the Olympic Games'.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the BOA took two months to answer Ebor with a letter deferring any political responsibility based on the German assurances of 1934.<sup>21</sup>

A more intelligent and less emotive appeal for the BOA to use the Olympics as an attempt to liberalise Hitler came from the Britain's 100 metre gold medallist at the 1924 Olympics, the retired Jewish athlete

Harold Abrahams. He wrote to Evan Hunter urging that the BOA act as Ebor proposed, expressing his belief that the Olympics would give the Nazi Government a chance to relax some of its radical programme without appearing to climb down, thus giving the 'liberal elements in Germany' a chance to re-assert themselves. Abrahams is worth quoting at length for his insight on the role of sport:

I know full well that it is said that the Olympic Games should keep clear of politics, but if I rightly understand the fundamental principles which underlie our enthusiasm for international sport, it is that we have here a means of emphasising the similarities between nations, and we are, I think, shutting our eyes to reality, if we believe that the mere organisation and support of such institutions as the Olympic Games, constitutes the end of our duty in this matter. Quite legitimately the common bond of sport can be used to ameliorate international relationships, and unless all our profession that the Olympic Games are a good thing is so much eyewash, a body such as the British Olympic Association can legitimately regard it as within its provinces to point out that racial and religious prejudices such as exist in Germany to-day tends to undermine the good which sport hopes to achieve.<sup>22</sup>

Unfortunately, the BOA's response to this letter is not on file.

The Foreign Office's gradual realisation that a threatened boycott could have a liberalising influence on Nazi policies can be seen by the end of 1935. In August, Creswell reacted to the news of anti-Nazi feelings in the USA with a minute on the forthcoming Olympics,

particularly how various countries were becoming 'chary of sending representatives to Berlin for what turn [*sic*] into a predominantly Nazi beanfeast';<sup>23</sup> while in November, and co-inciding with the debate over the England v Germany football match, Phipps warned from Berlin that Hitler was 'beginning to regard political questions very much from the angle of their effect on the Games'.<sup>24</sup> Ralph Wigram, Head of the Central Department, expressed his wish that this might be used against the Germans through private channels, as press coverage would weaken its potency,<sup>25</sup> while Assistant Under Secretary of State Orme Sargent showed himself adept at Goebbels'-style doublethink in his minute on the news:

We certainly ought to see if we can't use this as a lever.

Perhaps the Central and News Departments will consult together. Whatever is done ought to emanate spontaneously from the Olympic Games authorities in this country.<sup>26</sup>

Some change of heart was evident a few days later, when Phipps wrote with more advice that the chance of a boycott frightened Hitler, 'who hopes to utilize the games for world wide propaganda. A boycott would be disastrous financially now that German preparations are so far advanced and would be a severe blow to Hitler's prestige.'<sup>27</sup> Despite such advice from their representative in Berlin, the Foreign Office still pursued a line of non-involvement. John Perowne of the Central Department noted, in response to Phipps' information, 'we are always *most* careful to have nothing to do *officially* with the Olympic Games wherever they may be held' [emphasis in original], and expressed his fear of repercussions 'if it became known publicly that we had been trying to force the British Olympic Committee in an anti-

German sense.' He went on to point out the inconsistency of "'damping down" adverse comment' on the football match while attempting to 'stir up hate abt [sic] the Olympic Games', and made the familiar comment that British opposition towards Nazi Jewish policies could serve to worsen the Jews' position.<sup>28</sup> The only positive comment came from Wigram, who suggested bluffing the German Embassy by mentioning 'the application of the Nuremburg Laws to British subjects' and stating 'that it seemed a pity to do this sort of thing when the Olympic games were coming on', but that such actions should be kept from the press or 'we shall have all the Jews in London round - and I don't think we want that.'<sup>29</sup> These attitudes must be seen in the fuller context of the political need to placate Germany, summed up so well in the correspondence between Vansittart and Hankey earlier in the year. Hankey had urged that 'we really must cast suspicion from our minds. We must avoid anything calculated to hurt or wound, and try and make a fresh start',<sup>30</sup> to which Vansittart responded on behalf of the Foreign Office that 'we must try every chance... and do our best to make unpromising chances more solid if possible.'<sup>31</sup>

As has been seen, the Home Office and Foreign Office acted, albeit without full co-ordination, to facilitate the smooth running of the football match in December, referred to by Hart-Davis as an Olympic 'test case'.<sup>32</sup> The Government's non-provocative stance towards Germany continued into the Olympic year. Despite another despatch from Phipps on the continuing politicisation of German sport as indicated by a Nazi book, *Deutschkunde über Volk, Staat, Liebesbünden*, of which he noted that the 'Trade Union leaders, had they been in possession of this book when they made their protest

against the recent Anglo-German football match, would have had a stronger case',<sup>33</sup> no steps were taken to boycott Berlin, or to use the threat of a boycott as a political lever. Calls for a boycott of the Games continued in Britain into 1936, most notably in Citrine's pamphlet, *Under the Heel of Hitler*.<sup>34</sup> In January, the British Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi Council circularised all sports organisations urging them that they were 'falling below their high tradition of sportsmanship unless they offer a protest'.<sup>35</sup> The arrival of this letter, which was marginalised as 'propaganda'<sup>36</sup> by Perowne, occurred in the same week as the news from Donald St. Clair Gainer, the British Consul-General in Munich, that anti-Jewish placards were being removed from view in Garmisch-Partenkirchen for the duration of the Winter Olympics:

It is anticipated that when the Olympic Games are over and the visitors have been able to satisfy themselves that the stories about Jew-baiting in the foreign press are grossly exaggerated or entirely untrue, the anti-Jewish notices will be replaced.<sup>37</sup>

Valentine Lawford noted that 'This ought to be given the publicity it deserves',<sup>38</sup> but no attempt was made to interfere with the British preparations for the Winter Olympics.

These took place at Garmisch-Partenkirchen between 6 and 16 February, and a team of 39 Britons participated, winning the ice hockey in controversial style by fielding two Canadians who were officially banned by the International Ice Hockey Federation.<sup>39</sup> The only surviving documentation on Foreign Office files regarding the conduct of these Games is a report from Phipps to Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden on the bad reception given to the US team and the



complaints by US journalists present on reporting restrictions. Once again, Phipps used the opportunity of the despatch home on the Olympics to press the point on Nazi state involvement, stressing here that

the German Government attach enormous importance to the Olympic Games from the point of view of propaganda and hope to be able to take the opportunity of impressing foreign countries with the capacity and solidity of the Nazi régime.<sup>40</sup>

Whitehall continued to avoid involvement in this matter, although the Foreign Office was seen to be encouraging the Olympics in February when Stanley Baldwin was asked to attend a BOA dinner at which the German Ambassador was a guest. The Foreign Office became involved when Tom Dugdale MP requested Eden to advise the Prime Minister to attend the pre-Olympic meal in May.<sup>41</sup> The question of whether acceptance would signify support of Germany was raised, as was that of whether it would indicate governmental blessing of the Olympic movement. Lawford answered the latter problem in his minute of 5 March, noting that 'it is, I understand, the habit of HMG to make clear that they have no connexion with, and no responsibility for, the Committee and its works, by accepting the invitation the Prime Minister will not be going against this.'<sup>42</sup> Despite Dugdale's assurance that Baldwin would be the guest of the BOA, and not of the German Government,<sup>43</sup> the re-occupation of the Rhineland in March forced Robin Hankey to warn Baldwin against attendance due to 'the present crisis.'<sup>44</sup>

The Rhineland crisis also entered into Foreign Office and Admiralty decisions on whether to send a British warship to Kiel for the Olympic Regatta, which was debated in March. On 10 March Phillips of the Admiralty asked Vansittart whether such attendance was 'politically desirable',<sup>45</sup> and while the Central Department attempted to defer a decision until the Rhineland dispute was settled, a quick response was needed as other countries were waiting on Britain for a lead. Wigram came down in favour of sending a destroyer, but pointed to the inconsistency of such involvement with the Foreign Office's public line on the Games: 'It should be remembered that to those who objected to our participation in the Olympic Games, we have said that the matter was nothing to do with the Govt.'<sup>46</sup> But the obvious political value of normal sports contacts swung the Foreign Office's decision, although Viscount Cranborne, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, <sup>f</sup>gaced this fact with obvious regret:

If we are trying to initiate negotiations for an agreement with Germany on equal terms, I hardly see how we can refuse to treat them like everyone else, though I must confess I don't feel very enthusiastic about boosting their Olympic Games.<sup>47</sup>

The Admiralty was duly given Eden's approval to send a ship in a letter of 11 May.<sup>48</sup>

Before this issue was raised again in June, the Foreign Office was involved in the Olympics in other ways, most notably in response to a question from the Spanish Embassy. In April, the Counsellor of the Spanish Embassy, Pedro Conde, asked Horace Seymour if a British team was going to Berlin, and, if one was, whether it was privately or

publicly sponsored.<sup>49</sup> The Foreign Office's reply clearly stated their public stand on the issue. Seymour referred him to the BOA, stating that the 'question of participation is left entirely in the hands of the above Association, a private organisation with whom His Majesty's Government have no connexion, and there is no question of any official patronage or assistance (financial or otherwise) being given to the British teams participating.'<sup>50</sup> The total dismissal of 'patronage or assistance' here is worth noting, particularly as Capewell had written in the minutes leading to this reply that the Government was involved when serving members of the armed forces were selected:<sup>51</sup> and while this admission of a structural involvement was an advance on the usual repetition of the non-involvement phrase, its omission from Seymour's reply shows the Foreign Office as being keen to play down any question of state involvement when there was so much controversy over Berlin.

It is also shown to be relatively shallow when compared with Vansittart's subsequent actions. When the Foreign Office was informed by Phipps in May that the French left was pressurising its government into a boycott, which would 'mean the end of any hope of agreement between France and Germany' a move which was probably influenced by the Soviet Union,<sup>52</sup> Vansittart attempted to discourage the French Ambassador from letting his government take such a move.<sup>53</sup> So despite Lawford's minute that 'HMG. are right to have no official connexion whatever with the Olympic Games. They lend themselves to every possible kind of propaganda',<sup>54</sup> the highly placed Permanent Under Secretary was seen in May to be involving himself in the smooth running of the Berlin Olympics to facilitate European stability.

To Vansittart, who used the occasion of the Olympics to visit Berlin for informal talks with key political figures, the Games were clearly one of the 'chances' he had referred to in his correspondence with Hankey in the previous year. With the Foreign Office pursuing such diplomatic advantage around the Olympics, and the sporting press urging Britain to be represented as the 'sporting spirit of this country' should be above political dogma,<sup>55</sup> there is no surprise that the National Workers' Sports Association's (NWSA) late motion for a boycott came to nothing.

Consequently, the question of sending a warship to Kiel was revived in June not in terms of whether one should go, but on the quality of any attendant British naval rowing team. Phillips wrote to Vansittart on 4 June 1936, asking for a definite decision so that the men would have time to train if necessary,<sup>56</sup> to which Lawford's minute provides a useful insight to Foreign Office attitudes. Claiming that they had already approved of a ship paying 'an informal visit to Kiel on the occasion of the *Olympic* sailing races' [emphasis in original], he entered the usual escape clause in parenthesis that '(H.M. Government are not, of course, interested officially in the Olympic Games.)', before going on to address the problem of the team being ready to compete:

Quite enough harm is done already by sending abroad indifferent athletic teams who are trounced by teams representing countries like Belgium and Austria; and if we are to be represented at all at this regatta we ought at least to be well represented.

But the political atmosphere since the Rhineland crisis entered into his reasoning; and he concluded that if the Admiralty were indifferent about sending a team, the fact that 'it is very doubtful whether there is any longer anything to be gained by flattering or cajoling the Germans in order to persuade them that we intend to treat them on a basis of equality'<sup>57</sup> militated against any team going. The matter was referred back to the Admiralty with the recommendation that a ship should go, and that a team could be sent if the Admiralty so desired. The whole question, though unsettled, demonstrates that Germany was being treated normally. The presence of warships at Olympic regattas had been encouraged since Le Havre in 1924 at least, and was one of the most obvious public indications of the community of interests that the Olympic movement had with state structures. What is of note here is that the presence of a British warship in an informal meeting with German counterparts underlined emphatically the destruction of Versailles that the previous year's Naval Pact had helped to engender, and so gave another degree of legitimacy to German re-armament.

The Olympics did not start until 1 August, and throughout June and July the Foreign Office continued to come under pressure from various quarters to act against British presence. An intelligent plea for a boycott came from Dr A. Yahuda, a former Professor of Hebrew in Germany now in exile, who sent a memorandum to Rowland Kenney of the News Department, and followed it up with a meeting. The low priority of this matter can be guessed at from the timing: the memorandum was dated 15 April, but the interview did not take place until 19 June. Yahuda stressed that the suspension of Nazi radicalism currently being witnessed, the Olympic Pause, was based purely on the

need for international respectability in the Olympic year, and that a boycott could genuinely liberalise the Nazi Government. He claimed that a boycott, after all the central promotion of the Games, would damage Hitler's credibility at home; and that by discouraging British sportspersons and tourists from going to Berlin, the government could prevent the Nazis from 'inculcating their poison into thousands of Englishmen to the detriment of this country.'<sup>58</sup> Kenney seemed impressed by the argument, but Wigram's minute of 'Too late too late'<sup>59</sup> sums up the Foreign Office's response.

Pressure also came in Parliament, where Liberal MP Geoffrey Mander asked Cranborne on 16 July whether Eden had 'received any assurance from the German Government that they do not propose to make use of the occasion of the Olympic games ... for the purpose of political propaganda, and as implying recognition of and support for the Nazi régime'. Cranborne replied negatively,<sup>60</sup> but the same question was asked of Eden the following week. Being given another 'No, Sir', Mander went on to ask for 'some security that the persecution of the Jews will not immediately commence after the Olympic Games are over'. Eden avoided the question, being supported by Lieutenant-Colonel Moore's question: 'Does my right hon. Friend view with disfavour these impertinent pin-pricks against a friendly nation?'<sup>61</sup>

This small Parliamentary debate was followed by the *Manchester Guardian's* summary of a confidential circular sent from Walther Darré, German Minister of Food and Agriculture, to local officials in rural areas on how to behave during the Olympic period. As well as urging and sponsoring cosmetic improvements, such as the clearing of

rubbish and the repainting of houses on main roads, a couple of overtly political aspects were raised. Working parties from prisons and concentration camps were to be kept away from all roadsides from 1 July until 15 September; and, with regard to Jewish policy, it was deemed

necessary to make special mention of the fact that there may be Jews amongst the foreigners... Possible Jews must therefore be treated just as politely as Aryan guests. In no case must Jewish 'provocateurs' get a chance of creating incidents which will add grist to the mills of hostile propagandists abroad. For this reason all illuminated signs... must be removed during the period in question. The fundamental attitude of the German people towards Judaism remains unchanged.<sup>62</sup>

A copy of this cutting was kept on Foreign Office files, but no minutes were appended to it. The 'illuminated signs' in question were the anti-Semitic notices placed in numerous towns and villages bearing such legends as 'No Jews or Dogs Here', 'The Road to Palestine does not lead through this Place', and, at dangerous bends on roads, 'Jews, 75 miles per hour'.<sup>63</sup>

One final boycott plea that reached the Foreign Office before the start of the Games was that from an anonymous source, which was sent to the heads of all foreign missions in Berlin in July. For Britain, it urged the Embassy to inform the BOA that high jumper Grete Bergmann had been excluded from the German team due to her Jewish origins, despite the fact that she had cleared better heights than those Germans selected. Like fencer Helene Meyer, Bergmann had originally

been picked as part of an obviously tokenist German policy, and her late exclusion raised doubts about the sincerity with which the organisers had pledged for a non-racial Olympics. But the official British response indicates the desire to defuse any anti-Nazi debate, and the Berlin Chancery sent its copy of the letter to the Central Department 'as it seems likely the Press in England will get hold of it and use it for their own purposes.'<sup>64</sup> In the event, the exclusion probably worked against Germany, as gold medallist Ibolya Csák of Hungary went under Bergmann's best.<sup>65</sup>

Against the background of these various boycott calls, the attitude of the Foreign Office indicates that the smooth running of the Berlin Olympics was in its interests, and despite the few comments on the propagandist nature of the event, nothing was done to disrupt the 'Nazi beanfeast' when opportunities arose: rather, the opposite was done. Chancery's attempt to defuse the Bergmann controversy, the lack of response to Yahuda, and the refusal to link the news of the Olympic Pause with Mander's parliamentary question can all be seen as attempts to undermine any adverse criticism of Berlin. Furthermore, some efforts were made to assist the successful operation of the Games. The warship incident has already been noted, and of equal interest is the Foreign Office's dispatch of a book of flags from the Colonial Office's Library when requested from Berlin for the heraldic designs of the Dominions.<sup>66</sup> Also important in this context were the visits made to Berlin by various leading British public figures, including Unionist MP Henry Channon, who recorded that the 'new régime, particularly Goering, are masters of the art of party giving.'<sup>67</sup> Vansittart used the occasion of the Games and his family ties with Phipps to go to Berlin



'in order to dispel the absurd but widely held idea in Germany that he is possessed by a blind and unreasoning hatred of that country.'<sup>68</sup> Again, Vansittart's desire to make the best of any chances of improving Anglo-German relations can be seen. He met, among others, Goering, Goebbels, Hess, Frick, von Ribbentrop, and Hitler to discuss the chance of a five-power conference for a Western Locarno.<sup>69</sup> He concluded that he had 'succeeded in largely removing the idea that the British Foreign Office was peopled with professional anti-Germans.'<sup>70</sup>

The successful passage of the Olympics undoubtedly helped to create the desired impression of Nazi respectability and efficiency, and despite Mandell's claim that the Games were 'a vast razzle-dazzle that blurred the outlines of a growing threat to Western civilization',<sup>71</sup> the Olympics worked in the Foreign Office's favour. The friendly relations between Britain and Germany that were so central to contemporary foreign policy requirements were promoted, while the unofficial nature of such promotion was stressed by all concerned, including the BOA. The familiar abstention from all political judgement was forthcoming in the BOA's official report, interestingly edited by Harold Abrahams, who went to Berlin as a BOA Federation Delegate and a BBC commentator. Political problems were only referred to in so far as 'the international situation'<sup>72</sup> was blamed for hindering the BOA's funding appeals, while Lord Burghley stressed the sporting importance of the event by criticising those who claimed that Britain's slip to tenth place indicated a loss of prestige: 'It must be remembered that in the Olympic Games there are no "points" and winning country... The Council is satisfied that the representatives

which Great Britain sent to Berlin worthily maintained the highest Olympic ideals and their country's honour.'<sup>73</sup> How far this honour was compatible with the Nazi control of the Olympics, in which the Organising Committee's Executive Committee included Walter Funk of the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, and representatives of the Army, police, and Ministry of the Interior,<sup>74</sup> has been a frequent discussion point amongst the historians of this event. Of less ephemeral concern is the fact that the Foreign Office, knowing the extent of Nazi control over sport and the purely cosmetic changes made to certain Nazi policies that were offensive to many Britons, used the Olympic Games for the end of normalising relations in the year of the Rhineland crisis and the start of the Spanish Civil War. Vansittart and Eden may not have agreed with Hitler's assertion that sport 'helps to strengthen the bonds of peace between the nations':<sup>75</sup> but the mass cultural platform of the Games gave the National Government a chance to encourage the friendly relations that were necessary.

## **2. The Debate over the 1940 Olympics**

The question of the location of the abortive 1940 Olympics provides an excellent example of direct Foreign Office intervention in sport in pursuit of a political goal. The sites were chosen in 1936, with the winter and summer Games being awarded to the two Japanese cities of Sapporo and Tokyo respectively. Such a choice was indicative of the expanding scope and appeal of Olympism, as it was the first time that an Asian country had been chosen. However, in 1938, political problems raised by Japan's war in China led to the abandonment of the

plans for Tokyo, and the IOC awarded the 1940 Games to Helsinki and St. Moritz.<sup>76</sup> The Games were ultimately cancelled altogether due to the war, as were those of 1944 which had been awarded to London. But behind the official Olympic version of events Foreign Office documentation reveals that the National Government pressurised the BOA into withdrawing London's application for 1940, in order to help smooth strained relations with Japan.

The matter first came to the attention of the Foreign Office in December 1934, when British Ambassador Sir Eric Drummond wrote from Rome on how Italy and Japan were deciding which one of their capitals should apply to host the 1940 Olympics.<sup>77</sup> This was filed with no written comment. In February 1935 Drummond added that Rome had agreed to stand down in favour of Tokyo for 1940 if it could have 1944.<sup>78</sup> Six days later, the first request for Foreign Office involvement came when Sir Robert Clive, British Ambassador to Japan, wrote with the news that the Mayor of Tokyo had announced that he wanted Britain to support his city's application.<sup>79</sup> This was immediately followed by a more detailed plea for British support, in which Clive noted that Japan had always supported other Olympic Games, that the Games had never been held in Asia, and that 1940 would also be the 2,600th Anniversary of the ruling Japanese dynasty, so the Olympics could be promoted as part of the royal celebrations.<sup>80</sup> At this stage, the Foreign Office was typically dismissive, as seen in Capewell minute:

It is well that we keep clear of official intervention in the matter of arrangements for these games. There is no question of H.M.G. doing anything in the way of securing British support for the proposal to hold the 1940 Games in

Tokyo; it is entirely a matter for the British Olympic Games Committee to do whatever they think best.<sup>81</sup>

There was thus no consideration of helping Tokyo's bid at this stage. This was despite the hope it offered for promoting pro-British feelings in Japan, which Clive had reported as being generated by a commercial visit which had 'helped the Japanese a little to throw off their isolation complex' and had 'contributed to restore confidence and good-will in Anglo-Japanese relations and that is essential for our trade as well as for our general political interests in the Far East.'<sup>82</sup>

The internal realisation of the need for such friendship with Japan developed in the spring of 1935, when Sir Warren Fisher, Permanent Under Secretary at the Treasury, urging Vansittart to promote a positive line at the Foreign Office. He stressed 'the vital necessity for a revision by your Department of its attitude towards Japan':

[It] is vital, if the co-operative activities of the Treasury are to produce their full effect, that the Foreign Office for its part should not frustrate or nullify those preparations by a policy resulting in the permanent antagonisation of Japan.<sup>83</sup>

He re-iterated this point five days later, noting that 'care and patience and wisdom on our part might have a good effect on our relations with Japan.'<sup>84</sup> However, the application of such thoughts with regard to the Olympic question had not been pursued by July, when Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin received a personal letter from Count Soyeshima of Japan asking for Britain to support officially Tokyo's bid. Baldwin's secretary Neville Butler forwarded the letter to the Foreign Office for guidance,<sup>85</sup> which Capewell urged should be on the familiar lines that no action should be taken: 'We consistently decline to have anything

whatever to do with these Olympic Games officially, & the eternal bickering which goes on over them justifies this attitude.' He added:

I think the reply might be that H.M.G. do not take any official part in matters affecting the organisation of these Games & that the matter is entirely in the hands of the British National Committee.<sup>86</sup>

The matter lay dormant until January 1936, when Clive wrote that the Olympics in Tokyo in 1940 might facilitate a friendlier atmosphere from Japan. He referred to the royal celebrations of *Jimmu Tenno* already planned, and argued that

Japan cannot have both a successful celebration in 1940 and a warlike atmosphere. Although it may seem unimportant I believe it may contribute to peace in the Far East to encourage the idea of olympic games being held in Japan in 1940.<sup>87</sup>

This appeal evidently had the desired effect at the Foreign Office, and the tone of the discussion was set by Eden's comment pencilled in the margin of this telegram, 'Then, for heaven's sake, let us encourage it. I could even run in the mile myself!!'<sup>88</sup> The minutes induced by this suggestion are important, not least for the way in which they show how the ongoing debate over the Berlin Olympics was influencing Foreign Office staff, previously cynical of the role of sport, into realising that the symbolic status and respectability conferred by the Olympics on their hosts could be used as a lever to ensure stability and respectability. James Thyne Henderson of the Far Eastern Department, for example, noted that a possible boycott of Tokyo in 1940 might help

to liberalise Japan.<sup>89</sup> His colleague Alvary Gascoigne agreed with Clive's view, noting how 'pathetically anxious' Japan was to attract international meetings as an 'antidote to isolation', and that a channel for intervention in the Olympics did exist: 'if we are to do anything I suppose that some sort of notification could be made to the British Group on the Games Committee', the right idea with the wrong terminology.<sup>90</sup> Henry Maxse noted that Germany looked set to combine a military build-up with a successful Olympiad, but still saw some advantage in supporting Tokyo:

It would also I think be a gesture that would be much appreciated in Japan were it possible for this country's representatives to propose that the Games should be held in Tokyo in 1940. Given the existing good relations between Japan & Germany it is possible that the German representatives will propose it in any case - but that might be an opportunity for another Anglo-German agreement (& one less exacerbating to some of our friends than, say, the Naval one!).

He concluded, 'In short I see no disadvantage & some possible gain in following up the Ambassadors [*sic*] hint.'<sup>91</sup> The Head of the Department, Charles Orde, concurred with the principle, stating that 'we should communicate with the British Olympic Committee accordingly, semi-officially',<sup>92</sup> although he was wary of the Foreign Office taking the full initiative.<sup>93</sup> Ultimate blessing for the idea came from Vansittart, who thought the idea of advising the BOA a good one but considered the time not right to declare open support,<sup>94</sup> with which Eden agreed,<sup>95</sup> as did Parliamentary Under Secretary Earl Stanhope:

I would not mind our taking the initiative *at the right moment*. In other words I would not reward Japan now when she has been naughty both in N. China & at the Naval Conference, & I would be inclined to drop her a hint that if she wants the Olympic games she must pay for them by good behaviour in the interval [emphasis in original].<sup>96</sup>

This debate co-incided with the Chief of Imperial General Staff's Cabinet memorandum, 'The Importance of Anglo-Japanese Friendship', which concluded its bleak assessment of Far Eastern politics with the urge to 'seize the opportunity' to reach an agreement with Japan.<sup>97</sup> This was discussed at Cabinet on 29 January, at which Sir Bolton Eyres-Monsell, First Lord of the Admiralty, stressed the need to bring Japan into a naval agreement in order to forestall any closer military links between Germany and Japan. Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden approved the need for 'good relations with Japan', but noted that it 'was easier to desire them, however, than to find in current events a good opportunity for promoting them in the general interest.' It was also claimed here that Japan posed a bigger threat to British interests than Germany.<sup>98</sup> The location of the 1940 Olympics soon came to be seen as a useful opportunity for appeasement in the Far East, but not before some urgent prompting by Clive. His next communication on the subject came in April 1936, when he stressed that hosting the Games would help to rid Japan of 'the bogey of isolation', but this was deferred by a disinterested Foreign Office.<sup>99</sup> However, the issue was forced when the BOA and the City of London declared an interest in applying to host the Games.

The Foreign Office's first knowledge of this came in June, when Cyril Gamon, the Lord Mayor of London's Private Secretary, contacted the Office asking for advice on whether to comply with the BOA's wish.<sup>100</sup> This was dealt with by the Library in a manner that suggests a lack of communication with the Far Eastern Department. Arthur Boniface of the Library minuted that, despite the traditional policy of non-involvement with the Olympics, 'I take it that it would not be a matter of indifference to us if there were any real prospect of the 1940 Games being held in this country.'<sup>101</sup> Gaselee added that the 'Olympic Games always bring more dissension in their train than international amity', but that: 'On the other hand, a meeting in England would bring a good deal of tourists' money into the country.'<sup>102</sup> Consequently, the Library approved the Lord Mayor's letter of application to IOC President Count Henri Baillet-Latour,<sup>103</sup> with Boniface suggesting that, if the letter was being 'delivered through Herr Hitler' as it was rumoured, then it would be 'as well to make it clear that, at this stage, H.M.Govt. are in no way concerned with the proposal to hold the games in London.'<sup>104</sup> The London application gained momentum on 22 June, when the BOA formally applied to the IOC.<sup>105</sup> The Library Department came behind the effort on 14 July, when Gaselee contacted Clive to tell him of London's application and remind him of the private status of the BOA.<sup>106</sup> Thus, despite the interest with which the Far Eastern Department had approached the prospect of using the Olympic Games as a diplomatic tool to improve Anglo-Japanese relations in the context of Eden's desire for opportunity, another branch of the Foreign Office showed its lack of



co-ordination with such high policy by supporting London's application in the interests of promoting tourism.

But the importance of the need to placate Japan was still championed by some at the Foreign Office, and the intervention of Vansittart and Edward Crowe, Comptroller-General of the Department of Overseas Trade, kept the idea afloat. On 8 July, Crowe contacted Vansittart's Private Secretary, Clifford Norton, over the view that had been expressed by Noel Curtis-Bennett that the Government should keep out of the Olympics. He pointed out that 'as far as Japan is concerned it is a matter of Great Britain as a whole and not of the Organising Committee' that was coming between Tokyo and the Olympics.<sup>107</sup> On the same day, Vansittart wrote a crucial minute on the matter. He began by re-iterating the familiar view that the Foreign Office had 'hitherto shared' the BOA's view that the Olympics should not be a 'political matter', but went on:

It is quite true that in principle it is better for Governments not to intervene, but I feel that it is a matter for serious consideration whether in view of Japanese sensitiveness, their very great desire to have the Games held in Tokyo in 1940 and the difficulties that we are having and are likely to have with Japan in the Far East, His Majesty's Government should not on this occasion intervene and suggest to the British Committee that they should make a graceful gesture and withdraw in favour of Japan. Sir Edward Crowe tells me... in Japan itself it will be definitely taken as a snub if the vote goes in favour of London.

He concluded with the observation that Eden, while being against intervention, had noted that the Olympics tended to 'act as a slight deterrent to political moves liable to upset the feelings of other nations', an obvious reference to the German Olympic Pause.<sup>108</sup>

At this stage, the problem became a Cabinet matter, as it was raised by Viscount Halifax, Lord Privy Seal, on 9 July. Halifax pointed out that the 'British Committee' was set to propose London in direct competition with Tokyo, and that the view that this was not a political matter had been overtaken by events. He observed that 'the Japanese were anxious that the Games should be held in Japan, and it was thought that they would resent a proposal that they be held in this country.' Eden was 'inclined to the view that for the British to withhold their proposal might be a useful gesture towards the Japanese - though their behaviour recently hardly perhaps entitled them to such a gesture.' He then suggested, 'with a view to doing something to improve relations', that 'it might be a good plan to give a hint to the British Committee not to press the matter.' With the obvious value of such a hint to the stability of British interests, the discussion then focused upon other reasons why it was 'not altogether desirable' for the Olympic Games to be held in London: these were informed not only by contemporary events in Berlin, but also by the protest campaign raised against the England v Germany football match of the previous December. Cabinet was against the Olympics

partly because awkward incidents were apt to arise, and partly because the British people, whose attitude (unlike the Germans) was not under Government control, might make

demonstrations against the athletes of certain nations. There was, perhaps, even an element of danger in the proposal.

It was therefore agreed that Halifax should 'take appropriate steps to give the British Committee a hint not to put forward the proposal for holding the Olympic Games in London.'<sup>109</sup>

On the same day as this Cabinet meeting, further evidence that the traditional non-interventionist line was being mitigated by circumstance was contained in a letter from Geoffrey Fry of Downing Street, who wrote to Eden's Assistant Private Secretary, Frederick Hoyer Millar, for advice on whether Baldwin should meet Count Soyeshima. He noted that the question of the 1940 Olympics was 'presumably not one in which the Government is concerned', but stressed the Games' political importance by sarcastically commenting on how 'these athletic affairs are, I suppose, becoming so important as to deserve some consideration and one day a defeat and a bit of barracking may precipitate a world war.'<sup>110</sup> Before Hoyer Millar could reply, a greater urgency was injected to the proceedings when, on 10 July, Clive telegraphed from Tokyo on the prospect of London applying for the Games:

I desire to state emphatically that effect in Japan will be deplorable. We have enough matters in dispute already without presenting the Japanese with a grievance which they will not be likely to forget and which may injuriously affect Anglo-Japanese relations out of all proportion to the importance of the matter.<sup>111</sup>

The whole question thus increased in priority, particularly with the imminent arrival of Soyeshima who aimed to discourage London from applying. On 14 July, Crowe wrote privately to Gamon, who he claimed to 'know... pretty well as he and I play golf together at Roehampton',<sup>112</sup> to explain Soyeshima's visit and to stress the value of London's withdrawal.<sup>113</sup> Over the next two days, Vansittart saw Curtis-Bennett, Lord Aberdare, and Lord Burghley, to ask them to withdraw London's application. The semi-official nature of the intervention was emphasised at these meetings. Norton noted in his memorandum that the Government's normal policy of non-intervention should be seen publicly to be intact, with the BOA being advised to claim that the change of plan was spontaneous: 'This would preserve the independence of the Committee, which the latter prize very highly, and would make the gesture, if and when it is made as presumably it will be, all the more gracious and important.'<sup>114</sup> Clive was informed of these meetings by Vansittart on 16 July, in a telegram which stated that 'Cabinet have decided for reasons of high policy & contrary to normal rule of non-intervention in Olympic Games it would be desirable that the British Olympic Committee should be urged to withdraw their application.'<sup>115</sup> Pressure on the Lord Mayor was continued, and on 15 May Hoyer Millar wrote to Gamon on how Foreign Office policy had shifted since the Library's original approval of the proposal for London to host the Games, and that

if the British application was successful the Japanese would regard this as a deliberate attempt on our part to deprive them of the privilege of having the Games in Japan and that Anglo-Japanese relations would be seriously prejudiced.<sup>116</sup>

He closed with the request that, when meeting Soyeshima, the Lord Mayor should not refer to any governmental advice, thus underlining the Foreign Office's desire to appear uninvolved.

The Cabinet again discussed the issue in the light of the week's events on 16 July, concluding that while 'the matter was not one for which the Government had any responsibility', it 'was suggested that none the less pressure could be put on the British representatives not to advance the British claims in the circumstances', and Eden 'undertook to look into the question'.<sup>117</sup> The crucial and decisive pressure was then brought to bear on 21 July, when Soyeshima met with Aberdare of the BOA, Baillet-Latour of the IOC, and Crowe of the DOT at the Japanese Embassy. Aberdare was advised that London should withdraw its application to give Tokyo the best chance. Crowe noted in his report of the meeting that Clive should be informed of the planned withdrawal 'so that we can get credit for our generous and sporting action',<sup>118</sup> and that he could privately inform the Japanese Foreign Office of the plans and the Government's role in them. The desired withdrawal duly came. It was covered in the press on 30 July, with the *Evening News* reporting that the BOA had believed London would not win enough votes and that the lack of central funding for British sport would be an obstacle.<sup>119</sup> The idea that the BOA had spontaneously decided to withdraw was thus promoted, and no publicity was given to the Government's role in the horse trading that had ensured London's climbdown in favour of Tokyo. Gaselee's comment that it 'seems a very happy outcome' was undoubtedly heartfelt.<sup>120</sup>

It was also very opportune in its timing. Eden had met the Japanese Ambassador on 30 July after Lord Stanhope's speech on the

impossibility of a separate Anglo-Japanese agreement, and had been told that.

if we did not make some attempt to put our relations on a really good footing there was more than a danger that minor incidents would assume an undue importance in the public eye and the relations between our two countries would further deteriorate.<sup>121</sup>

The chance of the Olympic issue being such a minor incident had been successfully defused. Clive telegraphed on 3 August how the IOC's decision at its Berlin meeting to award the next Olympics to Tokyo had been 'made occasion for national rejoicing', and how London's withdrawal was appreciated.<sup>122</sup> He expanded this good news in his despatch of 13 August, in which he expressed his confidence that 'the action of the British Olympic Association in withdrawing has contributed, in however small a degree, to an improvement of the feeling in this country towards Great Britain.'<sup>123</sup> He enclosed a copy of a letter from Arita, the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, which referred to the 'splendid cooperation of your people which was undoubtedly animated by the traditional friendship between our two Empires'.<sup>124</sup> This line was re-iterated in a telegram from the Mayor of Tokyo to his London counterpart, in which he claimed: 'Our nation is profoundly touched by the generosity of your city in withdrawing its candidacy in favour of Tokyo'.<sup>125</sup> A positive response to this whole affair continued into the autumn, as the political advantages of London's decision were realised at the Foreign Office. In October, James Thyne Henderson minuted how the Olympics would make Japan sensitive to international opinion, 'which will afford *some* lever to

bring them to a more amenable frame of mind in negotiations' [emphasis in original].<sup>126</sup> This leverage was applied by Edward Warner of the Far Eastern Department to the specific problem of the ill-treatment of British subjects in Japan, when more news of the high expectations in Japan came in November: he noted that if there were any further ill-treatment, 'a word or two in our press linking police treatment of foreigners with the Olympic Games might have a salutary [sic] effect.'<sup>127</sup>

The depth and intensity of this example of governmental intervention in sport has made it an almost unique case. It provides an excellent study of how a sporting event could be appropriated as a complement to British policy, in which the Ambassador was heeded, the Foreign Office co-ordinated an approach, and the compliant peers in charge of the BOA acted as the Government wanted them to. The fact that the Cabinet was involved in the process gives the whole case an added importance, showing how certain sporting events were now perceived to be important enough in international culture to warrant intervention from the highest level. The value of the Olympics in acting as an incentive for the host nation to liberalise as a token gesture to international opinion had already been learnt from Berlin, and the references to 'leverage' indicate a willingness at the Foreign Office to use the Olympic Games to gain certain concessions from Japan. The terms of the Foreign Office discussion are also of value. They suggest that the traditional approach of non-involvement was no longer compatible with the swing of world affairs, with even such highly placed figures as Eden, Halifax, and Vansittart urging pressure; and while it has already been demonstrated that the Foreign Office's

traditional posture had often been somewhat disingenuous in practice, the departure from even the pretence of non-intervention is significant. It established a firm precedent for involvement, born from the problems raised by Nazi Germany's use of sport, and demonstrated the effectiveness of semi-official pressure on the relevant sporting organisation. The Berlin Olympics can thus be credited as the major factor in a fundamental change of outlook on sport by the Foreign Office, with the discussions and actions caused by the planning for the 1940 Olympics being the first visible effects of that change.



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## Notes on Chapter Four

<sup>1</sup> CAB 24/259, CP 12(36), 'The Importance of Anglo-Japanese Friendship', 17 January 1936; discussed at Cabinet 3(36), 29 January 1936, CAB 23/83.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics* (New York: 1971) p. xv.

<sup>3</sup> Duff Hart-Davis, *Hitler's Games: The 1936 Olympics* (London: 1986).

<sup>4</sup> Edward Marston, 'From Berlin to Moscow', *Spectator*, vol. 245, no. 7932, 19 July 1980, pp. 10-11.

<sup>5</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 27 March 1980, p.18.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Booker, *The Games War: a Moscow journal* (London: 1981) p. 33.

<sup>7</sup> Judith Holmes, *Olympiad 1936: Blaze of Glory for Hitler's Reich* (New York: 1972).

<sup>8</sup> Organisationskomitee für die XI. Olympiade, Berlin 1936, Friedrich Richter (ed.), *The XIth Olympic Games, Berlin 1936 - Official Report*, volume I (Berlin: 1937) p. 47.

<sup>9</sup> Gustavus T. Kirby, 'The Olympic Games, the Democracy of Sport, and the Jew', 21 December 1933. Reproduced in British Olympic Association library file, *Olympic Games Berlin 1936: The Jewish Question, Articles and Correspondence from GB and Abroad*.

<sup>10</sup> Carolyn Marvin, 'Avery Brundage and American Participation in the 1936 Olympic Games', *Journal of American Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1, 1982, pp. 81-105.

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<sup>11</sup> Translation, Leopold von Hoesch to Sir John Simon, 23 January 1934. *FO 370/455*, L 600/600/405.

<sup>12</sup> Sydney Waterlow to Sir John Simon, 29 May 1934. *Ibid.*, L 3505/600/405.

<sup>13</sup> Duff Hart-Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

<sup>14</sup> Minute, 23 March 1935. *FO 370/484*, L 1833/1054/405.

<sup>15</sup> Minute, 8 April 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Neville Laski and L.G. Montefiore, Joint Foreign Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association, to Sir Robert Vansittart, 26 February 1935. *FO 371/18861*, C 1588/232/18.

<sup>17</sup> Minute, 29 May 1935. *Ibid.*, C 4160/232/18.

<sup>18</sup> William Ebor to British Olympic Association, 14 May 1935. BOA library file, *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> B. Heckstall-Smith, Yacht Racing Association, to Sir Robert Vansittart, 27 May 1935. *FO 371/18864*, C 4324/239/18.

<sup>20</sup> Minute, 6 June 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Evan Hunter, BOA Secretary, to William Ebor, 8 July 1935. British Olympic Association library file, *op. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> Harold Abrahams to Evan Hunter, n.d. *Op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> Minute, 27 August 1935. *FO 371/18866*, C 6172/247/18.

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<sup>24</sup> Sir Eric Phipps to Orme Sargent, 7 November 1935. *FO 371/18884, C 7552/7552/18.*

<sup>25</sup> Minute, 11 November 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Minute, 12 November 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Sir Eric Phipps to Foreign Office, 11 November 1935. *FO 371/18863, C 7600/232/18.*

<sup>28</sup> Minute, 13 November 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Minute, 14 November 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Robert Hankey to Sir Robert Vansittart, 24 May 1935. *CAB 21/540, 14/2/23 (Part 1).*

<sup>31</sup> Sir Robert Vansittart to Robert Hankey, 27 May 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Duff Hart-Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>33</sup> Sir Eric Phipps to Foreign Office, 16 December 1935. *FO 371/18884, C 8362/7175/18.*

<sup>34</sup> Sir Walter Citrine, *Under the Heel of Hitler: the dictatorship over sport in Nazi Germany* (London: 1935).

<sup>35</sup> Frank Rodgers, British Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi Council, to Secretary of Home Office Swimming Club, January 1936; copy sent to Ralph Wigram by A. Tudor, 15 January 1936. *FO 371/19940, C 306/306/18.*

<sup>36</sup> Minute, 18 January 1936. *Ibid.*

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<sup>37</sup> Donald Gainer to Sir Eric Phipps, 14 January 1936. *FO 371/19922*, C 350/86/18.

<sup>38</sup> Minute, 20 January 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> David Wallechinsky, *The Complete Book of the Olympic Games* (London: 1984) p. 609.

<sup>40</sup> Sir Eric Phipps to Anthony Eden, 13 February 1936. *FO 371/19940*, C 930/306/18.

<sup>41</sup> Tom Dugdale to Anthony Eden, 28 February 1936. *Ibid.*, C 1346/306/18.

<sup>42</sup> Minute, 5 March 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Tom Dugdale to Frederick Hoyer Millar, 10 March 1936. *Ibid.*, C 1721/306/18.

<sup>44</sup> Robin Hankey to Tom Dugdale, 25 March 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Admiralty to Sir Robert Vansittart, 10 March 1936. *Ibid.*, C 1639/306/18.

<sup>46</sup> Minute, 30 April 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Minute, 7 May 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Ralph Wigram to the Admiralty, 11 May 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Pedro Conde to Horace Seymour, 23 April 1936. *Ibid.*, C 3137/306/18.

<sup>50</sup> Horace Seymour to Pedro Conde, 30 April 1936. *Ibid.*

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<sup>51</sup> Minute, 25 April 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Sir Eric Phipps to Foreign Office, 16 May 1936. *Ibid.*, C 3697/306/18.

<sup>53</sup> Clifford Norton to Hugh Lloyd Thomas, Paris Embassy, 20 May 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Minute, 18 May 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> A.E.M., 'The Athletic Arena', *Sport and Play and Wheel Life*, 16 May 1936; transcript in BOA library file, *op cit.*

<sup>56</sup> Phillips to Sir Robert Vansittart, 4 June 1936. *FO 371/19940*, C 4049/306/18.

<sup>57</sup> Minute, 5 June 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Memorandum by Dr. A. Yahuda, 15 April 1936. *Ibid.*, C 4559/306/18.

<sup>59</sup> Minute, 23 June 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, 5th Series, House of Commons*, vol. 314, 16 July 1936, col. 2276.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 July 1936, vol. 315, cols. 415-16.

<sup>62</sup> 'Germany puts on her best face for the Olympic Games', *Manchester Guardian*, 27 July 1936; cutting on *FO 371/19940*, C 5429/306/18.

<sup>63</sup> Duff Hart-Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>64</sup> Berlin Chancery to Central Department, 29 July 1936. *FO 371/19940*, C 5645/306/18.

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<sup>65</sup> David Wallechinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>66</sup> FO 371/19940, C 4149, 4833/306/18.

<sup>67</sup> Robert Rhodes James (ed.), *Chips: The Diaries of Sir Henry Channon* (London: 1967) p. 107.

<sup>68</sup> Sir Eric Phipps to Anthony Eden, 13 August 1936. FO 371/19912, C 5871/14/18.

<sup>69</sup> Norman Rose, *Vansittart: Study of a Diplomat* (London: 1978) p. 197.

<sup>70</sup> Sir Robert Vansittart quoted in Ian Colvin, *Vansittart in Office* (London: 1965) p. 111.

<sup>71</sup> Richard Mandell, *op. cit.*, p. xi.

<sup>72</sup> British Olympic Association, Harold Abrahams (ed.), *The Official Report of the XIth Olympiad, Berlin 1936* (London: 1937) p. 46.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>74</sup> Organisationskomitee für die XI. Olympiade, Berlin 1936, Friedrich Richter (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>76</sup> John Rodda, 'XII Tokyo/Helsinki (Cancelled) 1940', in Lord Killanin and John Rodda (eds), *The Olympic Games* (London: 1979) p. 116.

<sup>77</sup> Sir Eric Drummond to Foreign Office, 20 December 1934. FO 370/455, L 7469/600/405.

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<sup>78</sup> Sir Eric Drummond to Foreign Office, 12 February 1935. *FO 370/484*, L 1054/1054/405.

<sup>79</sup> Sir Robert Clive to Foreign Office, 18 February 1935. *Ibid.*, L 1077/1054/405.

<sup>80</sup> Sir Robert Clive to Foreign Office, 18 February 1935. *Ibid.*, L 1078/1054/405.

<sup>81</sup> Minute, 18 February 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Sir Robert Clive to Guy Locock, 12 February 1935. *CAB 21/1007*, 14/19/1.

<sup>83</sup> Sir Warren Fisher to Sir Robert Vansittart, 23 May 1935. *CAB 21/540*, 14/2/23.

<sup>84</sup> Sir Warren Fisher to Sir Robert Vansittart, 28 May 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Neville Butler to Clifford Norton, 2 July 1935. *FO 370/484*, L 4322/1054/405.

<sup>86</sup> Minute, 5 July 1935. *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Sir Robert Clive to Foreign Office, 8 January 1936. *FO 371/20279*, F 149/89/23.

<sup>88</sup> Minute, n.d. *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Minute, 9 January 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Minute, 9 January 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Minute, 9 January 1936. *Ibid.*

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<sup>92</sup> Minute, 10 January 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Minute, 14 January 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Minute, 15 January 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Minute, 15 January 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Minute, 17 January 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> CAB 24/259, CP 12(36), 'The Importance of Anglo-Japanese Friendship', 17 January 1936.

<sup>98</sup> Cabinet 3(36), 29 January 1936. CAB 23/83.

<sup>99</sup> Sir Robert Clive to Anthony Eden, 8 April 1936. FO 370/510, L 2912/580/405.

<sup>100</sup> Minute by Frederick Hoyer Millar of telephone call from Cyril Gamon, 16 June 1936. *Ibid.*, L 4049/580/405.

<sup>101</sup> Minute, 17 June 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> Minute, 18 June 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> Lord Mayor to Count Baillet-Latour, n.d.; copy from Cyril Gamon to Frederick Hoyer Millar, 17 June 1936. *Ibid.*, L 4090/580/405.

<sup>104</sup> Minute, 19 June 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> BOA to IOC, 22 June 1936; copy to Sir Edward Crowe, 2 July 1936. *Ibid.*, L 4537/580/405.

<sup>106</sup> Stephen Gaselee to Sir Robert Clive, 14 July 1936. *Ibid.*, L 4601/580/405.



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<sup>107</sup> Sir Edward Crowe to Sir Clifford Norton, 8 July 1936. *Ibid.*, L 4771/580/405.

<sup>108</sup> Minute, 8 July 1936. *FO 370/511*, L 4772/580/405.

<sup>109</sup> Conclusions of Cabinet, 9 July 1936. *CAB 23/85*, Cabinet 51(36)4.

<sup>110</sup> Geoffrey Fry to Frederick Hoyer Millar, 9 July 1936. *FO 370/511*, L 4821/580/495.

<sup>111</sup> Sir Robert Clive to Foreign Office, 10 July 1936. *FO 370/510*, L 4715/580/405.

<sup>112</sup> Sir Edward Crowe to H. Norton, 14 July 1936. *FO 370/511*, L 4774/580/405.

<sup>113</sup> Sir Edward Crowe to Cyril Gamon, 14 July 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> Minute, 15 July 1936. *Ibid.*, L 4775/580/405.

<sup>115</sup> Sir Robert Vansittart to Sir Robert Clive, 16 July 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> Frederick Hoyer Millar to Cyril Gamon, 15 July 1936. *Ibid.*, L 4822/580/405.

<sup>117</sup> Conclusions of Cabinet, 16 July 1936. *CAB 23/85*, Cabinet 53(36)4.

<sup>118</sup> Sir Edward Crowe to H. Norton, 21 July 1936. *FO 370/511*, L 4947/580/405.

<sup>119</sup> *Evening News*, 30 July 1936, p.13; cutting in *ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> Minute, 31 July 1936. *Ibid.*

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<sup>121</sup> Anthony Eden to Sir Robert Clive, 30 July 1936. *CAB 21/1007*, 14/19/1.

<sup>122</sup> Sir Robert Clive to Foreign Office, 3 August 1936. *FO 370/511*, L 5168/580/405.

<sup>123</sup> Sir Robert Clive to Foreign Office, 13 August 1936. *Ibid.*, L 5963/580/405.

<sup>124</sup> Arita to Sir Robert Clive, 7 August 1936; copy to Foreign Office, 13 August 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> Mayor of Tokyo to Lord Mayor of London, n.d.; copy to Foreign Office, n.d. *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> Minute, 28 October 1936. *Ibid.*, L 6881/580/405.

<sup>127</sup> Minute, 6 November 1936. *Ibid.*, L 7010/580/405.

## Chapter Five

### Sport and Appeasement, 1936-1939

#### 1. The Widening Scope of Foreign Office involvement in sport

Although the two Olympic meetings dominated the Foreign Office's involvement in sport in 1936, a number of other developments and instances of intervention are worthy of note. In June of that year, Sir Howard Kennard, British Ambassador at Warsaw, wrote privately to Orme Sargent, Assistant Under Secretary of State, on the Chelsea football team's recent 'admirable [example]... of British propaganda as it should not be.'<sup>1</sup> He enclosed a copy of his letter of 26 May to Rex Leeper of the News Department. Here he told of the 'lamentable impression' made by Chelsea in matches at Warsaw and Cracow against the Polish national side, during which the London club's players had committed numerous fouls and disputed the decisions of the referees: in one instance, a Chelsea player had spat at the referee upon being sent off.<sup>2</sup> He sent some Polish press cuttings, one of which included the assertion that not only were the Poles as good as the British at football, but that 'the famous lack of discipline of Polish sportsmen is pure gold in comparison with that which Chelsea demonstrated to us.'<sup>3</sup> Kennard concluded his letter with a blunt condemnation of such behaviour:

It seems to me that it is quite useless for the British Council and Embassies and Legations to waste time and money on cultural propaganda which appeals only to a few hundred

people when the unsportsmanlike behaviour of British footballers does infinite harm amongst the millions which have been accustomed to respect the British standard of play in all games, and I would suggest it is far more important for the Council to take strong measures with the authorities concerned to prevent a repetition of such incidents as occurred here on Saturday, than to send British conductors, professors and so forth abroad, who cannot in years wipe out the opinion which must now be held here in what used to be one of our greatest assets, namely, our sense of sportsmanship.<sup>4</sup>

In his letter to Sargent, he coupled this sports event with the visit of two members of the Imperial Policy Group of the Conservative Party, the Earl of Mansfield and A.R. Wise, who had offended some of their hosts by advocating British non-involvement in Europe. He concluded with the remark that 'it seems to me unfortunate that in one week our parliamentary institution and our sense of sportsmanship, which are about our best assets, should have been shown up in such an extremely unfavourable light.'<sup>5</sup> The minutes by Sir George Mounsey, Assistant Under Secretary, and Viscount Cranborne, Parliamentary Under Secretary, show a sense of sympathy with Kennard's predicament. Mounsey commented on the attempts at 'improving relations with foreign countries - both politically and culturally' being 'defeated at almost one stroke by incidents such as these';<sup>6</sup> but any governmental responsibility was deferred by Cranborne, who minuted 'we can't control the footballers, I'm afraid'.<sup>7</sup> In his reply to Kennard,

Sargent agreed 'that the antics of both are to be deplored, but, as you know, we have no control over M.P.s... or football teams.'<sup>8</sup> While no action was possible at this stage, this extreme example of bad behaviour by sportspersons did add strength to later Foreign Office attempts at regulating British sport abroad, and Kennard's linking of the work of the British Council with this area of popular culture is significant. His claim that cultural propaganda aimed at an elite would be irrelevant unless it was backed up on the popular level was gradually reflected in the British Council's programme.

A further admission that sport was becoming important at the Foreign Office can be seen in the research carried out in 1936 on what treatment was given to visiting sports teams in various other countries. Three criteria - official recognition, hospitality, and state representation at the event - were applied to 23 European countries, in order to gauge how typical Britain's non-involvement was. Only Bulgaria, Germany, and Hungary were found to meet fully all three requirements, but most other nations were seen to offer some interest. These included the favoured models of Belgium, Denmark, and Yugoslavia, where ministers attended events and their social functions in a private capacity, and of which Charles Johnston of the Western Department minuted: 'This seems as far as it is desirable to go until some especial occasion for setting a new precedent presents itself.' However, he added that if attendance at either the event or the social function was 'desired', then it would be 'preferable to adopt the practise [*sic*] of Austria and Switzerland, and confine such representation to the matches while declining to attend the banquets.'<sup>9</sup> But the research was not turned into any definite policy, with Philip

Leigh-Smith of the Western Department urging that any decision should be 'postponed until we hear that somebody is coming over here again to play football & the question of his or their entertainment is again raised.'<sup>10</sup> This report did serve to clarify some basic assumptions on the Foreign Office's recognition of sport: but future policy was left on a very informal basis; and no attempts were made to strengthen links with the governing bodies of sports, which would have enabled the Foreign Office to be regularly informed as to which teams were visiting Britain.

Aside from this vague review of policy, the organisation of sporting links continued to present some problems for the Foreign Office in 1937. One area of pragmatic involvement was that of contacts with Spain and Portugal in the light of the Spanish Civil War. Despite German and Italian aid to the rebel nationalist forces of General Franco, and the Soviet Union's lesser and more divisive involvement behind the republican government, Britain and France attempted to maintain a non-interventionist line. Against this background, the Foreign Office became involved with the British Workers' Sports Association (BWSA) in March 1937, when that organisation attempted to send a football team to Barcelona on the invitation of the Catalan authorities. They had been refused visas by the Passport Office, and the organisation's secretary, George Elvin, contacted Mounsey to discover the government's objections to the visit. Mounsey reported his conversation with Elvin to Cranborne. He noted that he had explained how

in present circumstances, both under our obligations under the non-intervention agreement, and owing to the difficult

conditions prevailing in most parts of Spain, we could not allow BSS [British Subjects] to proceed to Spain except for urgent and serious reasons. I hardly thought playing football could be covered by these conditions.

He observed that Elvin had offered to send a TUC representative along to add seriousness to the trip, which Elvin claimed was an attempt to show Spanish workers the support of their British contemporaries. Mounsey was set against the scheme, which he claimed would need a decision as it would probably be referred to Citrine. He claimed that the visit would be 'contrary to all our principles and interests at the present moment', and that 'there would be no end to our embarrassment in continuing to refuse less frivolous applications, if we had to make an exception in this case.'<sup>11</sup>

Cranborne agreed, stating that: 'No one should go except for serious reasons',<sup>12</sup> and Eden offered to meet Citrine personally to discuss the matter.<sup>13</sup> Mounsey re-contacted Elvin to communicate the Foreign Office's negative view of the tour, to which Elvin replied that the real aim had been to send a TUC representative to contact Catalan trades unions and conduct some research on the position of Barcelona's workers. To this, Mounsey

pointed out that the football team was the worst excuse for such a visit: if this was the real objective, and the reasons for it were weighty, the request for a visa would of course be considered on its merits. But the Passport Office would be placed in an impossible position if they allowed footballers to go out anywhere in Spain, while

endeavouring in other respects to maintain the strict letter of the new regulations.<sup>14</sup>

No further governmental action was forthcoming, but the example of the Foreign Office acting to prevent a sporting event politically-motivated by the Republican cause in Spain, whilst supporting sporting contacts with the Nazi Government in Germany, shows once more the priorities of foreign policy at work in the microcosm of sport. However, the Foreign Office's eagerness to meet the requirements of the League of Nations' non-intervention policy on Spain was obviously instrumental in this, and sets the matter in a different context to that of sporting links with Germany.

Simultaneously with this discussion, attempts at a higher level were being made to foster elitist sporting links between Britain and Portugal. Under the conservative dictatorship of Antonio Salazar, Portugal assisted the Spanish rebels throughout the civil war by offering a limited amount of military aid along with a safe refuge for nationalist forces.<sup>15</sup> Such aid was obviously arousing some criticism of Portugal in Britain. Against this background, Eden met the Portuguese Ambassador, Dr. Armindo Monteiro, to discuss the 'closer collaboration between our two countries which we were anxious to bring about'. Monteiro claimed that German propaganda in the <sup>P</sup>Peninsula was retarding the traditionally good relations between Portugal and Britain. He pointed out that almost 'every sphere, cultural, journalistic and sport, was affected' by the German programme of cultural propaganda, and he was anxious for sporting contacts between his country and Britain in 'those sports in which Portugal excelled: 'He mentioned particularly horsemanship, and



regretted that, whereas Portuguese teams frequently competed in horse shows in Brussels and elsewhere, they had never been to London.<sup>16</sup> Eden pledged Foreign Office support for any attempts to facilitate this, leaving the News Department to arrange such contacts. Charles Peake suggested asking the War Office to invite a Portuguese team to an Olympia horse show, which he saw as 'one way, even though a small one, of countering German propaganda in Portugal, at once cheap and effective.'<sup>17</sup> But nothing positive came of this attempt: the War Office reported that Portuguese representatives were often invited, but always refused.<sup>18</sup>

Other sports contacts with Portugal were discussed in early 1938. On 9 January, Sir Walford Selby, British Ambassador at Lisbon, reported to Mounsey on Portugal's 4-0 football victory over Hungary, adding the warning that if a British team were ever sent to Portugal it would have to be the best side available, 'otherwise they would be simply "galloped [*sic*] off the field", and having regard to the prestige which our football even today succeeds in retaining, it would not help from a national point of view.'<sup>19</sup> This led to Rowland Kenney of the News Department writing to Stanley Rous with the advice that the FA should send 'the best team they can collect'<sup>20</sup> if they went to Portugal, despite such negative minutes as that by Charles Fone of the Library:

It will be seen that it has been our policy to discourage the staging of football matches with foreigners and that on more than one occasion we have drawn attention to the embarrassing situation created as the result of the visits abroad of poor teams.<sup>21</sup>

Selby linked the football matter to more important issues in another letter of 9 January, in which he interpreted Portuguese sporting resurgence as symptomatic of 'a new spirit among the Portuguese' under Salazar, and stressed the value of such a spirit in the latest period of the traditional Anglo-Portuguese alliance: 'Certainly if their military forces develop as well as their footballers, they would be a *very* useful, even formidable, asset in certain contingencies' [emphasis in original].<sup>22</sup>

The courting of this asset was continued on the sporting front through yachting in 1938, after Leite Pinto, Secretary General of the *Instituto para a Alta Cultura*, requested the British Embassy to encourage British teams to compete in the yachting rally of the *Mocidade Portuguesa*, Salazar's youth movement which 'regime apologists compared to the Boy Scout movement but which, in the eyes of the British embassy, was more akin to the German Jugend'.<sup>23</sup> Charles Bateman, Counsellor at the Lisbon Embassy, informed Rex Leeper of this on 11 January 1938, and approved the scheme on the grounds that the *Mocidade* was depoliticising and that all British costs would be met.<sup>24</sup> The Foreign Office referred the matter to the British Council,<sup>25</sup> but the Portuguese request could not be met due to problems of team-raising encountered by the Corinthian Otters, the British club involved.<sup>26</sup> However, the eagerness with which the Lisbon Embassy and the Foreign Office attempted to facilitate the event, particularly after the direct intervention of Monteiro in London on how 'nothing but good would come from bringing English and Portuguese boys together',<sup>27</sup> shows the News Department's commitment by this time to the idea that sporting links could assist

diplomacy. It is also indicative of the Foreign Office's wider concerns that the other nations invited to this event were Germany and Italy.

Aside from the work of sport in complementing the diplomatic process, the concern that British sportspersons should act as diplomats whilst abroad was still present in official thinking in the late 1930s. Following on from the Polish incident involving Chelsea, the Foreign Office was informed in December 1937 of an incident of bad conduct by some members of the British Empire Games team docked in Toulon on their way to Australia. Five members of the team had reportedly broken a car headlight whilst drunk, and then attacked the police officers attempting to arrest them: two had escaped, but the others had been detained.<sup>28</sup> Charles Thomas, British Vice-Consul at Toulon, reported the affair to Augustus Routh, Acting Consul-General at Marseilles, and stated that 'the conduct of such so called sportsmen who are sent out... to represent Great Britain... is lamentable, and deserving of the severest censure.'<sup>29</sup> Leeper attempted to discover the British Empire Games Federation's (BEGF) version of the events on 11 January,<sup>30</sup> only to be told that the officers were all in Australia for the Games,<sup>31</sup> and he also asked Routh to express the Prime Minister's thanks to the local police 'for their lenience in dealing with this matter.'<sup>32</sup> The Chairman of the Council of the BEGF eventually contacted the Foreign Office from Sydney on 1 February to apologise, although he added that there had been some police provocation and that he had personally paid out £27 in compensation to the police and was surprised to see the matter revived.<sup>33</sup> This relatively trivial matter had been inflated because the athletes were perceived as being Britain's representatives on their way to a celebration of the idea of Empire,

and the invocation of Neville Chamberlain's name in the Foreign Office's smoothing down of the controversy suggests the perceived danger of such adverse national publicity based around sport at this time.

1938 saw an attempt being made to control such behaviour, when Charles Bridge, Secretary-General of the British Council, wrote to Leeper on the subject. He began by discussing the bad experience of Kennard in Poland in 1936, who had claimed to Bridge that the 'laborious and expensive work which the Council has undertaken in Poland can be rendered nugatory in a few minutes' by misconduct on the football pitch, and then urged that

something can and must be done to try and protect our British reputation for sportsmanship from the stigma to which such incidents as the one referred to above must subject it. Otherwise, as Kennard says, why waste taxpayers' money on trying to disseminate among foreigners an appreciation of the glories of British culture!

He proposed that the Foreign Office should compile 'a complete dossier of "regrettable incidents" in the football field' to present to the FA, and that government representatives abroad should be discouraged from attending matches in order to put pressure on the finances and credibility of matches until teams conformed. He concluded that 'such steps as these should be taken to show beyond any doubt that official recognition of visiting teams carries with it obligation on the part of the British players to behave with decency.'<sup>34</sup>

Christopher Warner of the News Department accordingly invited Rous to discuss the matter. The terms of the invitation showed the

informal position of sport within the broad field of cultural propaganda. Warner wrote that Vansittart, now Chief Diplomatic Advisor, 'takes a special interest in the question of Association football matches between British and foreign teams':

Appreciating the co-operation which the Football Association has afforded the Foreign Office in the past Sir Robert would much like to discuss with the President of the Association and yourself, in anticipation of the coming football season, the possibility of taking further measures to ensure that a good impression is made abroad by British participation in such matches.

References were also made to the Foreign Office's pleasure at the recent international between Germany and England [see below].<sup>35</sup> Rous complied, and met Vansittart on 25 August to agree to collaborate more with the Foreign Office in future arrangements.<sup>36</sup> The sensational stance taken by Bridge was mitigated by the recent good performances and decent behaviour by the England team. Warner and Vansittart therefore used the occasion of Bridge's complaint to ensure closer links with the FA in future. Although no reference was made to this meeting in the FA's International Selection Committee minutes, the matter did enter Rous' memoirs, in which he noted with reference to England's European tour of 1939, that 'The FA were always conscious of the political implications of tours by our national team and we kept in close touch with the Foreign Office over arrangements.'<sup>37</sup> Rous' administration of the FA gave the Foreign Office a more willing ally than in previous years, and the FA's letter to Chamberlain offering 'sincere congratulations on your great achievement in averting War

during the recent crisis' after the Munich agreement is symbolic of the co-operation and sympathy beginning to exist between Lancaster Gate and Whitehall.<sup>38</sup>

The Foreign Office maintained an interest in a few instances of British involvement in international sport in 1938, such as the visit of an Oxford ice hockey team to Holland,<sup>39</sup> and that of the London Division of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve's football team to Luxembourg, which involved correspondence between the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, and the British Embassy in Brussels. A familiar theme emerged in this correspondence when the News Department warned Brussels of the 'bad effects that a poor British team could cause when playing abroad'<sup>40</sup> but the team's one victory and one defeat seemed to ruffle no feathers.<sup>41</sup> More practical intervention was forthcoming over the issue of visas for sporting events. In March 1938, for example, the Foreign Office received a request from the *Hapoel* club of Warsaw, a Jewish sports club which wanted to send a twelve-man team on a circular motor cycle tour through Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. They needed British visas for Gibraltar and Palestine, but this request was turned down due to the club's inability to pay the 1,800 *zloty* per person demanded as security.<sup>42</sup> The tense position of Palestine with regard to Jewish immigration at a time when the Foreign Office was attempting to secure Arab support in case of a future war with Germany formed the background to this move.

A more positive approach came in May, when the European Swimming Championships were held at Wembley. Paul Herbert, Honorary Secretary of the Organising Committee, asked the Foreign

Office to exempt competitors from visa fees.<sup>43</sup> This contest involved swimmers from 27 other countries, including France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Spain, and the Foreign Office supported the scheme. William Dunlop of the Treaty Department wrote to C. McAlpine of the Home Office that

British subjects who have taken part in previous Championships abroad have been granted gratis facilities and we feel that, even apart from a desire to reciprocate this is the sort of thing we wish to encourage.<sup>44</sup>

The Home Office duly supported the idea, despite the fact that twelve of the nations had 'no visa abolition agreement' with Britain,<sup>45</sup> and Halifax was quoted by Dunlop in his appeal to Treasury as being 'of the opinion that all possible facilities should be accorded in respect of visitors in this category'.<sup>46</sup> The approval of this contest, which involved financial compromise by Britain but offered a chance of friendly contests between antagonistic nations, contrasts interestingly with the refusal to assist the Polish Jewish sports club in visiting Palestine. It shows the government using one of its tools for controlling international contacts in a manner in keeping with the diplomatic expediencies of European stability and Middle Eastern support.

An interesting sporting development in Latin America, which became important for Britain immediately after the war, was developed from 1938 from the despatches on the Bolivarian Games by Montague Paske Smith, British Envoy to Bogota, and Evelyn Rawlins, Envoy at La Paz. This contest, held in Bogota in August for the fourth centenary celebrations of the city, was contested by Bolivia, Colombia,

Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela.<sup>47</sup> The Treaty Department had been approached earlier in the month by Sir Thomas Hohler, through Paske Smith, who had asked that the King present a cup for the football competition, which 'would have most favourable effect',<sup>48</sup> but the Department turned it down for fear of creating a precedent.<sup>49</sup> Of more long term importance for official attitudes towards sport in Latin America was the news from Rawlins on the huge reception given to the returning Peruvian team, which had been placed last. He claimed that military heroes were given inferior welcomes, and saw 'a lamentable lack of any sense of proportion on the part of the Government and public who saw fit to welcome, in such a spectacular manner, the return of a few mediocre sportsmen.'<sup>50</sup> This was re-inforced by Victor Forbes, British Envoy at Lima, who warned that 'these people do not know how to lose and take defeat as a personal affront'. He went on

It follows that, if these Latin-American International sports continue with the same intensity, they are quite likely to lead in the end to bad international relations.<sup>51</sup>

The terms of these despatches, with only Paske Smith defending the Latin Americans, largely informed the Foreign Office's attitudes towards the attempts to send British football teams to South and Central America after the war.

Of more immediate diplomatic importance was the successful football match between Italy and England, drawn 2-2 at Milan on 13 May 1939. Sir Percy Loraine, British Ambassador to Italy, attended as a British representative, and wrote Halifax a report on the match. Loraine sat in the enclosure with Buffarini-Guidi, Under-Secretary for the Interior, Giovanni Marinelli, the Fascist Party's Administrative



Secretary, and Mussolini's sons Vittorio and Bruno. He reported on the friendly attitude of the 65,000 strong crowd towards the England team, which was seen as a sign of the popular Italian regard for Britain; and he recounted how the game was played in a clean and sporting manner, and that 'the match itself was a valuable contribution to friendship between the two nations'.<sup>52</sup> These good relations had been assisted by the English team giving the Fascist salute during the national anthems, and the Foreign Office was grateful for the whole event. Sir Andrew Noble of the Southern Department saw it as having given 'the Italians an opportunity for showing that they still like us', while his colleague Philip Broad noted that the match 'went off well, & may have helped friendly relations - an all-too-infrequent result of international contests of this kind.'<sup>53</sup> Seen in the context of the Italian invasion of Albania the previous month, which had led Britain to guarantee Greece and Roumania, and the maintenance of Italian troops in Spain since the end of the civil war, it becomes clear that the small amount of goodwill created by the match was in the Foreign Office's interests as a counter to the potential animosity over the Mediterranean.

## **2. The Continuing Debate over the 1940 Olympic Games**

Although official pressure in 1935 and 1936 had helped to ensure that the 1940 Olympic Games were awarded to Tokyo, the changing political atmosphere after the IOC's 1936 decision necessitated certain changes. In February 1938, amid rumours that the BOA would boycott Tokyo because of the Japanese government's aggressive policy towards China, Sir Robert Craigie, British Ambassador at Tokyo, informed the

Foreign Office that any boycott and subsequent removal of the Games to London would 'create the worst possible impression here and the effect on Anglo-Japanese relations would be out of all proportion to intrinsic importance of this question'. He concluded that the war in China could well make the 1940 Games 'die a natural death', but that 'it would be unfortunate if we could be charged with killing them.'<sup>54</sup> This information was supplemented the following day by another telegram from Craigie asking the Foreign Office to tell Lord Burghley to meet Japanese Olympic representative Massuzo Nagai on his imminent trip to London.<sup>55</sup> This was done immediately by J. Lloyd Thomas.<sup>56</sup> The next week, Craigie reported that the Games would not take place due to a lack of materials and resources,<sup>57</sup> to which news Davies expressed his sympathy for Soyeshima now that the military had 'robbed Tokyo of the Olympic Games by preferring war games in China.'<sup>58</sup> However, the cancellation was only a rumour at this stage, and on 2 March the Foreign Office contacted Craigie for advice on whether London should apply for the 1940 Olympics as 'many countries will have great hesitation about going to Japan'.<sup>59</sup> This was necessary as the Olympic movement's decision over Tokyo rested at the IOC's meeting at Cairo in March, and the BOA needed guidance. Craigie replied on 4 March that he still supported Tokyo's claim:

I venture to enquire whether it could not be pointed out to those who oppose holding games in Japan (a) exclusion of politics from the issue is unconditional for ultimate success for the games and (b) it seems probable that the situation here may have changed politically for the better by 1940.<sup>60</sup>

William Davies of the Far Eastern Department concurred, claiming that continued support of Tokyo's Olympic bid from London and elsewhere might bring the Japanese military towards a more conciliatory line,<sup>61</sup> and he asked Sir Miles Lampson, British Ambassador at Cairo, to inform Lord Aberdare of Craigie's opinion on his arrival for the Congress.<sup>62</sup> Despite the *Manchester Guardian's* criticism at this time of the political appropriation of the Olympics and of the National Government's 'obscure and not particularly creditable part' in the negotiations over 1940,<sup>63</sup> such negotiations continued at this time in the interests of British credibility in the Far East. Lampson reported that he had briefed Aberdare, and that Aberdare had agreed not to raise the matter at the IOC meeting,<sup>64</sup> and on 19 March he explained how the IOC had left the Games with Tokyo as no Olympic rules had been broken.<sup>65</sup>

While this decision by the IOC calmed the situation for a time, the problem arose again in July when various countries resumed their calls for the Games to be removed from Tokyo. Sweden, for example, decided to boycott Japan when twenty sports organisations protested to the Swedish Olympic Committee that Japan, by 'cynical disregard for the ideals of peace and international cooperation which the Olympic games are intended to serve, has made it impossible for Sweden to take any part in them.'<sup>66</sup> This news from Sir Edmund Monson, British Envoy to Sweden, was followed by Craigie's telegram of 15 July which related that the Japanese Cabinet could not provide any money for the Olympics, and had advised the Organising Committee to withdraw.<sup>67</sup> Helsinki immediately applied for the seemingly homeless Olympics, and the Foreign Office received a stream of telegrams from

Thomas Snow, British Envoy to Finland, on the speedy preparations being made by the Finns, and that they required British help. On 16 July, he reported that they called on British ship-owners to help with the anticipated accommodation problem by providing floating hotels;<sup>68</sup> while on 19 August he urged the Department of Overseas Trade to encourage this scheme, with the note that the importance of the 'propaganda aspect of the question to us will no doubt be borne in mind.'<sup>69</sup> Snow continued to support the Finnish claim into 1939, when he wrote a personal letter to Halifax's Private Secretary, Oliver Harvey, on the country's excellent record in middle- and long-distance running, and how Britain should use the opportunity of the proposed Olympics to compliment these athletic achievements with an official visit. He argued that a royal visit

would constitute that unique compliment, which no other one could approach in even the remotest degree. Such a visit by Their Majesties would, too, unassailably affirm British prestige and British popularity not only in Finland, but in the whole Scandinavian world.<sup>70</sup>

The Northern Department showed a general approval of this idea, resolving to review it in January 1940 and possibly send a Duke.<sup>71</sup> Snow also notified Halifax that the Finns were looking to Britain rather than Germany for a supply of horses for the Olympics,<sup>72</sup> and that 'special attention be shewn' to Dr. Rangell of the Organising Committee on his visit to London.<sup>73</sup> But the 1940 Olympics proved to be the second of the modern series to be cancelled. The Winter Games, awarded to Garmisch-Partenkirchen after Sapporo's withdrawal, were cancelled on 23 November 1939,<sup>74</sup> while Helsinki finally stopped

planning in May 1940 on the Soviet invasion of Finland.<sup>75</sup> Once again, the realities of international politics proved stronger than the polemical internationalism of the Olympic movement.

### **3. The British Council's use of Sport: the example of Greece**

Throughout this period, the British Council developed a degree of interest in sporting matters, ranging from the awarding of grants for sports visits to the employment of sports instructors in certain countries. An early attempt at assisting sport was the grant of £200 given to the Afghan Olympic Hockey team to tour Britain after the Berlin Olympics, which was awarded by the Executive Committee in April 1936.<sup>76</sup> However, after the tour took place in September, the Executive Committee noted that the British Council 'is not yet sufficiently well equipped either financially or from the point of view of staff, for such visits to be satisfactorily arranged.'<sup>77</sup> The sports work of the British Council soon became based around its main priorities, which were more fully defined in late 1936 and 1937. In October 1936, Kenneth Johnstone of the News Department wrote a paper on cultural propaganda in the Mediterranean area, which warned of German and Italian work there damaging British interests. He identified Cyprus, Egypt, Malta, and Palestine as the main areas, along with Greece and Turkey, and claimed that 'counter-action of some kind' was necessary. His main solutions were educational, but he concluded more generally:

We cannot rely indefinitely on our general political prestige. Prestige is a matter of reputation and reputation is founded on such knowledge as the public can acquire. If its

only source of knowledge is the distorted picture presented to it by foreign cultural propaganda from its earliest years, in the school and the club, then our reputation will gradually dwindle until it is merely a synonym for our physical power. In the last resort, like can only be met with like and propaganda with propaganda.<sup>78</sup>

These recommendations were followed in April 1937 by the privately circulated 'Notes on Cultural Propaganda' by Eleanor Rathbone, MP, based on her three week tour of Czechoslovakia, Roumania, and Yugoslavia with Lady Layton and the Duchess of Atholl. She stressed the 'immense desire felt in all these three dangerously situated countries for closer contacts with British people', but warned that British cultural inaction would only hasten the moves towards Germany and Italy that were being made for security reasons.<sup>79</sup>

Such research highlighted the countries on which the British Council should concentrate. Work was conducted, in the first place, through established British missions, but special British Council representatives were increasingly used. The work included lectures, concerts, and drama, as well as more permanent establishments such as libraries, schools, and British Institutes. Sport was used casually in 1937, when the British Council was involved in attempts to promote British culture in Greece through the medium of physical education. On 9 November 1937, the Executive Committee approved a grant of £150 a year to finance a Greek physical training instructor to study in Britain, although the original candidate had died since the application <sup>had</sup> been made. The Executive thus left the grant open for a reserve.<sup>80</sup> A more successful matter was the application by K. Kotzias of the

Hellenic FA, who was also Minister Governor of Athens, for a British coach to improve the country's football. He wrote to British Envoy Sir Sydney Waterlow to this end, basing his request for 'a competent English trainer' on 'our deep esteem for the English people, which leads all others, to confine ourselves to the sphere of sports, not only in games, but more important, in the due spirit of "fair play".'<sup>81</sup> Waterlow recommended the idea to Eden on 26 November, and claimed it should have priority over a British school or books as British Council expenditure. He claimed that Kotzias was 'most anxious to educate the rising generation to be worthy citizens of a regenerated nation by introducing the British sporting spirit to Greece':

His Excellency is a close personal friend of mine and, apart from General Metaxas [Greek Prime Minister], he is the only member of the Cabinet who is of outstanding importance and influence. It is therefore desirable, quite apart from the intrinsic merits of the proposal and its propaganda values from our point of view, which appears to me to be great, that his request should be met if possible.<sup>82</sup>

Three days later, in a despatch on the British Council's work in Greece, Waterlow re-iterated the point and called for the FA to send a trainer as soon as possible, to be closely followed by a tour of Greece by a British team. He closed with the claim that this work should not be restricted to football, but that 'regular despatch of sports teams of various other kinds to Greece' might form 'a necessary part of the Council's programme', which seemed 'especially desirable as a

corrective to the Olympic propaganda which has recently been so intensively pushed by the Germans.<sup>83</sup>

The Foreign Office acted on this request, and Kenney wrote to Bridge on 3 December approving Waterlow's scheme. He noted that 'to include football under the general heading of "culture" is to make the term somewhat elastic', but referred to previous Foreign Office assistance of football teams and hoped that the British Council could oblige.<sup>84</sup> O. Jennings of the British Council wrote confidentially to Rous on 23 December, asking for an interview, which took place on New Year's Eve.<sup>85</sup> Jennings found Rous 'most kindly and helpful', and explained the requirements of age and experience for the prospective coach, with the insistence that he 'should not be a "rough-neck"':

I explained as far as I was able the conditions under which the trainer would have to work, and emphasised the desirability of his having reached a certain general educational standard and of his possessing some of the more elementary social requirements.<sup>86</sup>

Rous approved of the idea, and agreed to look for a suitable candidate, while the British Council also used other contacts to recruit a trainer, including the Appointments Board of Cambridge University.<sup>87</sup> The post eventually went to W. Baggett, a former Bolton Wanderers and Reading professional, who was appointed on 22 January and arrived in Athens on 3 February.<sup>88</sup>

The British Council's use of sport in the Balkans continued in February, when the Foreign Office passed on a questionnaire sent from the Turkish Sports Association on the organisation of sport in Britain. The covering letter from the Ankara Chancery asked for co-



operation, 'as we think it would be quite a useful thing to give the Turkish Association a helping hand.'<sup>89</sup> Kenney sent it to the British Council for completion.<sup>90</sup> The more important structural work in Greece was monitored and increased through the spring. On 7 April, the Executive Committee approved a salary of £143.6.8 for Baggett,<sup>91</sup> while in May the Volo Yachting Club applied to the British Legation at Athens for a swimming coach, claiming that the 'method, scientific perfection and English enthusiasm in the accomplishment of duty' motivated them to apply to Britain.<sup>92</sup> Edwyn Hole, the British Consul-General at Salonica, supported the view in terms similar to Waterlow's enthusiasm for the football coach, stating 'that it would be likely to prove a sound investment from the propaganda point of view.'<sup>93</sup> The British Council acted on this, and sent out W. Aplin, only to find that Volo had appointed a local man in the interim.<sup>94</sup> But the football coach was more successful. In August, Baggett reported to Jennings on his early work, which had included the introduction of a national trophy competition on FA Cup lines, along with attempts to develop football in schools and his management of a national side in a trip to Budapest, where the Hungarians won by 11 goals.<sup>95</sup>

Further co-operation between the British Council, the Foreign Office, and the sports establishment came in July 1938, when Charles Bridge wrote to Leeper on Kennard's complaints from Poland in 1936. This initiative helped to bring about the important meeting between Vansittart and Rous. Such links were furthered in August in a discussion on the National Fitness Council (NFC). Wavell Wakefield MP and Lord Clydesdale of the NFC met Vansittart after their return from the World Congress of Work and Joy in Rome, at which they had

been impressed by the German and Italian leisure movements, and they requested that the Foreign Office should ensure publicity abroad for their work. Vansittart agreed, and Warner wrote to the British Council for help.<sup>96</sup> This led to a meeting on 10 August between Lord Lloyd, British Council Chairman, and NFC representatives Wakefield and Captain L. Ellis, at which the British Council agreed to assist with publicity work.<sup>97</sup> These increasing structural links between the British Council and one of Britain's sporting umbrella organisations demonstrate a commitment to sport as part of the broad programme of cultural propaganda.

The application of this commitment to Greece continued in the autumn and winter of 1938. It has not been possible to trace the fate of the unemployed Aplin, but the Executive Committee of 18 October stated that it was 'well justified' in sending a swimming coach at the cost of £145.0.0.,<sup>98</sup> while the Athens Chancery wrote to the British Council in October asking for a British football team to tour. The British Council agreed to help with arrangements, but did not wish to offer any financial help, leaving funding to the FA. They also rejected the idea of an amateur side being sent, as it was 'thought necessary that the team should be able to win, and by a controllable margin.'<sup>99</sup> The value of this work was underlined in February 1939 when Waterlow wrote a review of cultural propaganda in Greece for Halifax. He compared favourably the British Council's first year in Greece with the aggressive propaganda of Germany, and listed their academic and literary contributions before praising the 'excellent work' done by the football coach and the 'good work' done by the swimming coach in the Salonica area. He concluded that Britain was being treated more

favourably than Germany due to a 'natural and traditional sympathy', and that the work should be expanded to consolidate the British Council's position.<sup>100</sup> The place of sport was strengthened in March when Lord Lloyd visited Athens to discuss cultural propaganda in Greece with Waterlow. They discussed academic work, and then moved onto the question of the sport of *Neolea*, the Greek youth organisation. Baggett had been asked to take control of its football, but was unable to do so alone and so asked for help. Lloyd saw the value of this role as the Germans were also attempting to assert influence over *Neolea*, and Waterlow saw that 'there was an advantage in doing this, and that the importance of keeping sport in our hands outweighed any odium we might incur through our association with the *Neolea* in this way.' Baggett emphasised that Apostolides, the Minister of Finance, had made the request, and that to refuse it would be to lose some of the Greek Government's support for the British Council.<sup>101</sup>

The need for such work must be seen in the context of Johnstone's tour of the Balkans in January and February 1939, which took in Bulgaria, Greece, Roumania, and Yugoslavia, countries which were strategically significant for British control of the Eastern Mediterranean shipping routes and oil supplies. They reported to the Executive Committee that the Axis propaganda in these countries was good, but that Britain had a chance of maintaining its prestige if it worked hard. The need for extra finance was stressed, as was the need to support the cultural moves afoot in Greece. Britain was in the position to capitalise on its natural role as the ally of Balkan independence, and the contemporary and subsequent moves to use sport as part of this programme are rooted in this need to maintain

British interests in the Balkans.<sup>102</sup> Another attempt at this came in May 1939, when Waterlow contacted the British Council on the subject of the Hellenic Amateur Athletic Association's Marathon planned for 8 October. Runners from many countries were invited, including two Britons, and Waterlow saw it as

important that the United Kingdom should be represented in this event and that strong competitors should take part. Failure to compete would inevitably wound Greek susceptibilities, on the other hand weak British representatives would invite unfavourable comparison with the strong competitors which the German Government are sure to send.<sup>103</sup>

The event was cancelled due to the war, but the insistence of a public display of British athleticism against German strength clarifies the perspective with which the British Council and their sympathisers viewed sport.

The examples used here have dealt almost exclusively with Greece. This is, to a degree, dictated by the survival of documentation. The more general British Council file on sport, GB/35/1, has not survived.<sup>104</sup> However, the value of the Greek example is great. It was one of the countries prioritised for cultural propaganda, due to its strategic position in the Mediterranean and its long-term friendship with Britain that was perceived to be under threat from German and Italian propaganda and economic penetration. The British cultural propaganda was promoted actively by the British minister, Waterlow, which helped to ensure that it had a base wide enough to include football and swimming alongside lectures and English language

teaching. The permanent employment of Britons to teach and administer sport at this stage is also important, as it was an innovation later adopted in other countries, and the general value of sport as populist rather than elite propaganda worked in its favour. Through sport, the British Council was able to reach the lower classes as British techniques filtered down, while simultaneously courting Greek public figures who patronised native clubs' sports administrations. Overall, the Greek example shows the flexibility of the British Council's approach to cultural propaganda when in the hands of imaginative men, and the depth of commitment shown to sport by this branch of the state when its political value was demonstrated.

#### **4. Sport with Germany, 1937-1939**

After the 1936 Olympics at Berlin, the most famous example of Anglo-German sporting contact during the appeasement period was the Germany v England football match played at Berlin in May 1938, and won 6-3 by England.<sup>105</sup> The fixture was arranged by the FA in November 1937 upon receipt of an invitation from Germany in June.<sup>106</sup> It was brought to the attention of the Foreign Office in May 1938, eliciting the note from Gaselee that: 'Great importance is being attached to this in Germany... [For] our prestige it is really important that we should either win or put up a very good fight.' He urged that 'we should write a semi-official letter' to Rous 'expressing our interest in this match and our desire that the British team should be as efficient as possible'.<sup>107</sup> Vansittart wrote to Rous two days later, stating that 'it is really important for our prestige that the British team should put up a really first class performance. I hope that every possible effort will

be made to ensure this.'<sup>108</sup> Rous complied, promising to bring the matter to the attention of the FA's managing party, and concluding: 'You may rest assured that every member of the Team will do his utmost to uphold the prestige of his Country.'<sup>109</sup> The International Selection Committee did not convene between 29 April and 24 June, so Rous' representation was probably made privately.

The match passed successfully for both the Foreign Office and the FA. It was at this match that the historically controversial Nazi salute was made by the English players during the German national anthem, an act for which the order has not been easy to trace. The FA report on the whole tour, written by Rous and Wreford-Brown, stated that 'The Committee' decided the salute should be made,<sup>110</sup> although in his autobiography Rous stated that he and Wreford-Brown were guided to the decision by Sir Neville Henderson, the British Ambassador to Germany.<sup>111</sup> Players' memoirs are less vague about the order and their reactions to it, despite Rous' later claim that the decision was left to the players themselves, who all 'agreed they had no objection, and no doubt saw it as a bit of fun rather than of political significance'.<sup>112</sup> Stanley Matthews, for example, claimed that when an FA official 'gave an instruction that caused everyone to stop what he was doing and look up with some alarm', he felt 'disturbed':

What would all our friends back home think?... I wonder how many of the boys were tossing up with the idea of rebelling against this F.A. order which seemed so weak - the idea of crawling to Hitler and his thugs did not appeal to Englishmen.

He added that Henderson was behind the idea, but concluded that 'even to this day I still feel shame whenever I sit by the fire and glance through my scrap-book and gaze on that infamous picture of an England football team lining up like a bunch of Nazi robots, giving the dreaded salute.'<sup>113</sup>

Although Hitler did not see the match, prominent Nazis Goebbels, Goering, Hess, Ribbentrop, and Tschammer und Osten were present,<sup>114</sup> and the Nazi salute helped to ensure a friendly reception from the German crowd of 100,000. Coming soon after the *Anschluss* with Austria and at the start of direct German attempts on the Sudeten area of Czechoslovakia, this good reception was welcomed by the Foreign Office, as was the decisive English victory. The Consular Report from Berlin for May included a piece on the match, which concluded that the German people had been shown that 'the excellence of English football is still something to be admired and coveted. The game undoubtedly revived in Germany British sporting prestige'.<sup>115</sup> On receipt of this, Gerald Corley Smith of the News Department minuted that Rous should be thanked, as 'usually we send him nothing but complaints',<sup>116</sup> and Warner wrote to Rous on 25 June with a summary of the Consular Report and a message of congratulation 'on the success of this visit.'<sup>117</sup> This letter was reprinted in the FA's official report on the tour, which included a 2-1 defeat by Switzerland in Zurich and a 4-2 win over France in Paris. The report went on to state the recommendations that the FA should establish a special committee to investigate fully the quality and political status of any teams which England were invited to play:

Particular reference should be given to these questions, especially during times of international tension, when more than the playing of a match is at stake, and when it is particularly necessary for the English prestige in sport to be maintained.<sup>118</sup>

The penetration of Foreign Office attitudes on sport to the FA's decision-making bodies can be seen by the fact that these recommendations were adopted.<sup>119</sup> Thus, when the Foreign Office had to be seen to be reacting to Bridge's anti-football broadside in July, Warner was able to write to Rous on the need for 'further measures to ensure that a good impression is made abroad',<sup>120</sup> and the meeting between Rous and Vansittart to discuss future collaboration was on a sound basis after the FA's compliance over Germany.

Sporting contacts of a lower profile than this continued to be encouraged by the Foreign Office until the start of war in September 1939, but there were some reservations. Sport was generally hoped to work towards the maintenance of friendly relations in a non-provocative manner, so when the prospect of a German visit by a British football team managed by a Nazi sympathiser arose in January 1938, the Foreign Office intervened to minimise the damage. Councillor H C Andrews of Brighton, who had links with the Britannia Youth Movement, attempted to take his Brighton and Hove police team to Wuppertal; the Home Office warned the Foreign Office of the event,<sup>121</sup> and the News Department advised the Berlin Embassy of it as Andrews' previous dealings with Germany had had a 'strong Nazi tone'.<sup>122</sup> The government was concerned that the team wished to travel in uniform, a plan which their German hosts endorsed. The Foreign



Office, however, encouraged by the Berlin Embassy, decided to ensure that they travel in civilian clothes, in order to avoid the precedent which might enable German sportspersons from official bodies to visit Britain in uniform, an event that the experience from 1935 showed would be provocative to many Britons.

But the Foreign Office generally co-operated with Anglo-German sport, including the Treaty Department's support for Rous' request in September 1938 that 300 German football supporters be granted visas for the England v the Rest of Europe match to be played at Highbury on 26 October.<sup>123</sup> The Passport Office approved of this, and authorised the Passport Control office in Berlin to grant tourist visas to the enthusiasts.<sup>124</sup> Similarly, when the Amateur Basket Ball Association wrote to the Foreign Office in October 1938 asking whether their team should visit the British Embassy during their forthcoming visit to Berlin, no concern over the destination of the visit was voiced.<sup>125</sup> The extent to which official co-operation was offered to Anglo-German sport is perhaps best exemplified by the fact that a British Army motor cycle team was competing in an international meeting in Salzburg in the summer of 1939, and was only recalled on 25 August, a week before the declaration of war.<sup>126</sup>

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## Notes on Chapter Five

<sup>1</sup> Sir Howard Kennard to Orme Sargent, 3 June 1936. *FO 371/20462*, W 5343/542/50.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Howard Kennard to Rex Leeper, 26 May 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Translation, *IKC*, 26 May 1936; copy sent by Sir Howard Kennard to Rex Leeper. *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Sir Howard Kennard to Rex Leeper. *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Sir Howard Kennard to Orme Sargent, 3 June 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Minute, 15 June 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Minute, 27 June 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Orme Sargent to Sir Howard Kennard, 23 June 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Minute, 30 October 1936. *FO 371/20449*, W 8826/39/50.

<sup>10</sup> Minute, 15 August 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Sir George Mounsey to Viscount Cranbourne, 15 March 1937. *FO 371/21394*, W 5467/1786/41.

<sup>12</sup> Minute, 17 March 1937. *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Minute, n.d. (17 March 1937). *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Minute, 17 March 1937. *Ibid.*

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<sup>15</sup> Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (Harmondsworth: 1977) p. 360.

<sup>16</sup> Anthony Eden to Sir Charles Wingfield, 16 March 1937. *FO 371/21269*, W 6676/25/36.

<sup>17</sup> Minute, 12 April 1937. *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Minute by Edgar Joint, 26 April 1937. *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Sir Walford Selby to Sir George Mounsey, 9 January 1938. *FO 395/568*, P 673/28/150.

<sup>20</sup> Rowland Kenney to Stanley Rous, 11 February 1938. *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Minute, 25 January 1938. *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Sir Walford Selby to Sir George Mounsey, 9 January 1938. *FO 371/22591*, W 800/146/36.

<sup>23</sup> Tom Gallacher, *Portugal: a twentieth-century interpretation* (Manchester: 1983) p. 87.

<sup>24</sup> Charles Batemen to Rex Leeper, 11 January 1938. *FO 395/596*, P 345/345/150.

<sup>25</sup> Rowland Kenney to H. Croom-Johnston, 26 January 1938. *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> J. Jennings, British Council, to Corley Smith, 5 August 1938. *FO 395/596*, P 2362/345/150.

<sup>27</sup> Dr. A. Monteiro to Sir George Mounsey, 26 July 1938. *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Rex Leeper to British Empire Games Federation, 11 January 1938. *FO 395/568*, P 28/28/150.

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- <sup>29</sup> Charles Thomas to Augustus Routh, 16 December 1937. *Ibid.*
- <sup>30</sup> Rex Leeper to British Empire Games Federation, 11 January 1938. *Ibid.*
- <sup>31</sup> Olivette Small, British Empire Games Federation, to Foreign Office, 13 January 1938. *Ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup> Rex Leeper to Augustus Routh, 10 January 1938. *Ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> James Leigh-Wood to Foreign Office, 1 February 1938. *FO 395/568*, P 1201/28/150.
- <sup>34</sup> Charles Bridge to Rex Leeper, 12 July 1938. *Ibid.*, P 2241/28/150.
- <sup>35</sup> Christopher Warner to Stanley Rous, 27 July 1938. *Ibid.*
- <sup>36</sup> Minute by Aileen Dougherty, Private Secretary to Sir Robert Vansittart, 25 August 1938. *Ibid.*
- <sup>37</sup> Stanley Rous, *Football Worlds: a lifetime in sport* (Newton Abbot: 1979) p. 104.
- <sup>38</sup> William Pickford, Football Association, to Neville Chamberlain, 4 October 1938; Football Association Council, 27 October 1938. FA Archives.
- <sup>39</sup> *FO 395/568*, P 466/28/150.
- <sup>40</sup> News Department to Brussels, 5 February 1938. *Ibid.*, P 532/28/150.
- <sup>41</sup> Paul List to Simon Harcourt-Smith, 19 April 1938. *Ibid.*, P 1635/28/150.

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<sup>42</sup> FO 372/3268, T 3861/6/378.

<sup>43</sup> Paul Herbert to Chief Permit Secretary, 29 April 1938. *Ibid.*, T 5678/6/378.

<sup>44</sup> William Dunlop to J. McAlpine, 12 May 1938. *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Home Office to William Dunlop, 26 May 1938. *Ibid.*, T 7164/6/378.

<sup>46</sup> William Dunlop to Treasury, 2 June 1938. *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Montague Paske Smith to Viscount Halifax, 23 August 1938. FO 371/21447, A 7245/7245/11.

<sup>48</sup> Montague Paske Smith to Foreign Office, 8 August 1938. FO 372/3299, T 10474/255/379.

<sup>49</sup> Treaty Department to Montague Paske Smith, 10 August 1938. *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Evelyn Rawlins to Viscount Halifax, 10 September 1938. FO 371/21447, A 7687/7245/11.

<sup>51</sup> Victor Forbes to American Department, 6 September 1938. *Ibid.*, A 7777/7245/11.

<sup>52</sup> Sir Percy Loraine to Viscount Halifax, 16 May 1939. FO 371/23785, R 4193/1/22.

<sup>53</sup> Minute, 22 May 1938. *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Sir Robert Craigie to Foreign Office, 15 February 1938. FO 371/22189, F 1906/1904/23.

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<sup>55</sup> Sir Robert Craigie to Foreign Office, 16 February 1938. *Ibid.*, F 1904/1904/23.

<sup>56</sup> J. Lloyd Thomas to Lord Burghley, 17 February 1938. *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Sir Robert Craigie to Foreign Office, 24 February 1938. *Ibid.*, F 2186/1904/23.

<sup>58</sup> Minute, 24 February 1938. *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Foreign Office to Sir Robert Craigie, 2 March 1938. *Ibid.*, F 2491/1904/23.

<sup>60</sup> Sir Robert Craigie to Foreign Office, 4 March 1938. *Ibid.*, F 2520/1904/23.

<sup>61</sup> Minute, 5 March 1938. *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> William Davies to Sir Miles Lampson, 8 March 1938. *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 11 March 1938; cutting in *ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Sir Miles Lampson to Foreign Office, 11 March 1938. *Ibid.*, F 3017/1904/23.

<sup>65</sup> Sir Miles Lampson to Foreign Office, 19 March 1938. *Ibid.*, F 3238/1904/23.

<sup>66</sup> Sir Edmund Monson to Viscount Halifax, 8 July 1938. *Ibid.*, F 7384/1904/23.

<sup>67</sup> Sir Robert Craigie to Foreign Office, 15 July 1938. *Ibid.*, F 7630/1904/23.

<sup>68</sup> Thomas Snow to Foreign Office, 16 July 1938. *FO 371/22270*, N 3609/3609/56.

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<sup>69</sup> Thomas Snow to Foreign Office, 19 August 1938. *Ibid.*, N 4172/3609/56.

<sup>70</sup> Thomas Snow to Oliver Harvey, 22 February 1939. *FO 371/23648*, N 1129/698/56.

<sup>71</sup> Oliver Harvey to Thomas Snow, 8 March 1939. *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Thomas Snow to Viscount Halifax, 25 March 1939. *FO 371/23649*, N 1851/1851/56.

<sup>73</sup> Thomas Snow to Foreign Office, 3 June 1939. *Ibid.*, N 2779/1851/56.

<sup>74</sup> John Rodda, 'XII Tokyo/Helsinki (Cancelled) 1940', in Lord Killanin and John Rodda (eds), *The Olympic Games* (London: 1979) p. 116.

<sup>75</sup> David Wallechinsky, *The Complete Book of the Olympic Games* (London: 1984) p. xxii.

<sup>76</sup> British Council Executive Committee, 21 April 1936. *BW 68/2*..

<sup>77</sup> British Council Executive Committee, 6 October 1936. *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Kenneth Johnstone, 'British Cultural Propaganda in the Mediterranean Area', 10 October 1936. *BW 2/85*, *GB/8/2/399*.

<sup>79</sup> Eleanor Rathbone, 'Notes on Cultural Propaganda', April 1937. *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> British Council Executive Committee minutes, 9 November 1937. *BW 68/2*.

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<sup>81</sup> K. Kotzias to Sir Sidney Waterlow, 24 November 1937. *BW 34/8, GR/8/2.*

<sup>82</sup> Sir Sydney Waterlow to Anthony Eden, 26 November 1937. *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Sir Sidney Waterlow to Anthony Eden, 29 November 1937. *FO 395/556, P 5091/1265/150; repeated at BW 34/8, GR/8/2(3535).*

<sup>84</sup> Rowland Kenney to Charles Bridge, 3 December 1937. *BW 34/8, GR/8/2(3535).*

<sup>85</sup> O. Jennings to Stanley Rous, 23 December 1937; Stanley Rous to O. Jennings, 29 December 1937. *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Memorandum by O. Jennings on interview with Stanley Rous, 31 December 1937. *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> O. Jennings to O. Guy, 31 December 1937. *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Kenneth Johnstone to Sir Sidney Waterlow, 22 January 1938. *FO 395/565, P 468/18/150; Henry Hopkinson to Kenneth Johnstone, 11 February 1938. BW 34/8, GR/8/2(3535).*

<sup>89</sup> Ankara Chancery to News Department, 22 January 1938. *FO 395/609, P 512/512/150.*

<sup>90</sup> Rowland Kenney to British Council, 3 February 1938. *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> British Council Executive Committee minutes, 7 April 1938. *BW 68/2.*

<sup>92</sup> K. Kouziades and S. Tsalapatas, Volo YC, to British Legation, 29 April 1938; Sent by British Legation to British Council 18 May 1938. *BW 34/8, GR/8/2(3535).*

<sup>93</sup> Edwyn Hole to British Council, 18 May 1938. *Ibid.*



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- <sup>94</sup> British Council to Edwyn Hole, 15 July 1938. *Ibid.*
- <sup>95</sup> W. Baggett to O. Jennings, 12 August 1938. *Ibid.*
- <sup>96</sup> Christopher Warner to Charles Bridge, 27 July 1938. *FO 395/621*, P 2421/2421/150.
- <sup>97</sup> Record of conversation, 10 August 1938. *BW 2/85*, GB/8/2/(399).
- <sup>98</sup> Minutes, *BW 68/3*.
- <sup>99</sup> British Council to Athens Chancery, 12 December 1938. *BW 34/8*.
- <sup>100</sup> Sir Sidney Waterlow to Viscount Halifax, 22 February 1939. *BW 34/9*, GR/8/2(3536).
- <sup>101</sup> Draft record of meeting at HM Legation, Athens, 4 March 1939. *Ibid.*
- <sup>102</sup> Confidential report by K. Johnstone and M. Everett, 13 March 1939. Presented to British Council Executive Committee, 14 March 1939. *BW 68/3*.
- <sup>103</sup> British Legation, Athens, to British Council, 2 May 1939; copied to News Department. *FO 395/656*, P 1811/147/150.
- <sup>104</sup> Victorine F-Martineau, H/Archives of the British Council, personal correspondence to author, 12 September 1989.
- <sup>105</sup> Peter J. Beck, 'England v Germany, 1938', *History Today*, vol. 32, no. 6, June 1982, pp. 29-34.
- <sup>106</sup> Football Association International Selection Committee, 26 June 1937, 11 November 1937. FA Archives.

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- <sup>107</sup> Sir Stephen Gaselee to News Department, 4 May 1938. *FO 395/568*, P 1718/28/150.
- <sup>108</sup> Sir Robert Vansittart to Stanley Rous, 6 May 1938. *Ibid.*
- <sup>109</sup> Stanley Rous to Sir Robert Vansittart, 10 May 1938. *Ibid.*
- <sup>110</sup> Continental Tour Report, presented to Football Association International Selection Committee, 24 June 1938. FA Archives.
- <sup>111</sup> Stanley Rous, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
- <sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p.65.
- <sup>113</sup> Stanley Matthews, *Feet First* (London: 1948) pp. 86-7.
- <sup>114</sup> Peter J. Beck, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
- <sup>115</sup> Sir Neville Henderson to Foreign Office: extract from 'Current Events in Berlin', May 1938. *FO 395/568*, P 2054/28/150.
- <sup>116</sup> Minute, 20 June 1938. *Ibid.*
- <sup>117</sup> Christopher Warner to Stanley Rous, 25 June 1938. *Ibid.*
- <sup>118</sup> Continental Tour Report, presented to Football Association International Selection Committee, 24 June 1938. FA Archives.
- <sup>119</sup> Minutes, Football Association International Selection Committee, 24 June 1938. FA Archives.
- <sup>120</sup> Christopher Warner to Stanley Rous, 27 July 1938. *FO 395/568*, P 2241/28/150.

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<sup>121</sup> J.H. Burrell, Home Office, to Sir Stephen Gaselee, 14 January 1938. *Ibid.*, P 275/28/150.

<sup>122</sup> News Department to Berlin Chancery, 19 January 1938. *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Stanley Rous to Chief Passport Officer, 27 September 1938. *FO 372/3269*, T 12626/6/378.

<sup>124</sup> Passport Office to Stanley Rous, 11 October 1938; M. Jeffes, Passport Control Department, to Berlin, 5 October 1938. *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> J.A. Clay, Honorary Secretary of ABBA, to Foreign Office, 18 October 1938. *FO 395/568*, P 2968/28/150.

<sup>126</sup> Sir Neville Henderson to Foreign Office, 25 August 1939. *FO 371/23059*, C 11988/2387/18.

**PART III**

**SPORT IN WAR AND COLD WAR**

**'An important Foreign Office interest'**

## Chapter Six

### Sport and International Relations in Wartime, 1939-1945

#### 1. Sport in Wartime

The numerous changed conditions of manpower, economy, travel, and security that operated during the Second World War obviously precluded any traditional sport between nations, and when Garmisch-Partenkirchen and Helsinki ceased planning for the 1940 Olympics it became clear that formal international sport would have to be shelved for the duration. However, informal contacts continued in a number of sports involving British representatives, often under the auspices of the armed forces. These included sports tours of Britain and the various theatres of war by professional sportspersons whose military service was officially left flexible to allow for such entertainment work, along with fund-raising events involving top international names and representatives of other countries in exile. Throughout the war, there were also attempts to organise post-war contacts, and the usual monitoring of sport in other countries continued. The attitude of the Foreign Office towards sport can be seen to have been changed by the experience of the war, thanks to the exceptional amount of co-operation offered to the government by the governing bodies of most sports, in such fields as fund-raising and land use. The change was also tied to favourable propagandist images of national resilience and adaptability in the face of total war. There were, however, many practical reasons to prevent overt intervention and involvement in sport until the peace.

The idea of British sport being used as positive propaganda surfaced in 1939, when the Argentine FA suggested that a British

football team should tour their country. The proposal came from Dr. Adrian Escobar, President of the Argentine Association Football Federation and Director General of Posts and Telegraphs, who approached British Ambassador Sir Esmond Ovey with the idea. Ovey was assured that

if a really good side were sent out, they would be regarded by the public of Argentina as heroes... [There] could be no better propaganda for the United Kingdom in this time of war than to send out such a body of men, the representatives of the athletic manhood of the United Kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the offer of full expenses for the team, and of proceeds from the tour being given to the Red Cross, Ovey discouraged the idea due to manpower and travel obstacles. The potential propaganda value of such a visit in encouraging pro-Allied feeling amongst the population of this important country was thus sacrificed to wartime practicalities. But Ovey was not convinced of the case for such sporting contacts, and in his covering letter to Halifax he explained his reluctance in more candid terms. He wrote 'I believe international tests of athletic prowess in the professional field to be little short of disastrous', and went on to state the case against Anglo-South American football that survived for a long time at the Foreign Office:

no amount of discipline on the one side would have any possible effect upon an Argentine football crowd which is apt, when roused, to punctuate its vociferations by the hurling of bricks and, if the target is sufficiently close, by the drawing of knives. In theory - and possibly in practice - the propaganda value of a visit of a first class football team would be enormous, for the football "fans" of Argentina

are legion; but the dangers of disaster are such, that I could not possibly advise that the risk be taken.<sup>2</sup>

John Balfour, Head of the American Department, wrote to Ovey to approve his stance, stating that 'such visits would, at the present juncture, serve no useful purpose whatsoever.'<sup>3</sup> Ovey's warnings were re-inforced by O. Bonham-Carter of the Ministry of Information's Foreign Division, who wrote to the Foreign Office's Hugh Montgomery on 8 December to state that 'it is absolutely essential that the whole idea be shelved at once.'

It would be fatal if a team went out from here to play football in the Argentine, as nothing arouses the passions of the locals so much as this, to us, perfectly sound form of exercise. When one knows that the spectators have to be wired in and that the police are armed with tear-gas bombs, and that shootings have been known to occur, there is little need for one to enlarge upon the inadvisability of sending a team out.<sup>4</sup>

The original Argentine idea had been to include a French team in the tour, but Edouard Daladier, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, was also against the plan, which was subsequently dropped.<sup>5</sup> A similar scheme was raised towards the end of the war. But on this occasion, the attitudes of Ovey and the American Department that, despite any possible propaganda value a match might have brought at this time of German-backed agitation for the Falkland Islands, the risks of a British football team being implicated in a riot militated against compliance. The problems of travel and manpower imposed by the war formed a convenient excuse, although the warnings given here continued to inform the Foreign Office's understanding of Latin American crowds

in later debates.

A similar call for British sportspersons to travel abroad for propaganda reasons came in February 1940, when the *Fédération Française d'Athlétisme* (FFA) invited the AAA to send a team of young cross country runners, and a service team, for a France v Great Britain v Belgium event on 24 March. Holt informed Halifax that the French had claimed that 'the events would be, from the point of view of propaganda, a great success and would serve to tighten the bonds of friendship which unite us.'<sup>6</sup> The Central Department approved of the idea, with Frank Roberts minuting that there 'have been all too few social & sporting contacts between the French & ourselves since the war',<sup>7</sup> and Departmental Head Ivone Kirkpatrick duly informed Holt of the Foreign Office's support.<sup>8</sup> Kirkpatrick also wrote to the Service Ministries for their opinions, which were unanimously unfavourable due to wartime conditions. Lambert of the War Office wrote that the selection and training of an army team was impossible, and that the dispatch of a sub-standard team 'would render a disservice to the cause of inter-Allied propaganda'.<sup>9</sup> The Air Ministry declined with regret on the grounds that the activities of the RAF's Athletic and Cross Country Association had been suspended for the duration,<sup>10</sup> while the Admiralty repeated the War Office's line that 'to be of propaganda value, only the very best runners should compete in events of this nature', and so also declined with regret.<sup>11</sup> Some attempts to mitigate this concern with quality came from the Foreign Office, as in Guy Millard's minute from the Central Department that, after a recent 36-3 victory in rugby by the British army against the French: 'From the point of view of allied good-will, it might be better if we did not send quite such strong teams.'<sup>12</sup> But Kirkpatrick was forced to inform Holt that there could be no service representation at the proposed fixture.<sup>13</sup>



Holt thanked the Foreign Office for their efforts, and informed them that a junior team was being sent.<sup>14</sup>

The military aspect was revived upon the direct intervention of Charles Corbin, the French Ambassador in London, who told Halifax on 11 March that Edouard Daladier approved of the meeting and would be grateful if a British service team could attend.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, the War Office authorised the BEF to arrange an athletics fixture with the FFA if they so desired.<sup>16</sup> The action taken by senior Foreign Office officials in this attempt to establish an inter-Allied wartime sporting fixture indicates the trust that the Foreign Office had in the forces to promote an approved image of the British, along with their belief that 'social & sporting contacts' under the altered environment of wartime could help to increase Allied solidarity. A similar aim of promoting pro-British sympathy, this time in the Balkans, was demonstrated when the Southern Department approved the Roumanian suggestion that England should host a return football fixture for the previous May's match in Bucharest, which both the FA and the British Council supported if conditions allowed. Reginald Bowker of the Southern Department minuted his scepticism about the scheme, claiming that it seemed 'rather absurd to be arranging international football matches in the present circumstances', but concluded that 'if the Roumanian Legation think that it will have a good effect on Anglo-Roumanian relations if a return match were played, then I think we should support the proposal.'<sup>17</sup> The match did not take place, but its consideration in the same month as the Ministry of Supply's attempts to exploit pro-British feeling in Roumania by having the British Council show such films as *The Four Feathers*, *Pygmalion*, and *Goodbye, Mr Chips* suggest that popular cultural activities were being considered as part of the attempt to drive a

propaganda wedge behind the German offensive.<sup>18</sup>

The use of sport in wartime as a cultural demonstration of solidarity and sympathy between nations and nationalities can also be seen in the early stages of the war. In October 1940, for example, the FA gave equipment and administrative assistance to the Belgian refugees' football team in London, and helped to promote a number of fixtures for them.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the British Army's 8-2 victory over the Allied Armies at Stamford Bridge in March 1941 brought service personnel from Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Holland, Norway, and Poland into contact with their hosts.<sup>20</sup> A less practical but equally considerate idea was that of the USA's National Semi-Professional Baseball Congress to send 40,000 baseballs to the King for 'the distribution among the youth of England so that they may participate in our national pastime.' The balls in question were the ones used in the first play of that season's opening day, and were to be sent 'to show the close relationship and ideals between the youth of America and England.'<sup>21</sup> The American Department advised the Washington Chancery to thank Dumont but, in view of the shipping situation, to decline the offer on behalf of the King.<sup>22</sup>

The use of servicemen stationed abroad to engage in representative sport continued from the early Anglo-French contacts in rugby, athletics, and football. In November 1941, a combined service football team played four matches in Turkey, creating what British Ambassador at Ankara Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen<sup>s</sup> described as a 'favourable impression' of Britain at a time of German penetration by journalists, technicians, and businessmen.<sup>23</sup> But while this use of active troops already in the area was favoured by conditions, there were some attempts to send special teams abroad upon request, such as the Swedish attempt to secure a tour by a British tennis team. In December

1941, Marcus Wallenburg, the Chairman of the Swedish Lawn Tennis Association, wrote to Anthony Sabelli, Secretary of the LTA, to ask for a two or three man team to play in several parts of Sweden. He wrote that he was aware of 'existing conditions' that 'may make it almost impossible for You to organize this trip',

but viewing the deeper interests of our two countries I have ventured to forward You this proposal knowing the favourable reaction and keen interest which the appearance of a British team in Sweden would create.<sup>24</sup>

Wallenburg also wrote to Christopher Warner, Head of the Northern Department, asking for the Foreign Office to support the tour. He claimed: 'Apart from the fun of it, which perhaps is indecent in these times, I think it would do a lot of good.'<sup>25</sup> Warner's initial reaction was negative. He wrote to Wallenburg the following day claiming that 'I am not sure that I much like the proposal in war time, at first sight', and that even if a team could be assembled 'the visit would have rather a frivolous effect.'<sup>26</sup> The consensus in the Northern Department backed this view, as officials raised the criticism that transport was required for 'British and Allied subjects valuable to our war effort',<sup>27</sup> and casting it as 'a ridiculous suggestion.'<sup>28</sup>

Warner wrote to Sabelli on 27 December to state this view and solicit his, but pressure for the proposed tour then arrived from Charles Hambro, who had been an Honorary Attaché at Britain's Stockholm Embassy until July 1940. He wrote on 24 December that, despite transport problems,

this sort of gesture would do more to enhance British prestige not only in Sweden but in Finland, Norway, Denmark and even Germany, than many hours of effort by all the propagandists we could muster. It is just the sort of

thing that would appeal to the Swedes and bring home to them the strength of the British Empire.<sup>29</sup>

But Hambro's was the only voice in favour, and even Sabelli owned that such a tour might provoke attack, and that 'the damage to be anticipated from any criticism would far outweigh the problematical value of the propaganda in Sweden.'<sup>30</sup> The matter was then closed on the basic point that the LTA would be unable to raise a team, but this example provides some useful clues on the Foreign Office's view of sport. Not only did a former British representative give full support to the notion that sport could act, under wartime conditions, as positive propaganda for Britain, but the Foreign Office's ultimate rejection of the plan was based more on the impracticalities of transport and the fear of trivialising the war effort than on any aversion to becoming involved in sport: this was an important development, given the Foreign Office's usual view of sport as inherently trivial in itself. The lack of traditional Foreign Office disclaimers suggests a growing conciliation with the idea of sport as cultural propaganda. This was underlined by a dispatch from Victor Mallet, the British Envoy in Stockholm, on 12 January, in which he referred to any attempt to send an inferior tennis team as 'worse than useless', but made tentative suggestions for a 'really good football XI' from the British Army to be sent to Sweden that spring. He predicted that such a team would 'create a real sensation here'.<sup>31</sup> At least in the relationship between Britain and Sweden, in which the Scandinavian country's neutrality gave Britain a useful platform between occupied Norway and Finland, the principle of sport as a legitimate propaganda tool was not challenged at the Foreign Office.

This legitimacy can also be seen in connection with neutral Spain in February 1943, when the Treasury approved the Foreign Office's

request to send 1200 golf balls and 300 tennis balls to that country's sports clubs.<sup>32</sup> The request came from Sir Samuel Hoare, British Ambassador to Spain, who was noted by Patrick Hancock of the Central Department to have 'regarded it as a propaganda move of effectiveness & importance.'<sup>33</sup> Hoare's view was expounded by William Dunlop, Head of the Communications Department, in his letter to the Air Ministry asking for transport for the balls. He cited Hoare as informing the Foreign Office how the German Embassy had made a good impression by presenting 120 tennis balls for an international tournament at Santander, and how he was 'most anxious to make a similar gesture.'

He pointed out that considerable political importance attached to this question and he suggested that golf and tennis balls should in this connexion be regarded not as playthings but as instruments of policy.<sup>34</sup>

The Foreign Office thus helped to facilitate this minor but significant use of sport as cultural propaganda for the end of maintaining pro-British feelings in Franco's Spain, and to keep the Peninsula from succumbing to German and Italian courtship.

But the extension of this idea to sports teams was still not forthcoming when applied to South America in the summer of 1944, when Juan Rodriguez of Buenos Aires wrote to Winston Churchill to suggest that a British football club should tour Central and South America to raise money for British war charities. He claimed that a series of matches by a top club in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Paraguay, and Peru would raise one million *pesos* and would 'secure good-will for the future.' He suggested that Arsenal be chosen.<sup>35</sup> The Foreign Office officials involved were unmoved by the appeal, and they referred to the

Swedish tennis example of 1942 to legitimise the fear that 'public criticism in the Press and perhaps even in Parliament would be immediate.'<sup>36</sup> The familiar and genuine excuse that manpower and transport problems would preclude this idea anyway were stated, along with one note against the idea for fear of crowd behaviour. The Department had been warned of the problems surrounding football in Latin America, both by Ovey in 1939 and more recently by Edgar Joint, British Consul at San Salvador, who wrote in December 1943 describing how the Central American and Caribbean Football Championships had caused 'further deterioration [*sic*]' in relations between El Salvador and Guatemala.<sup>37</sup> There was thus an understandable degree of reluctance about football in the South American Department, and a concern that if such an event did occur, it should be carefully monitored. John Perowne, for example, minuted that 'if and when a proposal of this nature is seriously considered, the papers about earlier tours by British professional teams shd be looked [*sic*]. My impression is that they usually fail to achieve the objects for which they were organised.'<sup>38</sup> The matter was duly shelved on 7 September, when the South American Department wrote to the Buenos Aires Chancery to ask them to inform Rodriguez of the impossibility of the idea 'in view of the existing political position, and the manpower situation here.'<sup>39</sup>

The improving relationship between the Foreign Office and the FA was put on a firmer basis in June 1943 when Rous presented his reconstruction programme to the Association in the paper *The F.A.: Post War Development*. This urged that contacts made during wartime between the FA and the Government and Services should be maintained and furthered in peacetime, and that the friendly links made with other countries during the war should be used to lead to the

full international emergence of English football. Rous argued that international contacts should be developed at school, club, league, and full international levels, and that the current 'collaboration with the British Council' should be extended.<sup>40</sup> Examples of this work, which involved close co-operation with various branches of the state, included the Inter-Allied Services Cup of 1944, in which the National Fire Service, the Police Athletic Association, the Army, and the RAF competed against the Canadian Army, the Belgian Army, the Netherlands Army, and the Norwegian Forces.<sup>41</sup> The reconstruction programme became more formalised in 1944, with Rous' interim report,<sup>42</sup> and the closer collaboration with the government was evident in the FA's planning of the dispatch of a team to Paris and Brussels in the autumn of 1944. Rous wrote to George Hall, Parliamentary Under Secretary, on 21 September to inform the Foreign Office that the matches were taking place at the request of the Deputy Supreme Commander, Air Chief Marshall Tedder, and requesting that British ministers in the two Allied capitals should attend.<sup>43</sup> The ministers were duly contacted by Frank Roberts,<sup>44</sup> and the matches took place, seen by the FA as the re-opening 'in happy circumstances [of] the sporting relations between the English and their friends the French and Belgians.'<sup>45</sup> The FA XI for these games, picked from a squad including pre-war internationals Matt Busby, Raich Carter, Ted Drake, Stanley Matthews, Joe Mercer, and Frank Soo, won both matches comfortably, beating *France Libérée* 5-1 in Paris on 30 September and a Belgian XI 3-0 in Brussels on 1 October. About £4000 was raised for war charities in the three competing nations. High profile sport was thus coming to be seen as legitimate propaganda, while the wartime experience was putting the frequently rocky relationship that the Foreign Office had enjoyed with the governing bodies of some sports

onto a steadier basis of co-operation.

This was also evident in the attempt to organise a match between *Racing Club de Paris* and Arsenal, a regular pre-war fixture that was to be revived to raise funds for war invalids. The British Embassy was approached by *Racing Club's* President, who requested that the Ambassador be made 'President of the match', and pointed out that 'the recent France-England match was a great success.'<sup>46</sup> The French Department agreed to help, and Arsenal's manager George Allison was contacted for further information. Allison informed the Department that he had already approached the Ministry of Information for help, but had been turned down, E. Mcleod of that ministry's European Section explaining that: 'a. The French will get beaten. b. Transport is short. c. The French journalists are now reporting that Britain is mobilised to the last man & hence le sport shd be kept in the background.' However, after admitting that Mcleod's argument was persuasive, the Western Department noted that it was still a good idea:

We wish to encourage visits by similar classes of people; & if booksy boys go over, why not footballers? This match wd appeal to people who are not affected by more 'cultural' propaganda. There is a dearth of things English in Paris, & the men on the spot like the idea.<sup>47</sup>

However, the logistical problems raised by the Ministry of Information, along with those of keeping up an appearance of full mobilisation and prioritisation of the military effort, gained the upper hand. On 30 October, Richard Speaight of the French Department wrote to Peter Scarlett, First Secretary at the Paris Embassy, stressing that the mobilisation propaganda being put out by the Government would 'scarcely be consistent with' the official dispatch of

a team of professional footballers (all presumably exempted



from military service) in order to provide an afternoon's entertainment for the sporting public of the capital. The French would doubtless enjoy the occasion but this does not seem to be the sort of pleasure we want to give them.<sup>48</sup>

The note on military exemption was inaccurate, as Arsenal's squad in the 1944-45 season included Sergeant Instructor William Barnes of the Army and RAF men Ted Drake and Bernard Joy.<sup>49</sup> But more pertinent to the Foreign Office's case was the problem of transport, which Speaight claimed should be given to businessmen before footballers, and the sporting argument raised by Macleod that *Racing Club* 'would almost certainly get a sound beating. The French do not always take a beating well even from their favourite Ally.' He asked Scarlett to explain to *Racing Club* that 'shortage of transport makes it necessary to postpone the fixture',<sup>50</sup> and wrote to McLeod to ask her to deal with Allison.<sup>51</sup> This incident raises some valuable points. First, it shows the willingness with which the FA and the club co-operated with the Government in trying to arrange the fixture; and while this was necessary because of the transport situation, Rous and Allison were clearly willing collaborators. Second, the defence of the idea of football as popular cultural propaganda is rare in Foreign Office files, and the claim that footballers should be used in the same way as the 'booksy boys' in Anglo-French relations is quite radical. It shows a more positive appreciation of the fact highlighted by Bridge and Kennard in 1938 over Chelsea's behaviour in Poland, and indicates a new populism in the outlook of some at the Foreign Office. However, this populism must be seen in the context of the ultimate result of the official involvement, whereby powers invoked over the control of transport to prevent the visit show the government as being

uncommitted to such a display. Moreover, the manner in which the sports clubs were to be kept uninformed about the government's real objection to the fixture suggests the survival of a basic mistrust of sport.

Similar problems of travel priority were raised in January 1945 over Anglo-Belgian athletics. On 5 January, the Honorary Secretary of the English Cross Country Union (ECCU), wrote to Eden asking for facilities for the Victory Cross Country Race being organised by *Ligne Royale Belge D'Atlétisme* for March, which would take place in Brussels and comprise of teams from Belgium, France, and Luxembourg. He cited the precedent of the 1940 event in Paris, and asked for official support for this event which would provide entertainment for British troops based in Belgium.<sup>52</sup> With no reply forthcoming from the Foreign Office, he wrote again on 23 January,<sup>53</sup> as did Belgian Ambassador Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, who asked Eden for his support.<sup>54</sup> Frederick Hoyer Millar, Head of the Western Department, acknowledged both letters on 6 February,<sup>55</sup> but the Department was unable to support the scheme fully due to transport problems.<sup>56</sup> They informed the Brussels Chancery of this stance, although the basic idea of sport as positive propaganda was not dismissed:

While we are, as you know, generally speaking, in favour of renewing former Anglo-Belgian contacts in various walks of life, we are a little doubtful whether in present circumstances there would be sufficient justification to recommend to the authorities concerned the grant of exit permits etc. for such a purely sporting event as the race in question. On the other hand, if this is to be an important and representative affair, it would perhaps be a pity to let

an opportunity slide of showing the British flag and providing entertainment to our troops.<sup>57</sup>

The Brussels Chancery rejected the whole idea, along similar lines to those cited against the Arsenal visit to Paris: that Belgian journalists had been informed of Britain's total war effort, and that businessmen should have a priority over sportsmen.<sup>58</sup> Consequently, Hoyer Millar contacted both the Belgian Ambassador and the ECCU on 21 February to decline Foreign Office involvement because of the logistical problems involved.<sup>59</sup> As with the *Racing Club* plan for Arsenal, the Foreign Office here showed itself to have the power to prohibit an overseas fixture, through the channels of passport and transport control, but the acceptance of the potential value of sport is once more seen to be entering official thought. However, it is noteworthy that once again the reason that Britain might appear frivolous and uncommitted to finishing the war was kept from the proposer of the sports event.

Another major development for British sport in the war years, and one which mirrored perfectly the developments on the diplomatic front necessitated by the war, was the growth of a benevolent attitude towards the USSR. A country with which the FA had had no contact before 1939, a sign of the change in attitude came in January 1943, soon after the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Alliance of 1942, when Brook Hirst, the Chairman of the War Emergency Committee, sent a 'congratulatory message' to Stalin 'on the anniversary of the setting up of the Soviet Government.'<sup>60</sup> Similarly, the Foreign Office heard in March 1944 how the FA of Wales had sent Soviet sportsmen 'a present of a football with a message of greetings.'<sup>61</sup> Given the reconstructionist attitude prevailing at Lancaster Gate, it was natural that these expressions of solidarity should develop into fixtures, and, in

the English setting, Rous met Soviet Embassy officials in September 1944 to discuss post-war footballing links.<sup>62</sup> In January 1945, he followed this up with the proposal of an England v USSR match at Wembley on 26 May, which the FA would cover financially, and which would be used to raise money for the Aid to Russia fund.<sup>63</sup> On 22 February, he wrote to Philip Noel-Baker, the Minister of War Transport who, as Philip Baker, had won the silver medal in the 1500 metres at the 1920 Olympics, asking for governmental help in organising such a fixture.<sup>64</sup> Noel-Baker backed the idea fully, writing enthusiastically to Eden:

The great mass of young Russians now take such a passionate interest in sport of all kinds that I am convinced that international sport should be a very important way of breaking down their isolationism. Nothing could start the thing so well as a soccer international of the kind which Rous proposes.

He concluded: 'Is there anything that I can do to help? Or would you feel like taking any official action?'<sup>65</sup>

Eden pencilled on this letter, before passing it to the Northern Department for consideration, 'What do you say? Russians may well think that war is more important than football these days.'<sup>66</sup> J.Hill of the Northern Department described the idea as 'excellent' as a 'means of breaking down barriers', but saw the perennial transport and manpower problems as 'obstacles'. He noted that 'the U.S.S.R. would no doubt find much greater difficulty in getting a good team together than we should, and this would increase the chances of their team getting soundly beaten, which might not be altogether fortunate.' He suggested that the idea be approved, but recommended that the Foreign Office should not 'press the Russians at a high level if they do not

respond to Mr. Rous's letter'.<sup>67</sup> He drafted a reply to Noel-Baker, which stated that 'a football match between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. would be an excellent means of breaking down barriers', but that transport problems and the intense Soviet war effort were against it.<sup>68</sup> However, his more cynical Head of Department, Christopher Warner, minuted that 'it will take much more than a football match to break down the real barriers which the Soviet Govt. firmly believe in', and he 'toned down the draft'<sup>69</sup> to read 'a football match... might be a good plan.'<sup>70</sup> But the reply ended positively, as the Foreign Office left open the chance of such a match taking place after the war, and Eden promised to 'bear it in mind as a subject to mention in conversation with M. Gousev [Feodor Gousev, Soviet Ambassador to Britain] if occasion arises, in order to show that the proposal has our blessing.'<sup>71</sup> This debate obviously laid the foundations for the Moscow Dynamo tour of November 1945, and shows the adoption of a positive attitude towards international sport in the service of diplomacy at the highest level of government. The concept of the Foreign Secretary openly admitting his department's 'blessing' of a football match to a foreign ambassador was something of a departure.

A final wartime example of collaboration between the Foreign Office and the FA came in March 1945 when the Swiss FA invited an England team to play at their jubilee celebrations in July, and the Swiss Legation approached the Foreign Office for support.<sup>72</sup> The Western Department was in favour of the match. Lord Reay listed the reasons why support should be given:

I submit that (a) in view of the importance attached to this proposed visit by the Swiss Government, (b) because of our desire to reopen contacts between Switzerland and the outside world, and, particularly, (c) because of our policy

to accommodate the Swiss whenever possible for a number of well-known reasons, we should support this request.

These reasons centred on Swiss assistance with prisoners-of-war and diplomatic links, but Reay was aware that wartime conditions might work against the match, and he noted: 'I doubt whether exit permits will be given to these football players unless we give our support in fairly strong terms.'<sup>73</sup> Consequently, Hoyer Millar wrote to the Home Office in such 'strong terms':

Mr. Eden is in favour of such a visit, which should serve to strengthen the already friendly feelings of the Swiss nation towards this country. He hopes, moreover, that in considering the Swiss Government's request, Mr. Morrison will bear in mind the many signal services which they have rendered throughout the war in protecting British interests and particularly British prisoners of war in enemy hands.<sup>74</sup>

The Home Office agreed to consider applications for exit permits for the team members favourably 'on the assumption that Mr. Secretary Eden is prepared to certify that the journeys in question are in the national interest'.<sup>75</sup> After another request from the Swiss Legation,<sup>76</sup> Hoyer Millar passed on the Home Office's decision, and asked that the FA be informed to apply quickly for the permits.<sup>77</sup> The Swiss invitation for the match to take place on 21 July was accepted by the FA on 4 May.<sup>78</sup> Planning for transportation was still progressing on 25 June, when the War Emergency Committee was disbanded,<sup>79</sup> but the game did not take place. However, as a sign of the return of peace, England did entertain France at Wembley on 26 May, a 2-2 draw that marked the first visit of a full international team to England since 1938, and the Swiss played England and Scotland in May 1946, losing

4-1 at Stamford Bridge and 3-1 at Hampden Park.<sup>80</sup>

The last years of the war thus witnessed something of a new official attitude towards sport. The use of phrases and concepts that would have been anathema in the inter-war years, such as the 'blessing' and 'support' officially given to certain sports fixtures, indicated a higher degree of official commitment and involvement than had ever taken place in Britain before. While this change was largely due to the practicalities of wartime, when state co-operation was needed in so many areas for sport to function at all, the Foreign Office's involvement went further than this. Over certain incidents, most notably the chance of footballing contacts with Switzerland and the Soviet Union, highly placed officials and even the Foreign Secretary himself can be seen to have adopted the view that international sport could promote good relations, and that it should accordingly be supported. The general trend towards populism that transformed the National Government during the 'People's War' can be seen to have been at work here, with Eden, Hoyer Millar, and particularly the ex-Olympian Noel-Baker all working to promote sport when it was deemed to be expedient in a way that their inter-war predecessors would not have considered. The willing co-operation of the governing bodies of most sports was undoubtedly a factor in this: with the rugby ground at Twickenham converted to a Civil Defence centre, the Centre Court of Wimbledon a Home Guard drill ground, and the Oval a prisoner-of-war camp, the overall relationship between state and sport was good.<sup>81</sup> But the growth of the Foreign Office's positive attitude towards sport increased under the post-war Labour Government; and it is clear that the conditions of the war generally encouraged the Foreign Office to use sport on a more regular basis.

## 2. The British Council and Sport, 1939-45

The British Council's involvement with sport, though still relatively informal, expanded somewhat during the war, particularly through the sponsorship of touring service sports teams, and through work in various countries of political importance. As in the immediate pre-war years, Spain and Portugal remained priorities, and they became targets at an early stage. In October 1939, for example, the Executive Committee approved the suggestion from Sir Maurice Peterson, British Ambassador to Spain, that the British Council should make a gift of 1,000 kilograms of grass seed, four sets of golf clubs, and 120 balls to the Puerta de Hierro Golf Club in Madrid.<sup>82</sup> He wrote to Lord Tyrell of the British Council in November to inform him of the success of the gift, which had inspired interest in the club from Franco and some of his generals as members and sponsors. He enclosed a copy of a letter from himself to Joaquim Santos Suarez, the President of the Club, in which he recounted his 'happiest memories' of the club and how the British Council's gift 'brings with it the good wishes of all British sportsmen for the future and prosperity of golf in Spain and of the Puerta de Hierro Club in particular.'<sup>83</sup> The Central Department, at that time pursuing openings for pro-British feelings in Spain, expressed its approval of the gift: Michael Williams described it as 'an excellent purpose for the British Council to spend its money on',<sup>84</sup> while Kirkpatrick simply noted: 'Vive le Sport.'<sup>85</sup>

Attempts to improve Britain's standing in Portugal were also made through the channel of sport by the British Council in 1939, when a boxing coach for the *Mocidade* was appointed. This was recommended by Sir Walford Selby, British Ambassador to Portugal, in November 1939,<sup>86</sup> and was approved by Rupert Pearce with the pun: 'It seems essential for us to provide someone for this job, since a



boxing instructor could surely strike a powerful blow or two for British propaganda.<sup>87</sup> Secretary General Charles Bridge approved of the idea, as the 'Mocidade exercise an influence in Portuguese life & are or were courted by the Germans',<sup>88</sup> and Lord Lloyd received further details from Selby. The Ambassador hoped that the British Council could find a suitable man, even if it involved subsidising the 1000 *escudo* monthly wage offered by the *Mocidade*,

as it at last offers us a chance of getting a footing in the Mocidade, which has as you know been very much influenced by the Germans... It looks as if we have the chance of displacing German influence and I am convinced you will agree we should take it.<sup>89</sup>

The British Council acted immediately. Pearce interviewed gymnasium owner Fred Dyer on 23 November, who was unimpressed by the wages but agreed to look around for other candidates.<sup>90</sup> After consulting the Portuguese Embassy,<sup>91</sup> Pearce assured Dyer that the wage was reasonable, and that he would be able to teach English for extra money. He also stressed that they needed 'a man of really good character' who 'could be most valuable in upholding British prestige in Portugal.'<sup>92</sup> Meanwhile, the Foreign Office had become involved. Selby had written to the Central Department on 21 November urging them to encourage the British Council in its recruitment, and Kirkpatrick accordingly wrote to Bridge the following week to stress the importance of the scheme.<sup>93</sup> Dyer, however, was not satisfied with the wages on offer, and he was replaced in the recruitment by George Gogay through the Army Physical Training School at Aldershot. Gogay was an experienced amateur boxer who had been rejected from army service due to deafness, although, as Bridge noted, he was 'not deaf enough to be a nuisance',<sup>94</sup> and he was appointed after interview

on 16 December.<sup>95</sup> His reports home showed him to be effective and diligent. By the end of February, he had increased his boxing students from 6 to 12, and was participating in the *Mocidade's* camp and rowing club.<sup>96</sup> His duties increased during the summer to include football, but the changing political environment after the Timor landings left him with only boxing in November 1942.<sup>97</sup> As with the use of the swimming coach in pre-war Greece, the British Council's use of a sports instructor to gain a foothold in an influential and potentially hostile foreign governmental agency demonstrates the worth of sport in their programme, as well as the overall flexibility of cultural propaganda.

More pragmatic examples of sporting involvement included the British Council's role in trying to organise the England v Roumania football match in 1940. In March, Richard Speaight, on secondment to the British Council, wrote to Philip Broad of the Southern Department to inform him that the Ministry of Information had been approached by the Roumanian Legation to arrange the fixture. The Ministry of Information had passed the matter to the British Council, who had approached Rous for the FA's view, which was as positive as conditions could allow. But Speaight needed Foreign Office backing, and he asked Broad 'how you view the proposal from the political point of view.' He added 'I imagine that we should encourage it, if the Football Association consider it practicable in other respects.'<sup>98</sup> The plan came to nothing, but the unquestioning and unquestioned involvement of the British Council in trying to arrange a full international football match is worthy of note.

On more usual British Council territory was the recommendation from Edwyn Hole, Consul-General in Salonica, who asked for approval of the gift of three tennis nets which he was set to make to a

local tennis club. He claimed this had

a double importance from the point of view of 'cultural relations': it is exclusive and only accepts the best people on the social side, and also caters for a younger and more athletic set on the games side... [It] may be regarded as a focus of pro-British light and leading. And its nets are wearing out.<sup>99</sup>

The lighthearted expression of the request cannot disguise the serious intent of Hole in maintaining Greek sympathy for Britain through the social circles of the tennis club. Similarly, the British Council's donation of a football trophy in Peru, the *Copa Mariscal Millar*, helped to promote Britain's standing in Lima: British Envoy Victor Forbes reported on how he kicked-off the match at which 'there was no doubt of the pleasure of the crowd at the possession of this British Cup or as to where their sympathies lie.'<sup>100</sup> John Perowne urged full publicity for this news, to demonstrate 'how much the Latin American *public* is in favour of our cause.'<sup>[emphasis in original].</sup><sup>101</sup> The British Council also involved itself financially in the Services football tour of Turkey and Palestine of December 1941, giving a guarantee of £500 to cover a possible deficit.<sup>102</sup> The value of the cultural work in Turkey had been stressed in August 1940, when Charles Dundas had reported that '99% of Turks are certain that we shall win the war', but that propaganda was essential to counter the badly received but extensive work from Germany.<sup>103</sup> Sport was continually used as a part of this propaganda, with the funding of Baggett as coach to Galatasaray FC,<sup>104</sup> and most notably in the sponsorship of a tour by a British services football team in late 1941. The tour consisted of eight matches in Ankara, Istanbul, and Adana. British Council representative Michael Grant reported that from 'the propaganda viewpoint I must emphasize very strongly the

highly successful results of this experiment', noting that the large crowds attracted to the matches created a high degree of political interest in the British Council's work. He added that the team also 'did really excellent propaganda' socially, as they 'were a very nice lot of men' and their manager, Captain Lowrie, proved reliable in appreciating 'the need for extreme discretion owing to the pathologically touchy character of his hosts.' He concluded with the recommendation that 'for propaganda reasons it should be repeated regularly':

It is useless to expect sportsmanship from an imperfectly civilised nation, but the best way to teach them it is to show them our football teams regularly over a long period.<sup>105</sup>

Evidence of the British Council's sports activities during the middle years of the war has been difficult to trace, but it was used in Latin America towards the end of the war. In July 1942, Eugen Millington-Drake, who had used sport before the war, toured Central and South America as the British Council's Chief Representative, and in his report to Chairman Malcolm Robertson he called for continued efforts in cultural relations as 'the most effective means of influencing Latin America and much needed by us to substitute waning economic influence and to strengthen Latin American morale.'<sup>106</sup> In practice, these relations sometimes focused on sport, a generally popular area of Latin American life. In 1943, the British Legation at Costa Rica suggested that the British Council present a football cup in that country, where the coffee trade made links with Britain important. Football was proposed as a vehicle of propaganda because 'there is no single gesture of good-will that might be made towards this country which would exert such a nation-wide appeal.'<sup>107</sup> This scheme

materialised in January 1944, when Assistant Press Attaché Charles Stern wrote to the British Council on the competition being ready to start in the spring, and asked that the Ministry of Information send money to enable him to make 'a movie of the first match' which would 'go well anywhere in Latin America.'<sup>108</sup> The *Copa Gran Bretana* was duly competed for in April 1944: British Envoy Stanley Irving kicked off, and much pro-British sympathy was in evidence at the games. The film was described as 'an excellent propaganda short for local use'.<sup>109</sup>

These are some examples of the pragmatic way in which the British Council used sport to maintain a high British profile in non-belligerent countries where Allied and Axis powers were competing for influence. The appeal of sport was two-fold. It could work at an elite level, with the golfing equipment sent to Franco's club serving as a fine example of the British Council's courting of the influential through the social side of sport; and on a populist level, where, for example, a football cup donated by Britain was able to reach large numbers of the native population. Alongside this pragmatism can be seen the structural involvement in sport, as in the employment of British coaches on long-term contracts who, it was hoped, would spread sympathy for Britain through teaching methods and the "fair play" ethos, while also fostering links between the British Council and the patrons of native sports.

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## Notes on Chapter Six

<sup>1</sup> Memorandum of conversation by Sir Esmond Ovey; enclosed in Sir Esmond Ovey to Viscount Halifax, 9 November 1939. *FO 371/22715, A 8182/8182/2.*

<sup>2</sup> Sir Esmond Ovey to Viscount Halifax, *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> John Balfour to Sir Esmond Ovey, 1 December 1939. *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> O. Bonham Carter to Hugh Montgomery, 8 December 1939. *Ibid.*, A 8633/8182/2.

<sup>5</sup> Edouard Daladier to Ronald Campbell, 20 December 1939. *Ibid.*, A 9150/8182/2.

<sup>6</sup> E.J. Holt, AAA, to Viscount Halifax, 1 February 1940. *FO 371/24324, C 1723/1723/17.*

<sup>7</sup> Minute, 6 February 1940. *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Ivone Kirkpatrick to E.J. Holt, 8 February 1940. *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> War Office to Alexander Cadogan, 27 February 1940. *Ibid.*, C 3076/1723/17.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Evans to Alexander Cadogan, 26 February 1940. *Ibid.*, C 3077/1723/17.

<sup>11</sup> Admiralty to Alexander Cadogan, 28 February 1940. *Ibid.*, C 3122/1723/17.

<sup>12</sup> Minute, 4 March 1940. *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Ivone Kirkpatrick to E.J. Holt, 8 March 1940. *Ibid.*

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<sup>14</sup> E.J. Holt to Alexander Cadogan, 12 March 1940. *Ibid.*, C 3846/1723/17.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Corbin to Viscount Halifax, 11 March 1940. *Ibid.*, C 3843/1723/17.

<sup>16</sup> War Office to Alexander Cadogan, 21 March 1940. *Ibid.*, C 4446/1723/17.

<sup>17</sup> Minute, 18 March 1940. *FO 371/24988*, R 3551/392/37.

<sup>18</sup> *FO 371/24988*, R 4322/392/37.

<sup>19</sup> Football Association War Emergency Committee, 21 October 1940. FA Archives.

<sup>20</sup> Jack Rollin, *Soccer at War, 1939-1945* (London: 1985) p. 49.

<sup>21</sup> Raymond Dumont, President of the National Semi-Pro Baseball Congress, to George VI, 20 February 1941. *FO 371/26179*, A 1690/101/45.

<sup>22</sup> American Department to Washington Chancery, 14 March 1941. *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugesenn to Foreign Office, 28 November 1941. *FO 371/30031*, R 10205/15/44.

<sup>24</sup> Marcus Wallenburg to Anthony Sabelli, 7 December 1941; copy to Foreign Office, 10 December 1941. *FO 371/29676*, N 7158/378/42.

<sup>25</sup> Marcus Wallenburg to Christopher Warner, 10 December 1941. *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Christopher Warner to Marcus Wallenburg, 11 December 1941. *Ibid.*

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<sup>27</sup> Minute, 13 December 1941. *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Minute by Edward Coote, 15 December 1941. *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Charles Hambro to Christopher Warner, 24 December 1941. *Ibid.*, N 7405/378/42.

<sup>30</sup> Anthony Sabelli to Christopher Warner, 29 December 1941. *Ibid.*, N 7449/378/42.

<sup>31</sup> Victor Mallet to Christopher Warner, 12 January 1942. *FO 371/33045*, N 357/12/42.

<sup>32</sup> Treasury to Frank Ashton-Gwatkin, Assistant Under Secretary of State, 3 February 1943. *FO 371/34792*, C 1365/70/41.

<sup>33</sup> Minute, 16 February 1943. *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> William Dunlop to Captain J. Herbertson, 19 February 1943. *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Translation of Juan Rodriguez to Winston Churchill, June 1944. *FO 371/38225*, AS 4365/4365/51.

<sup>36</sup> Minute, 25 August 1944. *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Edgar Joint to Anthony Eden, 22 December 1943. *FO 371/37921*, AS 231/231/8.

<sup>38</sup> Minute, 30 August 1944. *FO 371/38225*, AS 4365/4365/51.

<sup>39</sup> South American Department to Buenos Aires, 7 September 1944. *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Stanley Rous, *The F.A.: Post War Developments* June 1943. FA Archives.



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<sup>41</sup> Football Association War Emergency Committee, 20 May 1944. FA Archives.

<sup>42</sup> Stanley Rous, *The Football Association: Post War Development - An Interim Report*, October 1944. FA Archives.

<sup>43</sup> Stanley Rous to George Hall, 21 September 1944. *FO 371/41942*, Z 6189/883/17.

<sup>44</sup> Frank Roberts to Brussels and Paris Embassies, 23 September 1944. *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Stanley Rous, report to Football Association Services Sub-Committee: War Emergency Committee, 30 October 1944. FA Archives.

<sup>46</sup> Paris Chancery to French Department, 23 October 1944. *FO 371/42026*, Z 7169/4034/17.

<sup>47</sup> Minute, 25 October 1944. *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Richard Speaight to Peter Scarlett, 30 October 1944. *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Stanley Rous, Report to Football Association Services Sub-Committee: War Emergency Committee, 30 October 1944. FA Archives; Jack Rollin, *op. cit.*, p. 397.

<sup>50</sup> Richard Speaight to Peter Scarlett, 30 October 1944. *FO 371/42026*, Z 7169/4034/17.

<sup>51</sup> Richard Speaight to E. McLeod, 30 October 1944. *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> L. Richardson to Anthony Eden, 5 January 1945. *FO 371/48988*, Z 1713/456/4.

<sup>53</sup> L. Richardson to Anthony Eden, 23 January 1945. *Ibid.*

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<sup>54</sup> Baron de Cartier de Marchienne to Anthony Eden, 23 January 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Frederick Hoyer Millar to ECCU and Belgian Embassy, 6 February 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Minute, 1 February 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Western Department to Brussels Chancery, 6 February 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Brussels Chancery to Western Department, 13 February 1945. *Ibid.*, Z 2193/456/4.

<sup>59</sup> Frederick Hoyer Millar to ECCU and Belgian Embassy, 21 February 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Football Association War Emergency Committee, 11 January 1943. FA Archives.

<sup>61</sup> Translation from *Moscow Bolshevik*, 27 February 1944; sent by Sir Archibald Clark Kerr to Foreign Office, 9 March 1944. FO 371/43296, N 2043/34/38.

<sup>62</sup> Report on Moscow Dynamo Tour, Football Association International Selection Committee, 17 December 1945. FA Archives.

<sup>63</sup> Stanley Rous to Soviet Embassy, 26 January 1945; copy on FO 371/47853, N 2510/18/38.

<sup>64</sup> Stanley Rous to Philip Noel-Baker, 22 February 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Philip Noel-Baker to Anthony Eden, 28 February 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Minute, 3 March 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Minute, 7 March 1945. *Ibid.*

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- <sup>68</sup> Draft letter to Philip Noel-Baker. *Ibid.*
- <sup>69</sup> Minute, 7 March 1945. *Ibid.*
- <sup>70</sup> Draft letter to Philip Noel-Baker. *Ibid.*
- <sup>71</sup> Anthony Eden to Philip Noel-Baker, 12 March 1945. *Ibid.*
- <sup>72</sup> Alexandre Girardet, Swiss Legation, to Western Department, 10 March 1945; minute by Frederick Hoyer Millar, 14 March 1945. *FO 371/49679, Z 3563/26/43.*
- <sup>73</sup> Minute, 21 March 1945. *Ibid.*
- <sup>74</sup> Frederick Hoyer Millar to Home Office, 26 March 1945. *Ibid.*
- <sup>75</sup> Home Office Aliens Department to Sir Alexander Cadogan, 30 April 1945. *FO 371/49680, Z 5462/26/43.*
- <sup>76</sup> Jean de Rham to Frederick Hoyer Millar, 3 May 1945. *Ibid.*
- <sup>77</sup> Frederick Hoyer Millar to Jean de Rham, 7 May 1945. *Ibid.*
- <sup>78</sup> Football Association War Emergency Committee, 3/4 May 1945. FA Archives.
- <sup>79</sup> Football Association War Emergency Committee, 25 June 1945. FA Archives.
- <sup>80</sup> Jack Rollin, *op. cit.*, pp. 472-4.
- <sup>81</sup> Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain 1939-45* (London: 1971) p. 432.
- <sup>82</sup> British Council Executive Committee minutes, 10 October 1939. *BW 68/3*

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<sup>83</sup> Sir Maurice Peterson to Joaquim Suarez, 7 November 1939; copy to Lord Tyrell, 16 November 1939. *FO 371/23170, C 18794/13530/41.*

<sup>84</sup> Minute, 22 November 1939. *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Minute, 22 November 1939. *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Sir Walford Selby to British Council, 18 November 1939. *BW 52/13.*

<sup>87</sup> Minute, 21 November 1939. *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Minute, 21 November 1939. *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Sir Walford Selby to Lord Lloyd, 20 November 1939. *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Minute, Rupert Pearce, 23 November 1939. *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Rupert Pearce to Portuguese Embassy, 27 November 1939. *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Rupert Pearce to Fred Dyer, 29 November 1939. *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Sir Walford Selby to Central Department, 21 November 1939; Ivone Kirkpatrick to Sir Charles Bridge, 28 November 1939. *FO 371/23161, C 18913/13620/36.*

<sup>94</sup> Sir Charles Bridge to Rupert Pearce, 8 December 1939. *BW 52/13.*

<sup>95</sup> Minute of interview, Rupert Pearce to Sir Charles Bridge, 16 December 1939; Sir Charles Bridge to George Gogay, 5 January 1940. *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> George Gogay to Sir Charles Bridge, 27 February 1940. *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> George Gogay to British Council, 6 November 1942. *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Richard Speaight to Philip Broad, 14 March 1940. *FO 371/24988, R*

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3551/392/37.

<sup>99</sup> Edwyn Hole to British Council representative in Greece, 9 October 1940. *BW 34/9, GR/8 /2 (3536)*.

<sup>100</sup> Victor Forbes to Lord Halifax, 17 December 1940. *FO 371/26136, A 113/113/35*.

<sup>101</sup> Minute, 8 January 1941. *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> British Council Executive Committee minutes, 10 December 1941. *BW 68/4*.

<sup>103</sup> Report of Charles Dundas' visit 1940-41. *BW 61/4, TUR/8/2 (15379)*.

<sup>104</sup> British Council Executive Committee minutes, 10 June 1941. *BW 68/4*.

<sup>105</sup> Michael Grant, report on Turkey 1 September-31 December 1941; copy on *FO 371/59326, R 15220/12016/44*.

<sup>106</sup> Eugen Millington-Drake to Malcolm Robertson, 31 July 1942. *BW 11/19, ARG/43/12/2*.

<sup>107</sup> 'British Council work, May - June - July, 1943', n.d. *BW 25/1, COS/8/1 (15070)*.

<sup>108</sup> Charles Stern to British Council, 13 January 1944. *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> O. Bruce, Ministry of Information, to Latin American Department, 4 May 1944. *Ibid.*

## Chapter Seven

### Sport and Diplomacy, 1945-47

With the end of the war in the summer of 1945, and the electoral return of a majority Labour Government, the diplomatic expediencies and international necessities of wartime gradually evolved into new ones. Securing the future position of Germany became central to policy needs, with Britain being committed through the occupation to playing a major role in maintaining a balance in Europe. But the problems that Germany and Eastern Europe raised for Soviet security promoted a new set of concerns for Europe, as the USSR refused to relinquish control of the eastern European states it had liberated during the march on Berlin. A major involvement from the USA<sup>was</sup> demonstrated by the commencement of Marshall Aid in 1947. British policy also became increasingly concerned with overseeing a smooth end to the empire. At the same time, relations with other countries were based around the attempt to remain militarily independent. But the logistics of weapon technology militated against this, as did the USSR's belligerent stand in many issues, which led to an increasingly close relationship between Britain and the USA. In this context, Labour Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin was not able to initiate any radical departures in foreign policy that might have mirrored the liberalising moves on the domestic front. Moreover, the survival of a traditional permanent staff at the Foreign Office, and Bevin's inheritance of Eden's private secretary, Pierson Dixon, ensured a strong degree of continuity in foreign affairs.

The changes in the world's political structures caused by the war were reflected in the international sport that immediately followed the conflict, and two major changes were evident. First, as after the First World War, the defeated nations were left in isolation for a period, although the pressures of the Cold War ensured that this period did not last as long as that of the 1920s had done. Second, the USSR emerged quickly as a major sporting power after 1945, in a marked contrast with its country's pre-war policy of maintaining sporting links almost exclusively with socialist and communist organisations. The position of sport in Stalinist propaganda was complementary to the USSR's new world role, and it served the primary effect of demonstrating that the Soviet Union was 'strong enough to take on the world; victories over bourgeois states would demonstrate the vitality of the Soviet system.'<sup>1</sup> By 1952, when the USSR was first represented at the Olympic Games, it was affiliated to 22 international sports federations: in 1945, it had been affiliated to none.

As sport maintained and increased its momentum as an arena for international politics, the Foreign Office consistently showed an interest in using sport for a variety of pragmatic diplomatic ends. But this period also witnessed attempts to define an official policy on sport. With the review of the information services in 1946, sport was formally recognised as being within the British Council's remit. This recognition set the foundations for the Foreign Office's own informal review of sport in 1947. But while a large degree of Foreign Office involvement was forthcoming in this period, Diane Pollock of the Cultural Relations Department was still able to ask in March 1946: 'Do we deal with sport or not?'<sup>2</sup> However, the attitude towards this popular area was clearly

changing, and sport was used consistently in this period as a regular cultural tool in the maintenance of wartime alliances, in the promotion of relations with countries that had been neutral during the war, and in the rehabilitation of Italy and Germany as western partners in the face of Soviet moves in the east. The prioritisation of different aspects obviously changed with the years, as the attempts to keep the alliance of the Big Three alive gave way to the Cold War environment of the later 1940s.

### 1. Sporting Contacts with the Allied Nations

Sporting links with the USSR had not been a major feature of British post-war sport, despite the numerous expressions of solidarity between the two countries' sportspersons during the war. However, in November 1945, one of the most obvious signs of the change in political relationships caused by the war occurred when Moscow Dynamo conducted a football tour of Britain. The FA maintained links with Soviet football administrators during the war, and Rous had been keen to organise a full England v USSR international as soon as conditions would permit. In this, he was supported by Aneurin Bevan, Sir Walter Citrine, Philip Noel-Baker, and Clementine Churchill. But, without any firm arrangements being made, Moscow Dynamo were sent in November, and the FA was informed of their arrival only the day before.<sup>3</sup> The Foreign Office was also kept uninformed of the tour until a late stage. It was first informed on 31 October, four days before the team's arrival, when Frank Roberts, Counsellor at Moscow, telegraphed with the news that the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (CFA) had asked him for visas and flight clearance. Roberts condemned the timing of this approach as being a Soviet attempt



to 'hustle us into granting visas without giving us time for reference to you', but approved of the tour as

It seems however desirable to encourage Anglo-Soviet sporting exchanges of this kind and I hope therefore that despite short notice you will authorise grant of necessary visas and facilities.<sup>4</sup>

The request was met, although Roberts was asked to inform the CFA 'orally' of their 'thoughtless and discourteous manner.'<sup>5</sup>

This was followed by another telegram from Roberts which explained the importance being attached to the visit in the Soviet press, as 'the Soviet Government attach considerable importance to these contests on grounds of prestige':

As we are still regarded as the world leaders in football it is, I think, important that the opportunity of the Dynamo visit to the United Kingdom should be taken to show that our star is not waning in this sphere.

He concluded with the remark that the press 'is preparing the Soviet public for the probability of defeat.'<sup>6</sup> John Pumphrey of the Northern Department acted on this hint by telephoning Rous, although the latter's evident trepidation at British teams fulfilling Roberts' expectations was clear: 'His comment was Hell's bells.'<sup>7</sup>

Dynamo played four matches in Britain without defeat, against Chelsea, Cardiff City, an Arsenal XI, and Glasgow Rangers.<sup>8</sup> The tour, though immensely popular as the first British exposure of Soviet footballers, was controversial, particularly after the Arsenal match at Highbury. Played in a heavy fog against a scratch side that contained five

regular Arsenal players and a number of eminent guests, including Stanley Matthews and Stanley Mortenson, Dynamo complained that they were playing an England team in disguise; while the fog was apparently exploited by both sides to evade certain of the Soviet referee's decisions. It was this tour that provided the occasion for George Orwell's famous comment: 'Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play.'

It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words it is war minus the shooting.<sup>9</sup>

But despite this unfortunate publicity for the tour, official co-operation on a minor scale occurred. On 12 November, Bevin received a letter from James Hoy, MP for Leith, who asked if the Foreign Office could arrange for Dynamo to play in Edinburgh. Hibernians were reported to be happy to play, and Hoy claimed that 'a great welcome would be given to the Russian footballers, and thereby help to strengthen the friendship between our countries'.<sup>10</sup> This was supplemented by a co-ordinated appeal from Sir William Darling MP, who added:

All the expenses will be paid, they will be appropriately welcomed, the people will rejoice, and Edinburgh will feel it has taken its share in the dissemination of that wider good will of which you are not the least notable protagonist.<sup>11</sup>

Pumphrey accordingly contacted Rous by telephone to inform the FA of the MPs' request, to which Rous responded with "'I wish they'd mind their business'", as the arrangements for the team's itinerary were so uncertain.<sup>12</sup> Hoy and Darling were duly asked to contact the FA direct, but were warned off with the note that Dynamo had 'a pretty full

programme, which included one match in Scotland - against the Rangers'.<sup>13</sup> Although the level of Foreign Office involvement in this important tour was thus relatively low, the support given to the scheme during and after the war by government representatives suggests that the visit serves to represent symbolically the change in diplomatic priorities occasioned by the war. In the 1930s, a Soviet football team had been banned from Britain and an England team had been asked to salute the Nazi leadership; just four months after the war, the football team of the USSR's security forces<sup>14</sup> was welcomed to Britain by the Government and the football establishment. This is one of the best examples of the fact that sporting events do not take place outside politics, and that the popular area of sport was one of the ways in which the Labour Government and the Foreign Office attempted to maintain the workings of the wartime alliance.

The USSR was not the only ally whose friendship was maintained through sport, and while such contacts were naturally organised by the governing bodies of the individual sports, governmental approval was often required and sought. The Foreign Office inevitably became involved as transport and manpower difficulties still caused problems for the normal operation of sport. Contacts with France were amongst the quickest to be re-established after the war, thanks to the traditionally close ties between the sports administrations of both countries and the circumstances of liberation. In May 1945, the French national football team visited Wembley for a match against England,<sup>15</sup> while in November the London Rugby Union (LRU) played the Paris Union in the French capital. Their Honorary Secretary, W. Ramsay, wrote to Bevin on their return to inform him of the 'hospitality extended to our party' and 'the

warmth of greeting we received'.<sup>16</sup> Ramsay asked Bevin to thank the French Ambassador on behalf of the LRU, which action was duly taken.<sup>17</sup> Co-operation with Anglo-French sport was not limited by class barriers, and pigeon racing also benefited from the mood of the time. On 27 December 1945, André Favereau, First Secretary of the French Embassy, asked the Foreign Office if reciprocal arrangements between the pigeon clubs of the two countries could be established. The Western Department contacted the National Homing Union and the Aliens Department of the Home Office to secure visa facilities for French pigeon racers.<sup>18</sup> Further co-operation was given to rugby early in 1946, when G. Thiébaud, the Mayor of Verdun, invited a British XV for a match, and the Paris Embassy and the Foreign Office forwarded the invitation to the RFU.<sup>19</sup>

A more co-ordinated plan to establish sports links with an Allied country was the Anglo-Netherlands Sports Scheme (ANSS), which involved the exchange of teams and individuals between British towns and their adopted Dutch opposites. Two incidents of this effort came to the Foreign Office's attention in 1945. In July, E.T. Lamerton, the Mayor of Woolwich, wrote to Bevin to ask for his support for the attempt to send a Woolwich football team to Maastricht to play *MVV* on 16 September, the first anniversary of that town's liberation. He cited the FA's approval, and noted that the Dutch air force would provide transportation: the Foreign Office only needed to provide visa facilities. Lamerton described the planned trip as helping Anglo-Dutch relations, and as providing 'a link with home for the military personnel in that part of Holland.' He concluded with his trust that 'you will be able to grant this request and thereby establish through the medium of football a close liaison between the two peoples.'<sup>20</sup> This letter was supported by a letter from Rous,<sup>21</sup> and

backed by the ANSS which boasted the patronage of Anthony Eden, A.V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Neville Bland, British Ambassador to the Netherlands. The Western Department supported the proposal: Reay minuted that the match was 'in the national interest',<sup>22</sup> and Hoyer Millar wrote to Lamerton on 21 August to say that travel applications would be 'sympathetically considered.'<sup>23</sup>

Bilateral exchanges with the USA had never been a major component of British sport in the inter-war period, due largely to the lack of mutual sports; and despite individual contact in tennis, rowing, and at the Olympic Games, there were very few meetings in football. A change to this situation came about in the immediate aftermath of the war, when the Foreign Office became involved in an attempt to use football to complement the alliance. In March 1946, Liverpool FC were invited to tour the USA. The club's Chairman, W.H. McConnell, telegraphed Bevin on 29 March, noting that Alfred Barnes, Minister of War Transport, had promised his assistance in allowing the tour to take place if the Foreign Office sanctioned it, and appealing for help in 'furtherance of International relations'.<sup>24</sup> McConnell wrote a more detailed letter to Bevin, who he knew personally, on the same day. In this he explained that the tour was to be sponsored by the American Soccer League (ASL), and that he envisaged bringing a US team to Britain the following season, as he considered that such an exchange 'would considerably strengthen the very happy relations which at present exist between our two respective Countries'.<sup>25</sup> The appeal was backed by Ivy Saunders' letter from Transport House to Bevin's Secretary Dixon on the same day.<sup>26</sup> The Foreign Office approved of the tour, although there was some fear that other groups asking for transport might be upset by the nature of the trip,

especially in the light of the personal relationship between Bevin and McConnell. But the priority of Liverpool over 'other churches, fraternities, clubs and so on to whom we cannot possibly give all they ask'<sup>27</sup> was justified by Berkeley Gage: 'If they are a good & sporting team, it seems to me well worth letting them go on public relations grounds.'<sup>28</sup> Approval was duly given to McConnell to make arrangements with the Ministry of Transport, with Bevin sending Liverpool his 'best wishes for a successful tour'.<sup>29</sup> The Foreign Secretary's wishes clearly bestowed good fortune: the ten match tour took place in May and June, and Liverpool won all ten, scoring seventy goals and conceding only ten, and reaching double figures on three occasions with their victories over American League All Stars (10-1), Ulster United (11-1), and Philadelphia Select (12-0).<sup>30</sup>

Further assistance to Anglo-US sport came in March 1946 to ensure the participation of the Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC) in a race against the Cruising Club of America at Bermuda. This came to the Foreign Office's attention when Donald Maclean, Acting First Secretary in Washington, wrote to the North American Department on behalf of Captain R. Bevan asking for assistance with currency problems that looked set to keep the RORC out of the race. Bevan had been in charge of Naval Information at the Washington Embassy during the war, which Maclean raised in support of the application, along with the reminder that the RORC had 'played an important part in the evacuation from Dunkirk'.<sup>31</sup> This was supported by E.W. Peterson, Rear Commodore of the RORC, who wrote to Anthony Bevir of the Colonial Office on the value of the event in aiding Anglo-US relations, and asking for governmental help in gaining currency and re-fit facilities at Devonport.<sup>32</sup> The Foreign Office

took the case up in April, when it received letters from Peterson and C.Thorley of the Treasury on the club's need for dollar credits. Thorley noted:

This application for dollars would not normally get through unless supported as being in the national interest by a Government Department. We think that perhaps the Foreign Office might have an interest in seeing this trip go through, so perhaps you would let me know if you are prepared to lend the necessary support.<sup>33</sup>

Official willingness to allow the national interest to cover yacht racing was evident, with Donnelly's letter to Maclean on 9 May explaining how the Ministry of Food had allowed the crew double rations, how Foreign Office recommendations had released £300 from the Bank of England, how the Passport Office had made 'a heroic effort at our request' to expedite the applications, and that 'pressure from us at a slightly higher level' had obtained a necessary copy of a crew member's birth certificate from Somerset House before the Easter holiday.<sup>34</sup> These two incidents, involving sports clubs of vastly different character and traditions, indicate that the Foreign Office was willing to use pressure and influence to enable sport to act as a positive agent for good relations with the USA in this critical period between the end of lend-lease and the start of Marshall Aid.

The third European Championships of the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF), held in Oslo in August 1946, were another sporting subject of the Foreign Office's attention. James Wardrop, First Secretary at the Oslo Legation, wrote to William Montagu-Pollock, Head of the Cultural Relations Department, on 5 April expressing his hope that Britain would send a good team. Wardrop broadly claimed that sport

'plays a most important part in international relations and a country's prestige tends more and more to depend on the success or otherwise of its teams when these go abroad', and then applied this rule to the situation in Norway:

There is here, as elsewhere, quite a strong body of opinion which believes that the British are getting decadent and it would be fatal, therefore, to send out a sort of "B" team with the idea of "giving the other side a chance" rather than trying to run off with the maximum number of trophies. Every other country approaches these international games in a purely competitive spirit and I am afraid that, for the sake of our prestige, we must follow suit.

He concluded that Montagu-Pollock should exercise 'any means of impressing these points on the A.A.A. or whatever other organisation may be responsible' to ensure strong representation.<sup>35</sup> This matter caused some form of definition of interest in sport between the Cultural Relations Department and the political departments, and it was eventually passed back to the Northern Department for action, despite the reservations of George Warr, who was 'opposed to intervention of any kind' and 'far from... convinced by Mr. Wardrop's arguments.'<sup>36</sup> But W. Ewart drafted a letter to the AAA, stating that:

In view of the important part which sport plays in international relations and the unfortunate impression which seems to persist in Norway about British athletes, Mr. Bevin hopes that it may be possible to send a first class British team... which would do much to uphold Britain's prestige.<sup>37</sup>



However, the draft was suspended, and one of the most forthright statements to date of Foreign Office support for sport thus remained unsubstantiated.

Norway was also the subject of some 'unfavourable incidents' in 1946, when football tours by Aston Villa and Newcastle United caused the Ambassador, Sir Laurence Collier, to write to Bevin and Montagu-Pollock in dismay. The problem arose after Newcastle beat Frigg Club 6-0 on 17 May. The Norwegian FA had not provided proper accommodation for the team, and the British Embassy had made a protest. This created a bad press climate for Aston Villa's 2-2 draw in an 'unsporting' match with a Combined South Norway XI at Oslo on 28 May.<sup>38</sup> The language used by Collier was reminiscent of Howard Kennard's reactions in Poland in 1936. He reminded Bevin of his and Wardrop's views on the value of sporting contacts in shaping public opinion, and expressed his fear 'that this particular event has resulted in definite damage to Anglo-Norwegian relations.' He urged the Foreign Office to use pressure to prevent such incidents:

I realise, of course, that His Majesty's Government have no active jurisdiction over, or responsibility for, British sporting teams travelling abroad; but I venture to suggest that, in view of the above considerations, they would be entitled to bring a matter of this sort to the notice of the Football Association with a view to preventing as far as possible the recurrence of such episodes in future, and I presume that channels are available through which the Association can be influenced.<sup>39</sup>

To Montagu-Pollock, he was far more blunt:

since it is notorious that British professional football is a disreputable business, run by toughs and crooks, I have no great hope that warnings to teams will make much difference to their behaviour. It would be better, in my private opinion, to discourage all international matches except those played by amateurs, who can usually be trusted to behave decently.

He concluded that the Foreign Office 'should try to discourage visits abroad by British professional football teams: there must be various ways in which they could do that, though I know that they are not usually concerned with such matters.'<sup>40</sup>

This over-reaction was not in tune with the general mood of the Northern Department. William Allen saw it as 'a moot point' whether such matches were so harmful, and claimed that Collier 'draws rather too sweeping conclusions. In any case I don't think the F.O. could or should do anything to discourage these visits in general and I doubt whether there would be any advantage in saying or writing anything to Mr. Rouse [*sic*] in the present case.'<sup>41</sup> But confidential contact with the reliable Rous - hardly a tough or a crook - was made by Warr on 3 July. He passed on Collier's despatch and urged that British teams should be fully informed of any rule differences when playing abroad.<sup>42</sup> Rous promised to bear 'your instructions' in mind in future.<sup>43</sup> The report covering these matches made by Rous and Drewry to the FA showed this promise at work, containing the note that 'British Government Officials abroad are taking a lively interest in these matches and incidents which have been the subject of adverse reports to the Foreign Office are being investigated.'<sup>44</sup> Collier was calmed with the news of the Foreign Office's approach to the FA, but

was informed that there were no means of preventing football teams from travelling abroad 'however much we deplore Aston Villa's behaviour'.<sup>45</sup>

This whole incident raises many significant points. First, it shows that the pre-war snobbery of some members of the diplomatic service towards professional sport had not been universally liberalised by the war: Collier's attack on the controllers of football was one of the strongest ever expressed. However, the Foreign Office's minutes and action suggest a greater grasp of practicalities at Whitehall, as well as a higher shock threshold, and the decision to give friendly advice to Rous shows the further development of the Foreign Office's ability to work with sport. The one real tool of negative intervention, that of travel restrictions, was dead, and the Foreign Office had no interest in searching for a replacement. It also shows Rous once again as a willing ally. With such a good relationship existing between Whitehall and Lancaster Gate, nothing more serious than Warr's advice was necessary, although it is interesting to note that Rous described this advice as 'instructions'. Overall, the role of sport in maintaining good relations with a wartime ally was brought under scrutiny, and seen to be open to some dangers but generally working in the Foreign Office's interests. This was underlined in June 1946, when the *Norges Idrettsforbund* (Norwegian Sports Association) presented the Oslo Embassy with a 'framed and pictorial address' to thank the British forces for their war effort "'on behalf of the sporting youth of Norway"'.<sup>46</sup>

A more positive report of the role of football in maintaining alliances came from Czechoslovakia. Sir Philip Nichols, British Ambassador at Prague, reported to Montagu-Pollock that there had been 'a little trouble here with Derby County', but that this had been 'offset

almost at once by a visit from Hibernians (a Scottish club) who earned universal praise for their fair play and demeanour generally. On balance I am still in favour of football contests.<sup>47</sup> The Hibernian matches became the subject of some controversy in July, when James Hoy MP asked Hector McNeil, Parliamentary Under Secretary, in the House of Commons why no British Embassy staff had been present at the recent matches.<sup>48</sup> Robin Hankey of the Northern Department asked Nichols for 'the facts', as he found it 'hard to believe that no member of your staff was present at a match played in Prague by a touring British team'.<sup>49</sup> In reply, Nichols claimed that 'someone has been lying', as he had been represented at the matches by his First Secretary, Major W..Barker, and other staff whilst he was on tour in Slovakia. He complained: 'Far from it being a fact that the Embassy remains unrepresented at football matches against English teams here, the boot is on the other leg', as there were never enough tickets available to meet Embassy demands.<sup>50</sup> Hoy was informed of this, and the false report was traced vaguely back to Prague.

Sporting contacts with allied countries were clearly given special attention at the Foreign Office in the year following the war. The few examples discussed here indicate both the range of sports used and the different levels of pressure that the Foreign Office was willing to use. A suggestion that sport was returning to normal can be seen in the return of the old arguments about badly behaved footballers, and by such other signs as the joint Foreign Office and Admiralty decision that a British destroyer could attend the Ostend Regatta in July 1946.<sup>51</sup> The signs were, by the middle of 1946, that sport between the allied nations was serving the dual purposes of maintaining wartime friendships, and of helping to establish a cultural base for Europe in the new Cold War environment.

This was seen at its clearest in the plans to extend the ANSS to Belgium, France, Norway, and Switzerland, to establish a 'Western sports block which undoubtedly will become an influence in the cultural and political relationship between Great Britain and the Western European countries.'<sup>52</sup> But for such schemes to work alongside the emergent US-backed plans for Europe, countries that had been neutral during the war also had to be courted and encouraged. Sport played a part in this process.

## **2. Sport and neutral countries**

Despite efforts by Hitler and Mussolini to include Franco in the Axis, Spain had remained neutral during the war, in order to restabilise after the three year civil war. Fascist penetration and propaganda had obviously been prevalent, but Allied shipping needs in the Mediterranean and the security of Gibraltar necessitated British interest throughout the war in both Spain and its conservative neighbour, Portugal. The British Council had remained active in both countries, and sport was occasionally used by the British Council and British missions to promote sympathy with the Allied cause. In 1945 and 1946, a number of opportunities for maintaining that sympathy through sport arose. The Foreign Office attempted to exploit some of these opportunities to help maintain British interests in the Western Mediterranean, and to foster links with Spain that would be useful in any future western military alliance.

In October 1945, Sir Victor Mallet, British Ambassador to Spain, received an invitation from the President of the Spanish Lawn Tennis Association for British players to take part in an international tournament in Barcelona at Christmas. The event would mark the renewal of Anglo-

Spanish tennis, and Mallet gave it his support as a 'proposal which should be encouraged.'

It has no political significance and could only result in better acquaintance of and improved relations between, British and Spanish people thereby serving similar purpose to the activities of the British Council.<sup>53</sup>

Despite the reservations of Peter Garran of the Western Department about the Foreign Office being brought into a private affair between the two tennis authorities,<sup>54</sup> Hoyer Millar suggested that the LTA should be informed of the invitation, and told that transport would be provided if the LTA accepted.<sup>55</sup> On 18 October, he wrote with this news to the President of the LTA, Lord Templewood (Sir Samuel Hoare), who had been Ambassador to Spain from 1940 to 1944, and covered it with a personal letter to Templewood informing him that he could reply through the Madrid Embassy if he wished.<sup>56</sup> Mallet was informed of this support on 16 October.<sup>57</sup>

At this point, the political significance of the event became clear. On 25 October, Templewood refused the invitation on the grounds that the LTA 'is at present engaged upon the reorganisation of the game in this country and is unable to send a team to Spain.' He candidly added:

It might be well to inform Mallet confidentially that the L.T.A. will undoubtedly give the preference to countries that were allied with us during the war, and this being so it is unlikely to sanction official participation in a Spanish Tournament until the situation is much more normal than it is at present.<sup>58</sup>

This anti-Francoist stance angered Mallet, who was informed of the LTA's decision on 8 November.<sup>59</sup> Mallet replied to Hoyer Millar that he had

rejected the Spanish invitation, although he 'did *not* transmit in the same words his [Templewood's] costive reply' [emphasis in original], and went on to criticise Templewood.

In the first place what is meant by "the L.T.A. is at present engaged on re-organisation of the game in this country"? Are we to be told to play with square balls in the future? When he was here, Templewood spent a great deal of time in playing tennis with Spaniards, cultivating them, and accepting their hospitality. One might have expected that he would take the trouble to show some sort of friendship in return by persuading the L.T.A. to send out some players in response to the cordial invitation. But apparently that was too much to expect!

He concluded that Anglo-Spanish sport should not be rejected 'on the grounds that we dislike the Government in power', as

It is one of the best way [*sic*] for the British and Spaniards to get to know each other and it is most unlikely that our men would come in contact with any Falangistas, if that is the underlying fear.<sup>60</sup>

But while Mallet, at least, approved of the tennis court as a meeting place for the two countries, there was no similar support for the football pitch. On 1 November 1945, the Madrid Chancery informed the Western Department that the *Federation Espanola de Futbol* had invited the FA to send a team to Spain that season. Madrid supported it on the condition that 'the thing so far as it rested with our people would have to be thoroughly well "done" and on condition that a neutral referee were appointed', and

suggested that the FA be given 'such comment or advice... as you may deem it expedient to offer.'<sup>61</sup> Richard Sloan of the Western Department saw no need to dictate to the FA, but minuted that 'if F.A. enquire, I think we should oppose the scheme: any big game of this kind would certainly be exploited by Franco and might even be attended by him.'<sup>62</sup> His colleague Ffreebairn Simpson was more candid, noting his inclination to 'let the Secy of the FA, Mr Rous, know privately that we shd. not be sorry if this invitation was refused.'<sup>63</sup> The private channel to Rous was then used. On 17 November Hoyer Millar wrote the FA a non-committal letter of information on the idea,<sup>64</sup> which was followed two days later with a telephone conversation with Rous on the Foreign Office's views: unsurprisingly, Rous told him 'that the invitation wd. be refused'.<sup>65</sup> The FA Services Committee noted at its 4 December meeting that it was unable to accept the Spanish invitation,<sup>66</sup> although it had never been specified that Spain had wanted a military team: this confusion was apparently caused by contemporary efforts to send an RAF team to Portugal, which are dealt with below.

Mallet, however, supported the football plan. In his letter criticising Templewood, he had expressed his hope that 'it may be given better consideration than Templewood, of all people, saw fit to give to the tennis invitation' and went on to highlight the value of football as 'a wildly popular game here, ranking next to bull-fighting. The visit of an English team would appeal to the real proletariat of Spain, just those people towards whom we wish to show our sympathy.'<sup>67</sup> But the Foreign Office's view was upheld on this occasion, and the Western Department informed Madrid of its actions:



We thought it well to put in a deprecatory word to the Football Association, but the latter had no hesitation in turning down the Spanish invitation of their own accord. Their refusal provides just another side-light on the present feeling in this country towards Spain.<sup>68</sup>

This earned more criticism from Madrid. Counsellor Douglas Howard wrote to Hoyer Millar on Mallet's behalf, expressing his disappointment at the Foreign Office's intervention: 'I cannot see that sporting events of this kind have anything whatsoever to do with politics and... they should, in my view, be encouraged.'<sup>69</sup> The Western Department settled the matter in a manner that showed their sensibility to the real political significance involved in meeting the Spanish in a friendly sporting atmosphere. Sloan minuted that any match would be sanctioned by the FA 'and would therefore go with at least the tacit approval of the national authority',<sup>70</sup> while Garran repeated the anti-Franco posture of the Foreign Office's decision:

I am sure a visit to Spain by a British football team would make an excellent impression in Spain, but there are two sides to Anglo-Spanish relations, and I am sure that such a visit would not be understood in this country and there would be criticism. As soon as General Franco has gone let as many football teams and tennis players go to Spain as may wish to do so.<sup>71</sup>

The Foreign Office was not dogmatic in this matter, though, and in May 1946 approval was given for Manchester City to visit the Canary Islands on Rous' application.<sup>72</sup> Mallet's eagerness for sports contacts was influential in this decision, and the low profile of the proposed matches

worked in their favour. Sloan noted that there was 'no question of an "international" but rather of matches between private clubs to be played far away from Madrid'.<sup>73</sup> Hoyer Millar advised Rous that the Foreign Office had no objections to the tour, but asked that he be kept informed of any developments,<sup>74</sup> although transport difficulties prevented it from taking place.<sup>75</sup> However, the Western Department's acceptance of Mallet's advice shows again that the Foreign Office was open to persuasion on the problematic question of international sport.

But, despite the difficulties caused by the political complexion of the Spanish government in relation to the development of a Western alliance, the most debated sports issue for the Foreign Office in the immediate post-war period was that of British footballing contacts with South and Central America. The debate was based largely on the appreciation by the Foreign Office and missions abroad that football's emotive role in Latin America often raised public order problems, and that a British team being implicated in a riot would be counter-productive cultural propaganda. Latin America was an important region for British strategic and economic interests, and good working relations with many of the nations were being courted on a cultural level: but football was perceived as a potential liability.

The debate began in August 1945, when Dr. Adhemar Bebianno, President of the *Botafogo de Futebol e Regatas* of Rio de Janeiro, wrote to Sir Donald St. Clair Gainer, the British Ambassador to Brazil. He highlighted his club's respect for 'the British tradition of fair play and good sport', and suggested a tour of Brazil by a British team of serving men to improve Anglo-Brazilian relations. He concluded:

We believe Your Excellency knows the Brazilian people well enough to understand what the visit would mean, what an interest it would awaken and how much sympathy [*sic*] such a gesture would bring to Great Britain and to the British.<sup>76</sup>

The Rio Chancery informed the South American Department of this invitation, and added its support for a tour which could be extended to other South American countries to raise money for the Red Cross noting that 'in these countries football news usually gets more publicity than any important world event, even war news. Publicity therefore should be rather good.'<sup>77</sup> The South American Department was more circumspect, proposing to involve the Ministry of Information and Latin American veteran Millington-Drake, with the keynote for the matter being sounded by John Perowne, who minuted: 'Football in muddy England is one thing: and quite a different game on sunbaked grounds in Latin countries!' But he did not reject the idea, proposing instead that the FA should be consulted.<sup>78</sup>

However, caution turned to doubt as information and views from other Latin American missions arrived. The Santiago Chancery, for example, admitted that it was 'a laudable project', but warned of English professional footballers, who 'frequently get beaten, and then proceed to make somewhat unsportsmanlike excuses. The fact is that such teams are nearly always second or third rate and they play after long sea voyages rich in alcoholic indulgence.'<sup>79</sup> The view from Argentina was more discouraging, as the Buenos Aires Chancery claimed that rule differences, particularly the British practice of allowing attacking players to charge the goalkeeper, would work against the plan: 'Argentine players and spectators are very excitable and the sight of a 12 stone Arsenal forward

charging an Argentine goalkeeper with the ball into the net might easily start a battle.' They suggested that an Argentine team should visit Britain, where 'any incidents will be something to read about in the newspapers, not an event witnessed by about 100,000 excited Argentines'.<sup>80</sup> Montevideo noted 'our experience indicates that it is a very moot point whether such visits are, in fact, good propaganda or not' due to the rule differences causing 'many disputes and misunderstandings in the field', and suggested that British funds would be better spent on less dangerous initiatives.<sup>81</sup> Rio updated its view after consulting the 'staff football expert' to state that 'football in this country arouses passions that can only be compared to the factions of the Green and the Blue in Byzantium'.<sup>82</sup> They duly withdrew their endorsement of the scheme. Bogota claimed to be sympathetic to the idea, but observed that differences in climate and altitude would 'be a severe handicap on the team' from Britain,<sup>83</sup> while both La Paz and Washington were against the whole idea. The former was 'very doubtful regarding the beneficent results to British prestige of such visits', and urged spending any spare money on increasing scholarships to Britain,<sup>84</sup> while Washington concurred with Montevideo, adding that the Latin Americans played with a lighter ball and had different rules for a "'fowl [*sic*]".<sup>85</sup> Panama returned one of the most cautious replies:

In general our experience is that the value of such visits in the inter-war years has been at best doubtful. The days of easy and acknowledged supremacy when British players were welcomed as masters, are over... [If] a team be sent at all it should be of the highest class, fresh and properly trained with the set purpose of winning all its matches decisively despite the special

conditions. Anything less than the best it would be better not to send.<sup>86</sup>

Havana was reserved,<sup>87</sup> while Lima did all it could to kill the idea. Noting 'it has been our experience that "latins are lousy losers"', the Chancery sent press cuttings on a recent Peru v Brazil match at which members of the crowd had set fire to the stand when Brazil took the lead, and concluded that such incidents 'amply confirm our view that the visit of a British team is to be avoided.'<sup>88</sup> The only missions to endorse the scheme were Caracas<sup>89</sup> and Quito, with the latter stating most positively that 'the well-conducted visit of a British football team, which would have the widest possible appeal to the people of the country, offers greater prospects of success in promoting goodwill than any cultural mission.'<sup>90</sup>

With this overwhelmingly negative view from the missions that the differences in rules and climate and the volatile nature of local crowds should preclude a British football tour, the South American Department rejected the plan: and on 30 October, Perowne minuted 'We shd. neither sponsor nor encourage such a tour.'<sup>91</sup> But while some long term concerns were present in the formulation of this stance, notably the idea that a losing British team would promote a bad image of the country, some more positive ideas were present here. E. Christie argued that professional British football coaches should be sent to the region, as they would be 'worth their weight in gold as good-will ambassadors' by exploiting the popular interest in football without inflaming it,<sup>92</sup> while the idea that an Argentine team should visit Britain was endorsed by James Murray.<sup>93</sup> But these more constructive ideas must still be seen in the context of the Foreign Office being prepared to use pressure if advice failed. Perowne minuted that as the FA 'can't send anyone to L.A. without

M.W.T.[Ministry of War Transport] assistance we have another card to play'.<sup>94</sup>

This stage of the debate on football contacts with Latin America thus ended with the Foreign Office and the missions generally averse to the idea of British teams visiting the region, and with some officers prepared to use covert methods to prevent such a trip if necessary. This action was not directed against Anglo-Latin American sport as a whole, as can be seen from the fact that whilst the anti-football reactions were arriving from the missions, the South American Department acted to assist the administration of a gift of football equipment sent from Argentine clubs to Britain in December 1944, which had been held up by Customs. This assistance came after the intervention of Sir Arthur Noble, Counsellor, for Sir David Kelly, Ambassador at Buenos Aires, who wrote to Perowne on 11 September 1945. He claimed that it 'matters a bit, because, as you know, football bulks, if anything, even larger here than in England.' He asked for help in releasing the items for their indented recipients:

These things don't seem so important to some of the hidebound officials in the Customs, but they make us ridiculous to the man in the street here; and that can undo quite a lot of good propaganda in other directions. Besides, you know how touchy the Argentines are and our action makes it look as though we don't appreciate their gift.<sup>95</sup>

James Murray wrote to the Board of Customs and Excise, asking for the assignment to be 'expedited in every way possible' as the 'delay has created a most unfortunate impression in Buenos Aires, where some excellent propaganda was made out of the gift'.<sup>96</sup> The Foreign Office's willingness to believe that sport could be the site of positive propaganda in

Latin America was thus demonstrated, showing that it was mainly the fear of the environment that had precluded the support for the football tour.

Football's character as a professional and, therefore, largely working-class, sport was another factor in this decision, as seen in the Santiago Chancery's allegation of the drunken and unsportsmanlike behaviour of players. This attitude was underlined in December 1945, when John Leche, British Ambassador to Chile, endorsed a plan for British involvement in the Pan-American Ski Championships. The idea was raised in a personal letter to Leche from Augustin Edwards, a Chilean newspaper owner,<sup>97</sup> which Leche forwarded to the Foreign Office with his support. After pointing out that Edwards was the son of a former Chilean Ambassador to Britain, he endorsed the idea:

Although I am, as a general rule, strongly opposed to international sporting events, having on a good many occasions seen the deplorable incidents to which they lead, it seems to me unlikely, in view of the type of person taking part in skiing competitions, that anything but good could come from the participation of a British team to take part in this Championship.<sup>98</sup>

Leche wrote again in January 1946 to report his discussions with Edwards and Millington-Drake, the British Council's Chief Representative for Spanish-speaking America, and to urge that the British Council should subsidise the skiers' travel. He noted that Edwards attached 'considerable importance to the visit of a British team' which 'would be received with enthusiasm and would be bound to do much good in the interests of international relations; more indeed, in his opinion, than much purely cultural propaganda. I agree with him.' The comparatively elitist nature of

such propaganda became apparent in Leche's explanation that Edwards had stressed that 'the team should be carefully handpicked so as to be composed not only of first class skiers but also of first class "good fellows".'<sup>99</sup> John Thwaites of the Cultural Relations Department was cynical on this point, minuting that the British Council could not subsidise this trip in which 'snob-appeal seems to have its part... I should have thought that the funds would be forthcoming from the competitors or from private sources.'<sup>100</sup> But the Cultural Relations Department backed the scheme, and, while it was generally agreed that the British Council could not help financially,<sup>101</sup> the idea was referred to the War Office with a view to sending some officers.<sup>102</sup> But the War Office was unable to help, and the skiing scheme was dropped.<sup>103</sup> However, the backing that it received from the British Ambassador in Santiago, the Cultural Relations Department, and the British Council indicate that this event in an elite and largely military sport was deemed by all concerned to be a legitimate and useful area for the promotion of Anglo-Chilean relations. The perceived differences between the participants and audiences of bourgeoisie and of working class sports were never clearer.

The football issue was revived in February 1946 when Rous informed Perowne that the Brazilian Embassy had invited Chesterfield FC to play two matches in Brazil.<sup>104</sup> The South American Department was quick to advise against acceptance on the grounds of the warnings from the previous year, and the readiness to act covertly was again stated. J. McQuillen noted the options: 'We can either discourage the F.A. openly, or return a non-committal reply to their letter & tell MWT to stall over transport (wh. would not be difficult).'<sup>105</sup> Perowne wrote to Rous on 15 March to settle the matter, noting that 'there are still certain objections to



such visits because of the risk that unpleasant incidents may occur leading to a deterioration in our relations with the countries concerned':

Scenes of extraordinary violence involving spectators and players alike are wont to occur, often resulting in considerable numbers of casualties. The possibility of such incidents taking place and resulting in ill-feeling against British players and this country is not a risk we should wish to run.

To emphasise the Foreign Office's view, he then explained that the team would face transport difficulties if they attempted to proceed with the visit.<sup>106</sup> But there was no need to threaten Rous, however subtly, and on 26 March he informed Perowne that Chesterfield had been advised to refuse the invitation. He also wrote here of the FA's invitation from the FA of Uruguay for a tour in the summer of 1947, which he had tried to put off by quoting high costs, and he promised to keep the Foreign Office informed.<sup>107</sup> McQuillen noted: 'This is satisfactory', and copied the letter to all British missions in Latin American countries.<sup>108</sup>

A letter from Russell Macrae, British Envoy to the Dominican Republic, further strengthened the South American Department's stance of discouraging football teams from visiting Latin America. Macrae wrote generally of his 'regret that I cannot advise that British football teams should visit this or any other of the South American countries I know':

Football teams in these countries are entirely professional, and the players are drawn from the lowest ranks of society, being, in fact, practically uncivilised, and any contest that is not going their way and therefore means loss of bonus and reputation, can only end in the very opposite of the kind of feelings we wish to promote.<sup>109</sup>

Despite the extreme language used, this statement offered a good enough summary of the case against Anglo-Latin American football for McQuillen to minute 'We agree with this view'.<sup>110</sup> The attitudes stated here remained central to the Department's dogma on the subject for the immediate future. In September 1947, Enrique Peon, the President of the Mexican Football League, invited a British team to Mexico through Charles Bateman, British Ambassador, expressing the hope that the Mexican players 'would learn a great deal... and not least to obey the referee and linesmen, and generally to keep both their tempers and the ball under better control.' But Bateman had 'felt obliged to apply a cold douche to their enthusiasm' on the grounds that differences of climate, altitude, ball weight, and temperament would make it unlikely that a British team 'would be able to give of its best or shew to advantage.'<sup>111</sup> This decision and the minutes indicate the continuity of thought from the earlier discussions, seen clearly in Robert Jackson's note that the '1946 AS pp. [i.e. South American papers] show that we do not wish to encourage visits of Brit football teams to L.A. countries',<sup>112</sup> and the South American Department commended the Mexico City Chancery on its line in a letter which stated the 'position described in the relevant correspondence last year remains unchanged and in present circumstances permission for such a tour would certainly not be forthcoming.'<sup>113</sup>

Similar fears of adverse publicity entered into the Foreign Office's handling of a suggestion that the British Council should become involved in a football tour of Turkey in 1946. On hearing that Chelsea or Arsenal were due to visit Turkey, Sir David Kelly, British Ambassador at Ankara, contacted Montagu-Pollock of the Cultural Relations Department. He emphasised the problematical lack of Turkish discipline and

sportsmanship, and stressed that any British team 'should know what they are undertaking': 'If things go badly, the counter-propaganda effect can be disastrous.' He urged that the Embassy and the British Council should take only a 'benevolent interest' in the tour, and asked the Department to investigate the matter.<sup>114</sup> The Department concurred. D. Moss minuted her agreement that the British Council should remain uninvolved, as 'experience has shown that sporting fixtures tend to be political rather than cultural in their implications.'<sup>115</sup> The correspondence was passed to the Southern Department, whence Michael Williams wrote to Rous to discourage a tour. He referred to the poor organisation of the 1941 football tour, and asked Rous to consult the Foreign Office before any arrangements were finalised, as 'Mr. Bevin would be glad to give you any advice and help he can.'<sup>116</sup> Rous wrote back expressing his surprise at the reference to the 1941 tour, as he was unaware of any unpleasant incidents from that time. However, he added that the FA was considering an invitation to send the England team to Turkey in May, 'but in view of the statements in your letter, will not accept until after your Department has been consulted.'<sup>117</sup>

These various debates over the establishment of more permanent sporting links with countries in which the emotive nature of sport was feared as a liability show clearly some of the trends at work in the Foreign Office's involvement in sport in the immediate post-war period. As a cultural link with neutral countries which it was expedient to court, the basic role of sport in this process was rarely questioned. The skiing example shows this clearly, in that the Foreign Office and the British Council never challenged the advice given by the Ambassador that sport should be promoted by the British government for the political end of

promoting good relations. But the different nature of football methods and crowds in these countries made diplomats and civil servants wary of encouraging British teams to visit them. While some of the comments passed in these discussions were reactionary and even racist in order to discourage the proposed events, there was no challenge to the basic matter of whether football matches were the Foreign Office's business: and this area was one of those in which the Foreign Office finally stopped claiming that it should not be involved in sport. There were practical reasons for this, based around the more centralised control of manpower and transport that still existed: but the change from the traditional outright denial of interest, coupled with semi-official action, to a more realistic acceptance of responsibility, marks the immediate post-war period as an important stage in the solution of a dilemma that the Foreign Office had never fully addressed.

#### **4. Foreign Office involvement in military sport**

Sport was employed by the forces after the war both as a means of physical fitness for the mobilised troops in peacetime Europe, and as entertainment. The presence of troops in many parts of the continent gave great scope for demonstration sports involving military and non-military sports organisations, particularly in Italy and Germany, where native sport was being nurtured back to political acceptability after the collapse of the Fascist and Nazi governments. The FA, in particular, co-operated with the forces on a large scale, and regular matches were organised in occupied areas between forces teams and British professional teams: between July and October 1945, for example, the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) played various matches, including Liverpool in Celle and

Hamburg, Derby County in Neurberg, Arsenal in Dusseldorf, Brentford in Hamburg, Wolverhampton Wanderers in Berlin, and Glasgow Rangers in Hanover.<sup>118</sup> Military sport thus became one of the locations for British cultural diplomacy, and one of the ways in which spectator sport was re-introduced to the defeated nations as a prerequisite for international rehabilitation.

An early example came in October 1945, when Sir Philip Nichols asked for assistance in securing the appearance of a British military football team to participate in the Czech National Day celebrations. The Foreign Office supported the plan, and referred it to the War Office.<sup>119</sup> More Foreign Office time was spent in dealing with the request from Portugal for a services football team. The fixture was agreed upon in July at a joint conference of various footballing bodies as a Portuguese Military XI v an RAF XI.<sup>120</sup> The Foreign Office became involved in November, by which time the visit had already been postponed once, when Henry Clark, Counsellor at the Lisbon Embassy, telegraphed the Foreign Office to express Lisbon's regret that the Air Ministry might call the trip off because of transport problems. He wrote: 'As this second postponement will cause a difficult situation here and we shall be missing an excellent propaganda opportunity I should be grateful if you could consider getting the Air Ministry to change their mind.'<sup>121</sup> Hoyer Millar contacted the Air Ministry on 13 November with the information that the British inability to fly eleven men to Portugal 'can only be unfortunate at a time when, for civil aviation purposes, we would like to impress them with the flexibility rather than the limitations of our transport services.' He stated that the Foreign Office 'attach considerable importance to the fulfilment of the plans for this match', and asked that transport be made available.<sup>122</sup> This

was backed by a direct appeal from O'Malley, who stressed once again that the RAF's inability to fly its own men to Lisbon in peacetime would be a 'distinct debit on propaganda side'.<sup>123</sup>

After some pressure from Lisbon on the fact that the timing of Portugal's domestic football league's championship depended upon whether or not the RAF could play on 2 December,<sup>124</sup> the Western Department secured an agreement from the Air Ministry that it would provide transport in the new year.<sup>125</sup> The Portuguese proved flexible on a new date, and the RAF agreed to 17 February.<sup>126</sup> The match was approved by the Western Department in its discussion of the Spanish FA's abortive invitation,<sup>127</sup> and the match was played on 17 February at the National Stadium in Lisbon. O'Malley wrote a pleasant report on the 1-1 draw to Bevin, in which he noted that 'in this agreeably parochial country where nothing ever happens, an importance out of all proportion to that of any similar event in England' had been attached to the game. It was watched by a crowd of over 60,000, including President Salazar and members of his Government, and the result was described as 'a diplomatic triumph, since it gave satisfaction to all and offended none.'<sup>128</sup> The Western Department minuted its satisfaction.<sup>129</sup>

O'Malley followed up this eventual success with an appeal that a Navy team be sent to exploit the pro-British mood which Salazar was 'anxious to boost', with another football match being seen as an opportunity for a mass demonstration of sympathy.<sup>130</sup> The Foreign Office helped to organise this, although the Admiralty would only consent to sending a Home Command team instead of the preferred first class team from Gibraltar.<sup>131</sup> However, flying conditions precluded this team from travelling to Portugal, and a scratch team had to be raised from the

visiting HMS *Nelson* : they were beaten 11-1.<sup>132</sup> O'Malley was furious about this. In his report of the *Nelson's* visit, he criticised the Admiralty for failing to send a strong team, and noted that the Portuguese score would have been higher 'if a discreet suggestion had not been made to their team to temper the wind to the shorn lambs.' He reported that the crowd had been informed of the situation at half-time, and that they had then 'cheered the British team for their sportsmanship',

but it was most regrettable that the Admiralty did not fulfill their engagement, for the promised match had excited the anticipations of the Portuguese to a degree which can perhaps hardly be realised in Whitehall.<sup>133</sup>

He stressed the importance of the naval visit in maintaining the generally good relations enjoyed by the two nations, and the Western Department appreciated that the 'non-appearance of the football team' damaged its overall success.<sup>134</sup> But Garran was angered by some of O'Malley's comments:

The crack about Whitehall not appreciating the feelings of the Portuguese... is not justified. Whitehall burst itself in an effort to get the team to Lisbon, and the plane carrying them actually left England. But Whitehall was beaten by the weather and the plane had to turn back.<sup>135</sup>

Hoyer Millar wrote to O'Malley on 15 May to repeat that the Foreign Office and the Admiralty had made every effort to send the team, but that the weather had interfered.<sup>136</sup> The matter ended with a fairly humorous appraisal from O'Malley, in which he stressed how the size and character of Portugal gave added value to any international sports event as a change to the routine:

Looking at the thing from this end however, it is excusable that we should be horrified by things going wrong. What we feel, I think, is this: that if it had been a political team with, say, R. Sloan as centre-forward, P. Garran as centre-half and H. Millar as full-back, it would certainly have got to Lisbon before the date of the match; having made adequate allowance for the weather and so on. With the very impressive stadium before our eyes, and the immense crowd pressing out to it... we forget what a little tin-pot country it is, after all, in which we live; and expect people at home to get more excited about our excitements than, things being as they are, can be expected.<sup>137</sup>

This series of incidents demonstrates that the military and the Foreign Office were willing to co-operate in sporting matters in Portugal, despite its wartime neutrality and its government's fascistic complexion. Sport involving forces' teams was encouraged more than that of civilian organisations, thus showing one of the diplomatic applications of sport in the post-war period.

Another aspect of military sport was that practised in the occupied areas, particularly in Germany, where non-Nazi sport had virtually disappeared in 1934. The stance for British sports organisations to take was pioneered by the FA in December 1945, when Rous asked the Foreign Office for guidance. The FA had sponsored some matches in Germany since July 1945, including purely military contests as well as games between military and civilian sides. But matches with citizens of the defeated nations were avoided, and as the FA moved towards co-operation with FIFA it attempted to discourage actively any contacts with Germans.



Rous and Drewry were asked by FIFA to request the Foreign Office to bar any footballing contacts with German teams until all FIFA members were agreed on a policy towards Germany.<sup>138</sup> The FA's Services Associations Committee accordingly rejected the proposal from Brigadier W.D. Graham that a Combined Services side should meet Juventus in Turin.<sup>139</sup>

Rous thus reacted when he heard that the team of the 53rd Division of the BAOR had played against representative German sides in December. He wrote to the Admiralty, referring to the FIFA decision against football with German, Italian, or Japanese teams, and mentioning a meeting at the Foreign Office in the previous year at which Noel-Baker had informed sports bodies that

the policy of the Foreign Office... would be that although the children of occupied countries should be encouraged to play games in accordance with British traditions, adults should not be given opportunities to take part in sports although they would be permitted to attend sports functions arranged by the occupying forces in order that they might observe the spirit in which such matches were played.

He then asked that 'those responsible' be instructed to 'prevent any further fraternisation on the sports field between British and German teams.'<sup>140</sup> Rous wrote the same text to Field-Marshal Montgomery, Commander-in-Chief of the BAOR, on 8 December. The latter replied on 16 December that, while troops should not play with ex-military teams in the occupied countries, 'it is part of my policy to play games with civilian teams, such as miners, boys clubs, and so on.'<sup>141</sup> Rous sympathised with this, and showed that the FA was tied by FIFA politics, replying to Montgomery

that the FA 'has been influenced in its decision by the attitude of friendly Allies, particularly Holland and Norway.'<sup>142</sup> The Foreign Office backed Montgomery's view that such matches should be encouraged: John Tahourdin even described the FA's request as 'this bit of neo fascism'.<sup>143</sup> Montgomery advised the Cabinet on 3 January 1946 that any contacts should be left to the discretion of the commanding officers on the spot, and the Foreign Office eventually replied to Rous to inform him that such games 'can contribute to the democratic re-education of the German people.'<sup>144</sup> In the meantime, more demonstration matches had taken place between the BAOR and various combined services XIs in Milan, Trieste, Graz, and Klagenfurt.<sup>145</sup>

These two examples of military sport in Portugal and the defeated countries can serve to highlight one of the areas of sport as diplomacy in which Foreign Office action and involvement was required. As the sportspersons concerned were in the direct service of the British Government, their appearances on the sports field were used to signify levels of acceptance and recognition of the structures that their opponents represented. In this way, military sport with Portugal was condoned and encouraged for its value in strengthening the relationship, while it was used in Germany as part of the re-education and denazification process that was necessary before any reconstruction of political relations could be completed.

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## Notes on Chapter Seven

<sup>1</sup> James Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society* (Cambridge: 1977) p. 363.

<sup>2</sup> Minute, 27 March 1946. *FO 924/409*, LC 1474/44/452.

<sup>3</sup> Football Association International Selection Committee Minutes, 17 December 1945. FA Archives.

<sup>4</sup> Frank Roberts to Foreign Office, 31 October 1945. *FO 371/47975*, N 14888/7671/38.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Warner to Frank Roberts, 31 October 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Frank Roberts to Foreign Office, 31 October 1945. *FO 371/47857*, N 14898/18/38.

<sup>7</sup> Minute, 1 November 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Jack Rollin, *Soccer at War, 1939-1945* (London: 1985) p. 475.

<sup>9</sup> George Orwell, 'The Sporting Spirit', *Tribune*, 14 December 1945; reprinted in Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (eds), *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, Volume 4: In Front of Your Nose 1945-1950* (Harmondsworth: 1970) p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> James Hoy to Ernest Bevin, 12 November 1945. *FO 371/47858*, N 15939/18/38.

<sup>11</sup> Sir William Darling to Ernest Bevin, 13 November 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Minute by J Pumphrey, 14 November 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Ernest Bevin to James Hoy and Sir William Darling, 16 November 1945. *Ibid.*

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- <sup>14</sup> James Riordan, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
- <sup>15</sup> Jack Rollin, *op. cit.*, p. 472.
- <sup>16</sup> W. Ramsay to Ernest Bevin, 15 November 1945. *FO 371/49070, Z 12838/13/17.*
- <sup>17</sup> S. Hebblethwaite to F. Brook Richards, 27 November 1945; Frederick Hoyer Millar to W. Ramsay, 27 November 1945. *Ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup> *FO 371/59968, Z 32, 206, 388/32/17.*
- <sup>19</sup> *FO 371/59940, Z 2035/4/17.*
- <sup>20</sup> E.T. Lamerton to Ernest Bevin, 31 July 1945. *FO 371/49419, Z 9274/430/29.*
- <sup>21</sup> Stanley Rous to Foreign Office, 7 August 1945. *Ibid.*
- <sup>22</sup> Minute, 10 August 1945. *Ibid.*
- <sup>23</sup> Frederick Hoyer Millar to E.T. Lamerton, 21 August 1945. *Ibid.*
- <sup>24</sup> W.H. McConnell to Ernest Bevin, 29 March 1946. *FO 371/51633, AN 951/7/45.*
- <sup>25</sup> W.H. McConnell to Ernest Bevin, 29 March 1946. *Ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup> Ivy Saunders to Pierson Dixon, 29 March 1946. *Ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> Minute, John Donnelly, 2 April 1946. *Ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> Minute, 2 April 1946. *Ibid.*

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- <sup>29</sup> J. Henniker to W.H. McConnell, 9 April 1946. *Ibid.*
- <sup>30</sup> Football Association International Committee, 8 July 1946. FA Archives.
- <sup>31</sup> Donald Maclean to North American Department, 25 March 1946. *FO 371/51633*, AN 955/7/45.
- <sup>32</sup> E.W. Peterson to Anthony Bevir, 25 March 1946. *Ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> C. Thorley to John Donnelly, 16 April 1946. *Ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup> John Donnelly to Donald Maclean, 9 May 1946. *Ibid.*
- <sup>35</sup> James Wardrop to William Montagu-Pollock, 5 April 1946. *FO 371/56284*, N 4933/219/30.
- <sup>36</sup> Minute, 18 April 1945. *Ibid.*
- <sup>37</sup> Draft, n.d. *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> Football Association International Committee, 8 July 1946. FA Archives.
- <sup>39</sup> Sir Laurence Collier to Ernest Bevin, 6 June 1946. *FO 371/56284*, N 7563/219/30.
- <sup>40</sup> Sir Laurence Collier to William Montagu-Pollock, 6 June 1946. *Ibid.*, N 7724/219/30.
- <sup>41</sup> Minute, 18 June 1946. *Ibid.*
- <sup>42</sup> George Warr to Stanley Rous, 3 July 1946. *Ibid.*
- <sup>43</sup> Stanley Rous to George Warr, 11 July 1946. *Ibid.*

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<sup>44</sup> Football Association International Committee, 8 July 1946. FA Archives.

<sup>45</sup> Robert Hankey to Sir Laurence Collier, 3 July 1946. *FO 371/56284*, N 7724/219/30.

<sup>46</sup> Oslo Chancery to Cultural Relations Department, 14 June 1946. *FO 924/517*, LC 2843/929/452.

<sup>47</sup> Sir Philip Nichols to William Montagu-Pollock, 4 July 1946. *FO 371/56284*, N 7724/219/30.

<sup>48</sup> John Rob to Robin Hankey, 15 July 1946. *FO 371/56030*, N 9286/197/12.

<sup>49</sup> Robin Hankey to Sir Philip Nichols, 22 July 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Sir Philip Nichols to Robin Hankey, 30 July 1946. *Ibid.*, N 10203/197/12.

<sup>51</sup> *FO 371/59883*, Z 1111, 2412/1111/4.

<sup>52</sup> Albert Milhado to Neville Bland, 30 July 1946. *FO 924/405*, LC 3845/37/452.

<sup>53</sup> Sir Victor Mallet to Foreign Office, 10 October 1945. *FO 371/49661*, Z 11608/ 11608/41.

<sup>54</sup> Minute, 13 October 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Minute, 13 October 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Frederick Hoyer Millar to LTA, 18 October 1945; Frederick Hoyer Millar to Lord Templewood, 18 October 1945. *Ibid.*

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<sup>57</sup> Foreign Office to Sir Victor Mallet, 16 October 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Lord Templewood to Frederick Hoyer Millar, 25 October 1945. *Ibid.*, Z 12400/11608/41.

<sup>59</sup> Foreign Office to Sir Victor Mallet, 8 November 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> C. Bramwell for Sir Victor Mallet to Frederick Hoyer Millar, 23 November 1945. *Ibid.*, Z 13278/11608/41.

<sup>61</sup> Madrid Chancery to Western Department, 1 November 1945. *Ibid.*, Z 12470/11608/41.

<sup>62</sup> Minute, 9 November 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Minute, 9 November 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Frederick Hoyer Millar to Stanley Rous, 17 November 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Record of conversation by Frederick Hoyer Millar, 19 November 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Football Association Services Associations Committee, 4 December 1945. FA Archives.

<sup>67</sup> C. Bramwell for Sir Victor Mallett to Frederick Hoyer Millar, 23 November 1945. *FO 371/49661*, Z 13278/11608/41.

<sup>68</sup> Western Department to Madrid Chancery, 7 December 1945. *Ibid.*, Z 13102/11608/41.

<sup>69</sup> Douglas Howard for Sir Victor Mallet to Frederick Hoyer Millar, 22 December 1945. *FO 371/60407*, Z 190/190/41.

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<sup>70</sup> Minute, 9 January 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Minute, 11 January 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Stanley Rous to John Perowne, 24 May 1946. *FO 371/60396, Z 4896/156/41.*

<sup>73</sup> Minute, 29 May 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Frederick Hoyer Millar to Stanley Rous, 6 June 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Stanley Rous to Frederick Hoyer Millar, 14 June 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Dr. Adhemar Bebianno to Sir Donald Gainer, 25 August 1945. *FO 371/45052, AS 4906/4906/51.*

<sup>77</sup> Rio Chancery to South American Department, 3 September 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Minute, 26 September 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Santiago Chancery to South American Department, 12 September 1945. *Ibid.*, AS 5071/4906/51.

<sup>80</sup> Buenos Aires Chancery to South American Department, 14 September 1945. *Ibid.*, AS 5029/4906/51.

<sup>81</sup> Montevideo Chancery to South American Department, 18 September 1945. *Ibid.*, AS 5171/4906/51.

<sup>82</sup> Rio Chancery to South American Department, 27 September 1945. *Ibid.*, AS 5287/4906/51.

<sup>83</sup> Bogota Chancery to South American Department, 28 September 1945. *Ibid.*, AS 5406/4906/51.



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<sup>84</sup> La Paz Chancery to South American Department, 1 October 1945. *Ibid.*, AS 5464/4906/51.

<sup>85</sup> Robert Hadow, Washington, to South American Department, 8 October 1945. *Ibid.*, AS 5387/4906/51.

<sup>86</sup> Panama Chancery to South American Department, 17 October 1945. *Ibid.*, AS 5608/4906/51.

<sup>87</sup> Havana Chancery to South American Department, 9 October 1945. *Ibid.*, AS 5765/4906/51.

<sup>88</sup> Lima Chancery to South American Department, 6 November 1945. *Ibid.*, AS 5961/4906/51.

<sup>89</sup> Caracas Chancery to South American Department, 27 September 1945. *Ibid.*, AS 5444/4906/51.

<sup>90</sup> Quito Chancery to South American Department, 21 September 1945. *Ibid.*, AS 5173/4906/51.

<sup>91</sup> Minute, 30 October 1945. *Ibid.*, AS 5464/4906/51.

<sup>92</sup> Minute, 26 October 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Minute, 27 October 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Minute, 15 November 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Sir Arthur Noble to John Perowne, 11 September 1945. *FO 371/44776*, AS 5040/3078/2.

<sup>96</sup> James Murray to Board of Customs and Excise, 9 October 1945. *Ibid.*

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<sup>97</sup> Augustin Edwards to John Leche, 13 December 1945. *FO 924/358*, LC 15/15/ 452.

<sup>98</sup> John Leche to Foreign Office, 17 December 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> John Leche to Foreign Office, 28 January 1946. *Ibid.*, LC 639/15/452.

<sup>100</sup> Minute, 15 February 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> E. Church to John Thwaites, 19 February 1946. *Ibid.*, LC 764/15/452.

<sup>102</sup> Cultural Relations Department to War Office, 1 March 1946. *Ibid.*, LC 639/15/452.

<sup>103</sup> War Office to Foreign Office, 4 April 1946. *Ibid.*, LC 1677/15/452.

<sup>104</sup> Stanley Rous to John Perowne, 26 February 1946. *FO 371/52113*, AS 1214/ 1214/51.

<sup>105</sup> Minute, 1 March 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> John Perowne to Stanley Rous, 15 March 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Stanley Rous to John Perowne, 26 March 1946. *Ibid.*, AS 1752/1214/51.

<sup>108</sup> Minute, 2 April 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Russell Macrae to John Perowne, 2 April 1946. *Ibid.*, AS 1980/1214/51.

<sup>110</sup> Minute, 11 April 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Mexico City Chancery to North American Department, 11 September 1947. *FO 371/60960*, AN 3394/3394/26.

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<sup>112</sup> Minute, 10 October 1947. *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> North American Department to Mexico City Chancery, 24 October 1947. *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> Sir David Kelly to William Montagu-Pollock, 8 August 1946. *FO 371/59326, R 12016/12016/44.*

<sup>115</sup> Minute, 11 September 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> Michael Williams to Stanley Rous, 16 September 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> Stanley Rous to Michael Williams, 27 September 1946. *Ibid.*, R 14487/12016/44.

<sup>118</sup> Football Association International Selection Committee, 15 October 1945; Football Association Service Associations Committee, 4 December 1945. FA Archives.

<sup>119</sup> *FO 371/47205, N 13580/13443/12.*

<sup>120</sup> Football Association Service Associations Committee, 14 August 1945. FA Archives.

<sup>121</sup> Henry Clark to Foreign Office, 8 November 1945. *FO 371/49476, Z 12520/2/36.*

<sup>122</sup> Frederick Hoyer Millar to Air Commodore S. West, 13 November 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Sir Owen O'Malley to Foreign Office, 12 November 1945. *Ibid.*, Z 12659/2/36.

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124 Sir Owen O'Malley to Foreign Office, 13 November 1945. *Ibid.*, Z 12688/2/36.

125 Western Department to Lisbon Embassy, 21 November 1945. *Ibid.*

126 Western Department to Lisbon Embassy, 21 December 1945. *Ibid.*, Z 13361/2/36.

127 Western Department to Madrid Chancery, 7 December 1945. *FO 371/49661*, Z 13102/11608/41.

128 Sir Owen O'Malley to Ernest Bevin, 21 February 1945. *FO 371/60265*, Z 1860/179/36.

129 Minute, Michael Williams, 1 March 1946. *Ibid.*

130 Sir Owen O'Malley to Foreign Office, 10 March 1946. *Ibid.*, Z 2291/179/36.

131 Foreign Office to Lisbon Embassy, 17 March 1946. *Ibid.*

132 Minute, Michael Williams, 27 March 1946. *Ibid.*, Z 2776/179/36.

133 Sir Owen O'Malley to Ernest Bevin, 6 April 1946. *FO 371/60290*, Z 3468/1403/36.

134 Minute, Michael Williams, 12 April 1946. *Ibid.*

135 Minute, 18 April 1946. *Ibid.*

136 Frederick Hoyer Millar to Sir Owen O'Malley, 15 May 1946. *Ibid.*

137 Sir Owen O'Malley to Frederick Hoyer Millar, 27 May 1946. *Ibid.*, Z 5019/1403/36.

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<sup>138</sup> FIFA Conference, Zurich, 9-11 November 1945. Football Association International Selection Committee, 17 December 1945. FA Archives.

<sup>139</sup> Football Association Services Associations Committee, 4 December 1945. FA Archives.

<sup>140</sup> Stanley Rous to the Admiralty, n.d. (December 1945). *FO 371/55626*, C 159/159/18. Football Association International Selection Committee, 17 December 1945. FA Archives.

<sup>141</sup> Field-Marshal Montgomery to Stanley Rous, 16 December 1945. *FO 371/55626*, C 938/159/18.

<sup>142</sup> Stanley Rous to Field-Marshal Montgomery, 2 January 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> Minute, 26 January 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> Philip Noel-Baker to Stanley Rous, 18 February 1946. *Ibid.*, C 1105/159/18.

<sup>145</sup> Football Association Services Sub-Committee, 8 February 1946. FA Archives.

## Chapter Eight

### Sport in the Cold War, 1947-48

International sport continued to reconstruct itself in 1947 and 1948 in the new international system that was emerging around the twin power blocs of the USA and the USSR. With the USA giving financial aid to Europe through the Marshall Plan, and the USSR countering with tighter political and economic links between Moscow and the ruling parties in the emergent Eastern Bloc, the familiar parameters of the Cold War were fixed at this time. Such flashpoints as the Berlin Blockade and Airlift of 1947, and the Soviet takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1948, kept the prospect of renewed military action alive. In the face of this and its corollary in the military alliances that became NATO and the Warsaw Pact, there were some explorations of the possibility of European economic and political union, although Ernest Bevin was a rather uncommitted partner in these experiments. The need to rehabilitate Germany, or at least its western part, became crucial in this environment. Meanwhile, Britain was undergoing a minor political revolution with the implementation of Labour's welfare state policies leading to the creation of the NHS and a more widespread form of social security, along with the partial nationalisation of certain industries, although financial crises based around dollar debts continued to inhibit the full realisation of these programmes.

British involvement in international sport in this period served various purposes. Most significantly, various sporting organisations slackened the traditionally aloof attitudes that had been shown towards the international ruling bodies, leading to a greater British

involvement in international competition: the membership of FIFA by the four British FAs in 1946, and their participation in the first post-war World Cup in 1950, are typical of this. Governmental interest in sport also increased, in two particular ways. On the one hand, the traditional Foreign Office involvement in sport on a pragmatic basis continued relatively unchanged in this period, seen most typically in its role in the cancellation of Anglo-Czech sporting contacts in response to the Soviet takeover in March 1948. But against this, these years also saw the growth of a more regular involvement, based around the three factors of a populist Labour Government, the good relations established between state and sport in wartime, and the increasing need in a period of international tension to employ any means possible to avoid war. The finest example of this for the years in question was the integral involvement of various government agencies in the organisation of the 1948 Olympic Games, held in London as the first post-war summer celebration of Olympism.

1948 also saw an important debate on the Foreign Office's policy towards sport, initiated by Jack Ward's letter from the Rome Embassy on the value of sport in reconstructing Anglo-Italian relations. He reported on the England football team's 4-0 victory over Italy in Turin on 16 May as having 'considerably enhanced our prestige in this country', and urged that football, rugby, and other sports should be officially sponsored:

There has in the past been, I think, the feeling in London that international sport is just as likely to do harm as good to international relations... But I think it would be a pity to allow this risk to prevent our developing closer relations with the Italians over sport and making use of the very great prestige which our country still enjoys in Italy as the

originator and developer of most of the great sports of today.

He reported the Ambassador's recent conversation on sport with Sir Ronald Adam, Chairman of the British Council, in which Adam had agreed that his organisation could promote sport. Ward concluded with a request to Ponsonby Crosthwaite of the Cultural Relations Department to support the idea 'from the political point of view'.<sup>1</sup>

The Cultural Relations Department took this proposal as the basis for a more general debate on sport as cultural propaganda. Head of Department Brian MacDermot minuted 'on the whole... international sporting events are a good thing and should be encouraged', but noted that the lack of a single sports authority in Britain made governmental involvement difficult to channel. He suggested the creation of a 'Sports Advisory Committee', to be funded and guided by the British Council, and urged consultation with Adam and Philip Noel-Baker, now Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations.<sup>2</sup> Crosthwaite backed the idea, and minuted his hope that 'sport, as a form of enlightenment if not of culture, shall be accepted as falling in the competence (a) of Cultural Relations Department & (b) of the British Council'.<sup>3</sup> A note of caution was sounded by Jain Aitken, who advised that the British Council was the wrong body to oversee Britain's international sport. She referred to the 1946 review of the information services which had limited the British Council to 'cultural and educational work', and added that the Council's desire to be seen as politically neutral would be hampered by sport, which 'gives rise to popular passions and is... likely to develop political implications'. She concluded that the British Council's image also made it an inappropriate agency to deal with sport:

Justly or unjustly, the British Council are not regarded as



an unmixed blessing either here or abroad; they have a certain reputation for a sort of effeminacy; their critics are not, I think, as numerous as their admirers, but they certainly exist. For this reason I think it would be best to keep British sport quite clear of them.

However, she was not opposed to the general idea of official aid to sport, and she agreed with MacDermot that Noel-Baker should chair a meeting to discuss the matter.<sup>4</sup>

A letter to Noel-Baker was duly drafted. It claimed that the Cultural Relations Department 'had been considering the possibilities offered by sport in the development of closer international relations', and deferred to his experience in both fields of sport and diplomacy as the person best placed to know 'the growing tendency of the modern world to attach importance to prowess in sport.' It went on to demonstrate an appreciation of the lessons of the 1930s:

That success... in international sporting events helps to increase national prestige abroad was realised and acted on by the totalitarian countries before the war, and in these changed times I think we might seriously consider taking that leaf out of their book... [In] this field, as in so many others, the State must feel impelled sooner or later to intervene.

The draft referred to the British Council's problems in defining sport as 'cultural', and suggested a 'central sporting administration in this country which could administer any funds that might be allocated by the Treasury'. Noel-Baker was then asked to convene a meeting to discuss the problem.<sup>5</sup> However, there is no final copy of this letter on file; neither is there a reply. The opportunity to turn these 'deliberations on the general issue of the official sponsorship of sport'<sup>6</sup>

was thus apparently lost. Despite the Government's experience in dealing with the Olympic Games in 1947 and 1948, no formal policy was established. But the fact that it was discussed so seriously, and that the pre-war political sports of Germany and Italy were cited as possible models, suggests a major advance in Foreign Office attitudes towards sport.

### **1. Non-Olympic sport**

One of the most striking roles of sport in this period was the rehabilitation of Italy, the first of the defeated nations to be courted by the west due to the circumstances of the deposition of the Fascist Government and the country's subsequent effort against Germany, and because of the possibility of a communist government in Italy giving Stalin a bridgehead to western Europe and the Mediterranean. Efforts to rehabilitate Italy were made on the political and economic fronts, but the use of sports diplomacy to complement this work cannot be ignored. In June 1947, the FA accepted an invitation to send a team to Italy<sup>7</sup> for May 1948, and which gave rise to the Cultural Relations Department's discussion of sport. The Foreign Office was to become involved in this visit, as it was in the promotion of the International Festival of Physical Education and Sport that took place in Venice in the same month. The Rome Chancery contacted the Western Department about this festival in December 1947, and the Department distributed the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' invitation to various other branches of the Government, including the Home Office, the Ministry of Health, the Admiralty, the Air Ministry, and the War Office. Most departments replied negatively, but the Ministry of Education and the Scottish Education Department expressed an interest, which was communicated to Rome and to the Italian Embassy

in London.<sup>8</sup> The Ministry of Education threw light on the value of this minor affair in its appeal for more information to the Cultural Relations Department, in which William Richardson noted: 'On general grounds I imagine that you would be anxious that we should participate in an international gathering of this sort in Italy.'<sup>9</sup>

The Italy v England football match played in Turin on 16 May 1948, and won 4-0 by England, was obviously a higher profile event. As has been seen, this match became the occasion for a review of policy towards sport, thanks to Ward's letter from Rome on the value of international sporting contacts. On the subject of football promoting good relations between Britain and Italy, Ward was also enthusiastic, and he linked this to an appeal for Anglo-Italian rugby:

We have been thinking for some time that "Sport" ought to be developed as a means of bringing the two countries together... Association Football is the game of the country and attracts huge crowds and enormous interest as in England. But Rugby seems to us also worth encouraging as it is played almost entirely by past and present University students, who are obviously one of the best sections of the population to cultivate.

After making his suggestions on how the British Council and the Foreign Office should take a greater interest in sport, he returned to the specific Italian question by noting:

There are many difficult questions which still separate the two countries which will obviously always remain very different in general character and outlook. So it does seem important that we should do all that we can to develop close and friendly relations in fields of activity where both countries share a common enthusiasm and where the

prestige of our country still stands so high.<sup>10</sup>

He enclosed a report on the football match by Guy Hannaford, the Embassy's Legal Advisor, who wrote on the excellent reception given to the English team, and on the invitations extended from the Italian football authorities to the FA to send coaches to Italy.<sup>11</sup>

While the Cultural Relations Department discussed the implications of Ward's advice and Adams' desire to co-operate, another opportunity for Britain to exploit football in the pursuit of good relations with Italy arose. In July 1948, the Mayor of Florence, Mario Fabiani, asked the British Consul, Herbert Greenleaves, for help in arranging British involvement in a sports festival planned to raise money to rebuild the *Ponte de Santa Trinita*, bombed by Germany during the war. He envisaged a friendly match by a professional or representative team.<sup>12</sup> Greenleaves contacted the Rome Chancery with this request, and endorsed it:

I suggest that the organisation of a match on the lines suggested for the object of raising money for the reconstruction of this famous bridge would receive the most favourable comment in Italy.<sup>13</sup>

The Embassy asked the British Council to discover whether any British teams were planning to go to Florence, as it had been rumoured that Arsenal were playing in Milan on 3 September and that they would be able to extend their trip, with further approval being given as 'matches of this kind can have a most beneficial effect in cultivating friendly feelings towards England.'<sup>14</sup> The British Council's Establishment Officer in Rome contacted London to suggest that Arsenal should play in Florence first, as their possible defeat in Milan would reduce the Tuscan interest in the game. He added a word of measured approval, noting that 'Britain would gain a great deal of goodwill by making

their contribution to the reconstruction of the Ponte Trinita' [*sic*] in such a picturesque manner', but that 'if it is impossible to arrange, no harm will be done.'<sup>15</sup> The Arsenal trip had been only a rumour, but the Cultural Relations Department approached the club and they offered to go after 9 October when their midweek League commitments ended: Jain Aitken minuted that 'they sounded most co-operative'.<sup>16</sup> But while this scheme never came to fruition, the effort put into it by various branches of the government was symptomatic of the Foreign Office's reassessment of sport.

This continued in the discussion of rugby, which was furthered by a meeting between Rous and Ward in Rome. Ward saw the sport as 'an opening to the most impressionable, and probably on a long view the most important, section of the Italian people.' Ward also appealed to Harold Caccia, Assistant Under Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, 'who was himself an Oxford Rugger Blue',<sup>17</sup> to whom he described rugby as a 'useful field for British influence':

I feel that we do have in Rugby Football a useful point of contact with the Italian student world and that this fully justifies running the admitted risks inherent in international sport.<sup>18</sup>

He asked Caccia to use his influence to get something done, which was rewarded as Caccia felt that a lack of action would offend the Italians: 'on these sort of issues I do not imagine that we wish to rub in the salt.'<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, Christopher Warner wrote to Lieutenant Colonel F.D. Prentice, the Secretary of the RFU, to 'commend to you a proposal'. He summarised Ward's arguments, and added that a scheme of Anglo-Italian rugby exchanges 'would have the whole-hearted approval of the Foreign Office', although he could offer no financial help.<sup>20</sup> Prentice promised to bring the matter to his committee in

February.<sup>21</sup> Thus, apart from the healthy debate on the role of sport that the Italian affair provoked at the Foreign Office, the official promotion of Anglo-Italian sport signifies on a cultural level the higher policies being pursued to keep Italy sympathetic to the West. The realistic manner in which rugby was exploited due to its social appeal to the country's future legislators shows an appreciation of the influence that sport could bring. However, Ward's enthusiasm for rugby should be seen in the context of the pre-war requests from the Fascist university organisation GUF for co-operation in rugby from the English universities.

While these detailed deliberations over Italy provide an example of sport being used by the Foreign Office for purposes of political rehabilitation, Cold War diplomacy was also responsible for official involvement in sport between Britain and Czechoslovakia. In February 1948, the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia led a successful Soviet-backed coup. Britain had been attempting to avert such an eventuality by political and other means, including 'a rather pathetic cultural drive in Prague, consisting of the showing of British films and the visit of a theatre company'.<sup>22</sup> The FA had arranged a full international in Prague for 6 May as part of England's continental tour,<sup>23</sup> and on 10 March Pierson Dixon, British Ambassador in Prague, telegraphed the Foreign Office to recommend the cancellation of the fixture:

The match is already being eagerly discussed by the sporting section of the public and its cancellation would have a considerable effect in making the public at large realise that the British people disapprove of what has happened here. Moreover, whichever side were to win, a match of this kind would not be likely to improve the atmosphere.

He concluded with the observation that the organisation of Czech football was now under communist control, as it had been taken over by 'Action Committees.'<sup>24</sup> The Foreign Office immediately perceived the value of complying with Dixon's suggestion, and Brian MacDermot was quick to give Rous 'a fairly broad hint that we should like to see the match cancelled'.<sup>25</sup> A second telegram from Dixon contained the news that both the Hallé Orchestra and the British Council had cancelled commitments in Czechoslovakia, and that the new government was deliberately attempting to 'exploit' cultural contacts 'in order to demonstrate that in spite of certain differences of opinion on political matters Anglo-Czechoslovak relations are still fundamentally unaltered.'<sup>26</sup> MacDermot minuted that the planned football match would be 'rather a conspicuous exception to our general attitude and one which the new regime could hardly fail to exploit.' He urged that Rous should 'be given the Foreign Office view at a high level.'<sup>27</sup> This led to a meeting on 31 March between Rous and Hector McNeil, Minister of State, on which Warner minuted that Rous 'has promised to do his best to meet our wishes.'<sup>28</sup>

The FA's International Selection Committee met on the following day, and it was decided that the match should be postponed on the grounds that the new organisation of Czech football had not yet been recognised by FIFA.<sup>29</sup> This must be seen in the context of the FA's willingness to co-operate with FIFA on all matters; but the timing of the incident would suggest that the Foreign Office's request and Rous' promise had helped to shape the FA's decision. This is underlined by the fact that Rous sent McNeil a copy of his letter of postponement to the Secretary of the *Ceskoslovenska Asociace Footballova*.<sup>30</sup> But before Dixon could be informed of the FA's compliance, he sent more advice on how the FA could break the arrangement, claiming that they

could either protest at the politicisation of Czech football clubs, or say that public opinion in the United Kingdom having been shocked by the overthrow of democratic institutions in Czechoslovakia would not understand it if arrangements were allowed to stand, and that the atmosphere was therefore unsuitable for playing an international match between the two countries.<sup>31</sup>

Although Rous had pulled the FA out of the commitment before such excuses became necessary, the presumption on Dixon's part that the FA should be encouraged to cancel, and the Foreign Office's role in facilitating the cancellation by contacting Rous and asking Dixon for 'further ammunition'<sup>32</sup> provide an example of the Foreign Office using sport as part of a wider cultural drive against the USSR's expanding influence. The willingness of the FA to comply is also significant as an indication of its continuing relationship with the government.

These, then, were some of the sporting matters with which the Foreign Office and official representatives abroad became involved in the years 1947 and 1948, with the decisions made over Italy and Czechoslovakia reflecting the more general trends of diplomacy pertinent to those countries. But of more long-term importance in the relationship between state and sport was the 1948 Olympic Games, held in London as the first post-war Summer Olympic competition. Various government departments were involved from an early stage, and despite Tony McCarthy's claim that the Government 'offered little help... beyond providing some Spartan accommodation, and was of the general opinion - when it had one - that sport should look after itself',<sup>33</sup> there is much evidence of a high degree of official involvement in the "Austerity Olympics".



### 3. The 1948 Olympic Games

The planned resumption of the celebration of Olympiads was announced in 1946, and the Summer Games were awarded to London despite the city's bomb damage and the country's reconstruction priorities. The events were held principally at Wembley in July and August 1948, and attracted a record 4099 competitors from 59 countries, surpassing the Berlin records by 33 and 10 respectively. In accordance with the IOC's 1920 precedent, Germany and Japan were not invited, and the USSR remained absent as it was still at the planning stage of Olympic sport and administration. But a team was sent from Italy, and new medallists included Brazil, Ceylon, Iran, and Korea. The smaller Winter Olympics, which attracted less competitors than the pre-war event at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, was held at St Moritz in January and February.<sup>34</sup>

The earliest reference to the Games traced in Foreign Office files came in January 1946, when Viscount Wyndham Portal, Chairman of the BOA, wrote to Bevin to propose a meeting between themselves, Lord Burghley, and Philip Noel-Baker, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, to discuss the IOC's suggestion that London should act as host.<sup>35</sup> Dixon minuted that he had discussed it with Cabinet Secretary Norman Brook, who proposed that an *ad hoc* Cabinet Committee should deal with the question, and Dixon suggested that Bevin should raise it with Attlee.<sup>36</sup> Bevin and Noel-Baker met Portal and Burghley on 10 January, at which meeting Bevin 'warmly welcomed the proposal' as he 'thought that in two years time we should have got into our stride again after the war & its aftermath & that we shd. be ready to welcome a large number of tourists.' Wembley Stadium was proposed as the best location, and Bevin's optimism that

the Olympics would be free from political problems was also recorded at this stage: in dealing with the question of Soviet representation, Harold Freese-Pennefather of the General Department minuted that the Foreign Secretary 'did not envisage any political complications whether the Russians competed or not.'<sup>37</sup> Dixon followed this meeting up with a letter to Brook asking for a committee to be established, and stating that Bevin's prime motive in backing the proposal was his desire to 'use the Games as the occasion for an organised drive to attract tourists to visit all parts of the U.K.'. The organisation at the Foreign Office was given to the Central Department under Gallop.<sup>38</sup>

On 25 January, Brook circularised the departments perceived to have an interest, including the Home Office, the Board of Trade, the Dominions Office, the Scottish Office, the Ministry of Labour and National Service, the Ministry of War Transport, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Works.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile, Portal had encouraged the Lord Mayor of London to apply formally to the IOC on behalf of the capital, and the letter of application included the claim that the 'invitation has the full support of His Majesty's Government', a claim unthinkable before the war.<sup>40</sup> This support was quick to materialise. On 20 February, Brook chaired an informal meeting to 'explore the ground in a preliminary way before the matter came to the Cabinet.' All of the departments contacted by Brook sent representatives to this meeting, at which it was decided that while the ultimate responsibility for the organisation and financing of the Games rested with the BOA, some 'Government machinery would be required to assist the British Olympic Association in organising the Games, and to attract tourists to this country in connection with the Games.' Again, it was stressed that the 'Government's main interest in the matter was to seize the occasion to develop the tourist trade.' Wembley was named

as the best site, with RAF Uxbridge being suggested as the Olympic Village, while an inter-departmental committee was suggested to act as a co-ordinating body for hotel development, the improvement of the catering industry, the establishment of cheap rail packages, the restoration of London's museums, and the simplification of the tourist visa process. It was envisaged that this would consist of representatives from the Foreign Office and Home Office along with the Scottish Office, the Board of Trade, and the Ministries of War Transport and Works, with the co-operation of the Dominions Office, India Office, Colonial Office, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, the Civil Aviation Authority, the Arts Council, and the Standing Council on Museums.<sup>41</sup>

Six days later, the Foreign Office heard officially from the BOA that the IOC had accepted London's offer to host the Olympics.<sup>42</sup> The co-operation that was necessary between the BOA and the Foreign Office was evident in this information, while the government's own body was establishing itself. On 9 March, Brook asked Dixon to advise Bevin to bring the matter to Cabinet, while proposing that either Hilary Marquand, Secretary of State for Overseas Trade, or A. Mullins, Under Secretary of the Tourist Catering and Holiday Services Division of the Board of Trade, should chair the committee.<sup>43</sup> The Foreign Office's prime interest in tourism was evident in the minutes on this letter, with Freese-Pennefather seeing the Olympics as the chance 'of establishing the United Kingdom as a tourist centre for years to follow',<sup>44</sup> and Bevin finally took the matter to Cabinet on 6 April. He reported on how he had given Portal and Burghley the approval to accept the IOC's offer, and how governmental help was necessary 'in obtaining the various facilities required for competitors and visitors.' The aim of encouraging tourism was stressed in his claim

that the 'Government are... very interested in exploiting the opportunity of attracting tourists to this country in connection with the the Games.' He concluded by proposing the inter-departmental committee and an advisory body from the catering and entertainment industries, and by noting that the Government would favour the Games being held in June rather than the BOA's and IOC's August to avoid bringing in too many extra tourists during Britain's own holiday period. The main task was clearly to see 'that the Games are turned to good account in the development of our tourist trade.'<sup>45</sup>

But while the need to attract foreign currency into Britain was the Foreign Office's main concern in allying itself with the BOA, and despite Bevin's optimism on the political front, it soon became clear that not all diplomatic concerns would be avoided. As early as March 1946, Counsellor Hossein Ghods of the Iranian Embassy contacted Charles Baxter, Head of the Eastern Department, for information for the Iranian National Cultural Association, which wanted to take part in the Games.<sup>46</sup> While the Foreign Office on this occasion did no more than offer the Iranian Embassy the address of the BOA,<sup>47</sup> Freese-Pennefather used the opportunity to contact Burghley to state that 'we should be very grateful if you would pass on to us any information about the Games, as it becomes available, which you consider would be of interest to the Foreign Office'.<sup>48</sup> This request was heeded at all stages of the planning of the Games, with this particular example leading to the Foreign Office acting as a go-between for the BOA and Iran.<sup>49</sup>

Of more significance to the structural development of governmental involvement was the Cabinet Office memorandum of 30 April by Marquand, which moved on from Bevin's earlier preliminary paper. Marquand welcomed the plan for London to host the Olympics,

but raised some doubts as to whether a new committee was necessary to plan the Games. He cited the Travel Association and the Reception and Tours Section of his own department's Export Promotion Department, and claimed that they would be working closely enough with the BOA to preclude the need for another committee.<sup>50</sup> A. Dunn of the General Department minuted his agreement on this,<sup>51</sup> but Freese-Pennefather urged a discussion which brought Noel-Baker back into the consultation process.<sup>52</sup> Noel-Baker's important and informed minute came on 13 May. He agreed that the existing machinery appeared to be adequate, but went on to highlight some 'other problems with which the B.O.A. will be faced, and in dealing with which they may require assistance from H.M.G.' These included the development of Wembley Stadium, including the improvement of its road and rail links, and the location of an Olympic village: and he claimed that the help of the Ministries of Works, Health, Transport, and Air would all be needed. He also argued for the Government to make 'an outright gift' to the BOA to help its fund-raising, and for ministers to speak publicly on the BOA's need for funds, especially as other countries' governments had always funded Olympics in their countries. He concluded that.

for these questions, and others which, no doubt, will arise, it might be desirable to have a special committee of the kind suggested by the Secretary of State, which could deal with these, and other, matters, on a broader basis than that of mere tourism.<sup>53</sup>

These papers, along with Bevin's original memorandum, were taken by the Cabinet Office to plan a response.<sup>54</sup> The structure was settled in June, when the Insurance and Companies Department of the Board of Trade asked the Foreign Office if it could approve the granting of a

licence for the incorporation of the Organising Committee under the Companies Act of 1929.<sup>55</sup> Dunn replied that this would be approved 'since H.M.G. have given their explicit approval to the holding of the Olympic Games in 1948.' He explained that

The Government intend to give every assistance to those organising the Games and have recently been considering the machinery for so doing. The arrangements are being made by the Cabinet Offices under the direction of Sir Norman Brook.

He concluded that the question of financial support would be assessed 'in due course.'<sup>56</sup>

The consideration of the machinery of governmental involvement continued on 4 June when Brook chaired another informal meeting, at which Plan B of the Lord President's Committee was discussed. This put the tourist aspect of the Games into the hands of the Catering, Holiday and Tourist Services under the Board of Trade, ruled out the establishment of a new inter-departmental committee, and proposed a 'small executive agency' to channel governmental assistance in other areas. The meeting accepted this plan, and urged 'a single Government agency' to co-ordinate the government's approach.<sup>57</sup> Brook sent the minutes of this meeting to the Foreign Office, and noted that there was no need for the Cabinet to see any more reports as the Catering, Holiday and Tourist Services could now take over.<sup>58</sup> This left the Foreign Office free to pursue its more usual Olympic concerns of diplomatic implications and national image, albeit in a more structured form than ever before. On 2 July, Noel-Baker called for more state help for the BOA in the shape of office space, as the two year time span imposed by circumstances was not long enough for the planning of an Olympics: the government should therefore help to prevent 1948

becoming 'an ill-managed affair' which 'will only do us harm, for tourist purposes as well as others... The national reputation will be largely involved in this highly risky undertaking.'<sup>59</sup> He discussed the issue with Brook, who promised to raise it with Attlee, as he saw 'an important Foreign Office interest in the Olympic Games, in more ways than one, & I hope that the arrangements made will fully protect it.'<sup>60</sup> In the same week, the Foreign Office's structural involvement was ensured when it was invited to send a representative to the first meeting of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Catering, Holiday and Tourist Services, chaired by Marquand.<sup>61</sup>

The question of adverse publicity arose in the same month, when the Foreign Office received a cutting from the *Minneapolis Tribune* on the forthcoming Olympics. The article appeared in a sports column, and contained an interview with the sports editor of the *Daily Express*, Frank Butler. It was based on Minneapolis' bid for the 1952 Olympics. Butler was quoted as saying that the city 'is welcome to the Games in 1948 insofar as England is concerned.' He referred to the unpleasant aspects of the 1908 Olympics, and the negative feelings from the USA that had been caused by the British judges at that meeting.<sup>62</sup> This caused concern at the Foreign Office. Donald Logon of the North American Department described the item as 'unfortunate' and proposed that Butler should be informed of the 'result of his statement',<sup>63</sup> while Freese-Pennefather suggested that 'some central authority' should deal with such instances of adverse publicity.

I venture to suggest that what is wanted is a department whose job it would be not only to deal with offending columnists but to anticipate their harmful activities by putting out publicity giving the true facts of our intentions about the Games to the Press abroad (and in this country)

and to the correspondents here of foreign papers and news agencies. If we get our material published first, there is less likelihood of the public in foreign countries being misled by the fantasies of irresponsible local pressmen.<sup>64</sup>

This commitment to pro-Olympic publicity was complemented by the government's public commitment to the Games by promising to supply adequate accommodation for competitors. This was elicited when Collier wrote from Oslo with the news that some national teams would not attend without such a guarantee.<sup>65</sup> Richard Heppel accordingly gained the assurance from the Lord President's Office that an Olympic Village would be established if the Board of Trade agreed.<sup>66</sup> This agreement was forthcoming on 30 August,<sup>67</sup> and in September Burghley was able to inform the IOC that the London Olympics 'have not only the support, but the keen support, of H.M. Government.'

In these days, when the whole world is suffering from dislocation following the War and the shortage of all materials and the inevitable impingement of Government control on almost all activities, this backing is, clearly, of profound significance.<sup>68</sup>

The Inter-Departmental Committee and the Ministry of Works assessed the accommodation problem, and proposed various schemes to avoid the impossible task of funding a special building project. These included billeting competitors with British families, which 'might promote international understanding' as no competitors from Germany or Japan were attending, although C.S. Toseland of the Board of Trade argued against this option on the grounds of athletes' temperaments and the fact that they need 'a good deal of spoon-feeding'. The



alternatives included using schools, liners on the Thames, new housing estates prior to normal occupation, and prisoner of war camps.<sup>69</sup> The latter idea needed the approval of the Foreign Office, where Leslie Blackwell of the General Department minuted that 'provided the camps conform to a reasonable standard and the barbed wire and other signs of their occupation by prisoners of war are removed I doubt whether there could be any objection to their use for this purpose',<sup>70</sup> and Freese-Pennefather communicated this approval to the Export Promotions Department on 12 December.<sup>71</sup>

The question was brought before Cabinet in March 1947, when the Secretaries of Overseas Trade and Air submitted a memorandum calling for Cabinet support for the plan to house the competitors in RAF Uxbridge, the Convalescent Depot in Richmond Park, and RAF West Drayton. A total expenditure of £720,000 was envisaged to bring these sites up to standard, and the two ministers urged a high priority for labour and materials for the sites:

If the Games are to be held in this country, it is essential to our national prestige that they should be a success; and, as we are committed to holding them here, the Government should give all possible assistance in ensuring their success. And one of the factors most likely to contribute to the success of the Games is the provision of satisfactory accommodation for the competitors.<sup>72</sup>

This paper was discussed by the Cabinet on 27 March. Some voices were raised against the plan, based on the reasonable premise that the hosting of the Olympic Games was not entirely compatible with Britain's financial state.

Was it wise that the Olympic Games should be held in this country at a time when we should not have recovered from

our economic difficulties? Was it reasonable that we should be preparing for an Olympic Meeting at a time when we had thought it necessary to restrict our own mid-week sport in order to avoid loss of industrial production? Could we justify the use of scarce materials for this purpose when we had refused facilities for, *e.g.*, the Highland and Agricultural Society's Show?

But against these criticisms it was pointed out that it would be inexpedient and publicly damaging to withdraw at this stage, and that the Games would bring in an estimated £1,000,000 towards restoring the balance of payments. The Cabinet concluded by approving the accommodation plan minus the new buildings designed for Uxbridge, to ask the Service departments to find and propose suitable existing accommodation, and to ask the Ministry of Works to ensure that labour and materials were provided for the adaptation programme. The Government thus showed itself to be fully behind London's Olympics.<sup>73</sup>

While planning aspects of the Games continued to crop up throughout 1947, the Foreign Office also became concerned with various diplomatic and political considerations during that year. The most obvious problem was that of the excluded Germany, which the IOC was not inviting on the grounds that it had no NOC, and which fitted well with the Foreign Office's need to keep the USSR on friendly terms. On 18 February 1947, Aberdare wrote to the Foreign Office on the subject of Duke Adolphe Friedrich of Mecklenburg, a pre-war German member of the IOC who was resident in Soviet territory and had not been invited to the IOC Congress. Aberdare asked the Foreign Office to use its influence with the USSR to allow the Duke to travel, pointing out that he was the Queen of Holland's brother-in-law and

'was and perhaps still is a perfect gentleman.' He claimed that the Duke should present no political problems, as he 'seems always to have been against the Nazi movement and to have acted against it as much as he could', and was seen as a suitable sporting representative for post-war Germany. Aberdare ended with an appeal to British policy in general:

I believe that the British Government are trying as far as possible to get Germany run by the Germans and I am wondering if we should start making contacts over Sport and if the Duke is still a member of the International Olympic Committee.<sup>74</sup>

The Central Department was not keen to raise this rather peripheral matter with the USSR. F.F. Reihman questioned the timing of this attempt to re-integrate Germany as a sporting nation with the comment 'I should have thought an increase in the daily calories was a prerequisite!'<sup>75</sup> while Ronald Hope-Jones noted more seriously that the USSR would be unlikely to help, particularly as one of their conditions for membership of the IOC, the expulsion of Spain, had not been met.<sup>76</sup> John Rob, Hector McNeil's Private Secretary, advised Aberdare that in the circumstances it would be unwise to apply to the USSR for the Duke to travel.<sup>77</sup> This incident found something of an echo later in the year when Burghley appealed to Bevin to release General Djoukic, a Yugoslav member of the IOC in British custody. This was not granted.<sup>78</sup>

The position of the USSR itself was also problematic. Despite its rapidly growing interest in international sport since 1945, the USSR had still not applied for IOC membership by 1948. The country did not have its own NOC, and there were some political and dogmatic obstacles to its joining the IOC, such as the IOC's use of only the English and French languages, the issue of amateurism, and the

continued membership of Franco's Spain. However, in the light of their advances in other sports, it was clear that Olympic participation was a Soviet aim, and in July 1947 Burghley visited Moscow to discuss Soviet entry. Roger Allen of the Moscow Embassy reported to London on the success of the visit and how IOC membership seemed imminent.<sup>79</sup> Criticism of the Olympics as a field for US economic imperialism continued to emanate from the USSR, as in the piece in *Ogonyok* in December 1947 on 'The Role of Spam in Sport':

There is no doubt that the Olympic emblem of five rings... will adorn not only belt clasps, ties, and so on in London, but also tins containing American spam. Under the pretext of giving aid with food, it will be possible to market a large amount of tinned goods at a profitable price. Is this not the essence of aiding the Olympic meeting, and the reason for the generosity of the American pseudo-philanthropists?

The article concluded: 'If, however, the Americans do not win... they will be able to quote spam as a justification for their defeat. Spam, they will say, has increased the strength of the European sportsmen tenfold.'<sup>80</sup> But Chancery claimed that this stance was mainly a façade, and that the USSR was still interested in membership of the IOC. They asked for information on the progress of Soviet affiliation.<sup>81</sup> The department co-operated by sending a copy of the article to Burghley, from whom they gained information on which international sports bodies the USSR was represented: Moscow was duly informed.<sup>82</sup> While the USSR sent no team to London, a rumour of their late entry came in August 1948, once the Games were underway. Geoffrey Harrison, Minister at the Moscow Embassy, telegraphed the Foreign Office that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had asked for thirteen visas for Olympic competitors. The affair seemed suspect from the start,

with Harrison stating that the precise 'intentions are not clear since for example only two members are described as basketball players',<sup>83</sup> but the visas were granted when it transpired that the thirteen were visiting Britain as delegates to the International Athletic Federation's Congress.<sup>84</sup>

The Foreign Office also used the occasion of the Games for some positive actions towards Greece, from which Britain had had to withdraw its troops in the previous year. On 16 March 1948, Sir Clifford Norton, British Ambassador at Athens, wrote with the news that that the President of the Municipality wanted his city to have a special connection with the London Olympics through the presence of representatives and the awarding of a trophy in the pentathlon, by-passing the IOC's members to Greece. Norton apologised for bothering the Foreign Office, using 'the excuse that in these difficult times anything that shows the Greeks that somebody loves them is all to the good.'<sup>85</sup> The idea was welcomed at the Foreign Office Library, where it was noted that they should 'certainly make an effort to meet the Greeks' request', justifying it on historical grounds if the Organising Committee was against it;<sup>86</sup> and on 12 April, Dorothy Bigby of the Library wrote to J. Eaton Griffith, the civil servant in liaison between the government and the Organising Committee, stating it 'would, in our opinion, be highly desirable to meet the wishes of the Municipality [*sic*].'<sup>87</sup> But the appeal was in vain. Eaton Griffith pointed out that many other cities had historical reasons for special treatment, so the Organising Committee could not be preferential. But he suggested that the Foreign Office approach Athens directly, and restated the closeness that had been established between the government and the British Olympic movement since 1946: 'Although all of us here are, of course, most anxious to fall in with the wishes of the

Foreign Office whenever possible, I am afraid this particular request is a difficult one.'<sup>88</sup> But the Foreign Office did not want to become directly involved in such privileged treatment, and Norton was instructed by Geoffrey Wallinger, the Head of Southern Department, to give 'a polite reply' to Athens.<sup>89</sup> This example provides an interesting insight to the Foreign Office's approach to Olympic-related diplomacy: while prepared to act as a go-between, it was unwilling to act directly; and their taking eleven days from the minutes to the sending of the request to the Organising Committee, and a further twenty one days between Griffith's reply and Wallinger's letter to Norton, show the whole issue to be of low priority.

Other diplomatic problems surrounding the Olympics were rooted in the War, with the status of Japan proving very difficult. In June 1948, Burghley approached the Foreign Office for guidance after hearing from IOC President Edstrom that Japan wished to send a team to London. He met John Henniker-Major, who made a full and detailed minute of the conversation. Burghley started by stressing that Japan, unlike Germany, had not been 'thrown out' of the IOC, but had 'lain doggo and it was not thought desirable to raise the question which might cause unnecessary bother.' Burghley was against Japanese attendance, which he saw as 'quite impossible... as they were still technically enemies', and he asked for Foreign Office assistance.<sup>90</sup> Dermot MacDermot, Head of the Japan and Pacific Department, minuted his approval of Burghley's attitude. He claimed that a Japanese presence 'would almost certainly cause serious public resentment in the U.K.. It would also precipitate a first-class row with Australia and New Zealand in particular who have set their faces... against allowing any Japanese to leave Japan for any purpose whatever this side of a peace treaty.'<sup>91</sup> Henniker-Major advised Burghley to tell the IOC that

permission to leave Japan would not be granted to athletes for the Olympics,<sup>92</sup> although he later realised that the Japanese in question were really officials and not competitors.<sup>93</sup>

Burghley wrote to Edstrom on 19 June, with the Foreign Office's advice having been accepted and blended with his own views. He highlighted the fact that Japanese guests could not be introduced to the King or any other guests, and went on to note that 'There would be a public outcry if they were present, which would probably lead to the withdrawal of some of the Dominion Teams who feel most strongly on this question'. He stressed that IOC membership should continue to be held 'in abeyance until such time as it was considered that we should invite them to take it up again', and concluded that 'their presence on this occasion is quite unacceptable.'<sup>94</sup> While this reply was frank and personal, and containing no textual reference to the Foreign Office, it is significant here as an example of how the government could act to maintain wartime divisions in sport. Their reasons for this were pressing, based around public opinion, Dominions sentiment, and royal protocol, and the Organising Committee's agreement with this official line is another example of the close relationship between the two. The IOC showed itself to be more progressive in this instance, as Edstrom and Brundage had desired Japanese participation: as Edstrom wrote to Burghley, 'I am surprised that you take this attitude 3 years after the war. We men of sport ought to show the way for diplomats.'<sup>95</sup> The Foreign Office, meanwhile, contacted Tokyo on the refusal of visas, with the 'hope that we shall hear no more of this proposal', and asking why the office of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in Japan (SCAP) had not defused it at the start.<sup>96</sup> The UK Liaison Mission replied to defend itself, noting that SCAP had not been approached and that the trouble had arisen because of certain unnamed 'hot heads',<sup>97</sup>

and the matter was noted as having been settled when it was noted that 'the Olympic Ctee have told the Japs not to come.'<sup>98</sup> The Foreign Office was thus implicated in the steps taken to keep the defeated Japan out of the Olympic Games, thereby clearly using sport for the political end of keeping relations on an abnormal footing until a peace settlement was made. Sport was not allowed to become a focus for Japanese rehabilitation, and once more the diplomats were seen to be showing the way to sportsmen, rather than the reverse.

Another wartime problem still facing the organisers and the Foreign Office was the position of French collaborators. On 30 June 1948, Sir Oliver Harvey, British Ambassador to France, wrote to Permanent Under Secretary of State Sir Orme Sargent with the warning that Melchior de Polignac and Piétri, members of the IOC to France, were 'two of the worst collaborators in France'. Polignac had been white-washed, he claimed, but still 'no decent French person will meet either him or his wife', and he asked that they not be invited to any official functions while in London for the Games. He concluded that this 'confirms my view that the Olympic Games are a great deal more trouble than they are worth.'<sup>99</sup> Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, Super-Intending Under Secretary for the Western Department, contacted the government's liaison official, Lord Inverchapel, asking him to 'get a very plain hint conveyed to him [Polignac] through some intermediary that if he chooses to come here he can expect no facilities of any kind and will be completely ignored.'<sup>100</sup> The debate then became personal. Inverchapel relished the task of snubbing Polignac, whom he described as a 'little toad', and he agreed to keep the Frenchmen out of any official Olympic functions.<sup>101</sup> Kirkpatrick approved of such a stand by citing the need to keep the French press and public from criticising Britain for 'entertaining such people',<sup>102</sup> and he wrote to Harvey with



the news that the BOA would not receive the men in question.<sup>103</sup> To guarantee this, Sargent asked Portal that a full cold shoulder be applied to Polignac, as any acceptance of him would offend the French team.<sup>104</sup> This letter, however, came too late. On 30 July, Inverchapel informed Kirkpatrick that Polignac and his 'now ample wife' had been present at three Olympic parties.<sup>105</sup> Although their intervention was not decisive in this case, the Foreign Office's attempt to exclude Nazi sympathisers from official receptions indicates again that the London Olympic Games were seen to be a stage for good will and positive diplomacy, and that the presence of collaborators would sour the atmosphere.

These, then, were some of the diplomatic and political concerns with which the Foreign Office became involved in connection with the 1948 Olympics. Below these often high-level discussions was a structure of involvement, based around the Tourist, Catering, and Holidays Board of the Board of Trade, and the appointment of Lord Inverchapel as the Foreign Office's liaison for foreign representatives.<sup>106</sup> Through such channels, an official interest in the day-to-day preparations for the Olympics was maintained in various areas, including the provision of seats for foreign ministers,<sup>107</sup> the composition of a message by Bevin for the Olympic programme,<sup>108</sup> and the co-ordination of the scores for the national anthems of nations whose constitutions had changed since the war.<sup>109</sup> The volume of interest can partially be explained by the presence of men at decision-making levels who had a greater understanding of international sport and its worth than their pre-war predecessors, particularly Noel-Baker: but the main impulse was a combination of economic opportunism to attract tourists with a general desire to promote stability in the international community. As Bevin put it in his piece

for the programme,

It is of very great importance to the world that meetings of these international bodies should be resuscitated as speedily as possible. One of our great objectives is to get people to meet and to know each other and in this way to establish friendship between the nations... Learn all you can about us and enjoy such hospitality as our circumstances will allow.<sup>110</sup>

Although the sentiments expressed here were not particularly original, the very fact that the Foreign Secretary complied in writing a piece for the programme of a sports event was significant. It demonstrates the change of attitude towards sport brought about by the investments of the inter-war governments of Germany, Italy, and the USSR, and by the conditions of the war. The gradually developing acceptance of sport as a legitimate and potentially valuable tool in international politics thus came to something of an organisational fruition with the Labour Government's support for the 1948 Olympic Games.

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## Notes on Chapter Eight

<sup>1</sup> Jack Ward to Crosthwaite, 27 May 1948. *FO 924/708B*, LC 2225/66/452.

<sup>2</sup> Minute, 14 June 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Minute, 21 June 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Minute, 29 June 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Draft, Ernest Bevin to Philip Noel-Baker, July 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Minute, P. Dove, 10 January 1949. *Ibid.*, LC 4404/66/452.

<sup>7</sup> FA International Committee, 2 June 1947. FA Archives.

<sup>8</sup> *FO 370/1591*, L 108, 461, 796, 841, 867, 993, 1043, 1066, 1471, 2129, 2309/108/405.

<sup>9</sup> William Richardson to J. Finch, 6 April 1948. *Ibid.*, L 2309/108/405.

<sup>10</sup> Jack Ward to Ponsonby Crosthwaite, 27 May 1948. *FO 924/708B*, LC 2225/66/452.

<sup>11</sup> Note by Guy Hannaford, enclosure to Jack Ward to Ponsonby Crosthwaite, 27 May 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Translation, Mario Fabiani to Herbert Greenleaves, 12 July 1948. *Ibid.*, LC 3322/66/452.

<sup>13</sup> Herbert Greenleaves to Rome Chancery, 19 July 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Rome Chancery to British Council, Rome, 7 August 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> T. Robinson to British Council Overseas Division, 17 August 1948.

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*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Minute, 26 August 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Jack Ward to Stanley Rous, 11 November 1948. *Ibid.*, LC 4404/66/452.

<sup>18</sup> Jack Ward to Harold Caccia, 11 November 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Minute, 12 January 1949. *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Christopher Warner to Colonel Prentice, 25 January 1949. *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Colonel Prentice to Christopher Warner, 28 January 1949. *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Victor Rothwell, *Britain and the Cold War 1941-1947* (London: 1982) p. 372.

<sup>23</sup> Football Association International Committee, 10 February 1947. FA Archives.

<sup>24</sup> Pierson Dixon to Foreign Office, 10 March 1948. *FO 371/71305B*, N 4171/303/12.

<sup>25</sup> Minute, 30 March 1948. *Ibid.*,

<sup>26</sup> Pierson Dixon to Foreign Office, 10 March 1948. *FO 371/71306*, N 4188/303/12.

<sup>27</sup> Minute, 30 March 1948. *FO 371/71305B*, N 4171/303/12.

<sup>28</sup> Minute, 31 March 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Football Association International Selection Committee, 1 April 1948. FA Archives.

<sup>30</sup> Stanley Rous to *Ceskoslovenska Asociace Footballova*, 3 April

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1948; Stanley Rous to Hector McNeil, 3 April 1948. *FO 371/71305B*, N 4171/303/12.

<sup>31</sup> Pierson Dixon to Foreign Office, 7 April 1948. *FO 371/71306*, N 4188/303/12.

<sup>32</sup> Minute, Brian MacDermot, 2 April 1948. *FO 371/71305B*, N 4171/303/12.

<sup>33</sup> Tony McCarthy, *War Games* (London: 1989) p. 180.

<sup>34</sup> David Wallechinsky, *The Complete Book of the Olympic Games* (London: 1988) pp. xiii-xvi.

<sup>35</sup> Viscount Portal to Ernest Bevin, 2 January 1946. *FO 371/54785*, W 454/454/50.

<sup>36</sup> Pierson Dixon to Ernest Bevin, 3 January 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Minute of meeting by Harold Freese-Pennefather, 10 January 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Pierson Dixon to Norman Brook, 15 January 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Norman Brook to ministries, 25 January 1946. *Ibid.*, W 1170/454/50.

<sup>40</sup> Lord Mayor of London to IOC, February 1946; copy, Viscount Portal to Ernest Bevin, 12 February 1946. *Ibid.*, W 2168/454/50.

<sup>41</sup> Minutes, 20 February 1946. *Ibid.*, W 2423/454/50.

<sup>42</sup> Evan Hunter to Harold Freese-Pennefather, 26 February 1946. *Ibid.*, W 2544/454/50.

<sup>43</sup> Norman Brook to Pierson Dixon, 9 March 1946. *Ibid.*, W 2926/454/50.

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<sup>44</sup> Minute, 13 March 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> 'Olympic Games', memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. *CAB 129/8*, CP(46)141, 6 April 1946.

<sup>46</sup> Hossein Ghods to Charles Baxter, 26 March 1946. *FO 371/54785*, W 3823/454/50.

<sup>47</sup> Harold Freese-Pennefather to Hossein Ghods, 24 April 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Harold Freese-Pennefather to Lord Burghley, 24 April 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, W 5929/454/50.

<sup>50</sup> *CAB 129/9*, CP(46)181, 30 April 1946. Copy in *ibid.*, W 5121/454/50.

<sup>51</sup> Minute, 6 May 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Minute, 8 May 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Minute, 13 May 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Minute, D.F. Hubback, 22 May 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> E.H. Marker to Harold Freese-Pennefather, 21 June 1946. *FO 371/54783*, W 6663/302/50.

<sup>56</sup> E. Dunn to E.H. Marker, 22 July 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Memorandum by Sir Norman Brook, 31 May 1946; minutes of meeting, 4 June 1946. *FO 371/54785*, W 6689/454/50.

<sup>58</sup> Sir Norman Brook to Gallop, 22 June 1946. *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Minute, 2 July 1946. *Ibid.*

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- <sup>60</sup> Minute by Philip Noel-Baker, 17 July 1946. *Ibid.*
- <sup>61</sup> M.K. Hill, Export Promotion Department, Board of Trade, to Harold Freese-Pennefather, 13 July 1946. *Ibid.*
- <sup>62</sup> *Minneapolis Tribune*, 23 July 1946; sent by British Consulate, St. Paul, to Washington Chancery, 23 July 1946. *Ibid.*, W 7942/454/50.
- <sup>63</sup> Minute, 30 August 1946. *Ibid.*
- <sup>64</sup> Harold Freese-Pennefather to Colonel Richard Edwards, Export Promotions Department, 18 November 1946. *Ibid.*
- <sup>65</sup> Sir Laurence Collier to Foreign Office, 26 August 1946. *Ibid.*, W 8531/454/50.
- <sup>66</sup> Richard Heppel to Board of Trade, 28 August 1946; J. Christies, Board of Trade, to Richard Heppel, 28 August 1948. *Ibid.*
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, W 8743/454/50.
- <sup>68</sup> 'The Report of the Chairman of the Organising Committee for the XIV Olympiad London 1948 to the International Olympic Committee, Sept. 1946'; copy sent from Colonel T. Bevan, BOA, to Ernest Bevin, September 1946. *Ibid.*, W 9185/454/50.
- <sup>69</sup> 'Accommodation for Competitors and Officials', note of a meeting at the Ministry of Works, 13 November 1946. *Ibid.*, W 11709/454/50.
- <sup>70</sup> Minute, 9 December 1946. *Ibid.*
- <sup>71</sup> Harold Freese-Pennefather to Brigadier S. Jones, 12 December 1946. *Ibid.*
- <sup>72</sup> 'Olympic Games, 1948', 25 March 1947. *CAB 129/18*, CP(47)102.

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- <sup>73</sup> Cabinet 33(47), CM(47), 27 March 1947. *CAB 128/9*.
- <sup>74</sup> Lord Aberdare to Foreign Office, February 1947. *FO 371/64538, C 2965/2471/18*.
- <sup>75</sup> Minute, 27 February 1947. *Ibid.*
- <sup>76</sup> Minute, 17 March 1947. *Ibid.*
- <sup>77</sup> John Rob to Lord Aberdare, 27 March 1947. *Ibid.*
- <sup>78</sup> *FO 371/6702, R 15196/97/92*.
- <sup>79</sup> Roger Allen to Robin Hankey, 28 July 1947. *FO 371/66371, N 9103/271/38*.
- <sup>80</sup> Summary in translation of N. Sevidzh, 'The Role of Spam in Sport', *Ogonyok*, 21 December 1947; sent by Moscow Chancery to Northern Department, 13 February 1948. *FO 370/1592, L 1138/110/405*.
- <sup>81</sup> Moscow Chancery to Northern Department, 13 February 1948. *Ibid.*
- <sup>82</sup> Northern Department, to Library, 1 March 1948; Library to Moscow Chancery, 16 March 1948. *Ibid.*
- <sup>83</sup> Geoffrey Harrison to Foreign Office, 5 August 1948. *FO 370/1595, L 4739/110/405*.
- <sup>84</sup> Minute, 12 August 1948. *Ibid.*
- <sup>85</sup> Sir Clifford Norton to Geoffrey Wallinger, 16 March 1948. *FO 370/1593, L 2030/110/405*.
- <sup>86</sup> Minute, 1 April 1948. *Ibid.*
- <sup>87</sup> Dorothy Bigby to J. Eaton Griffith, 12 April 1948. *Ibid.*



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<sup>88</sup> J. Eaton Griffith to Dorothy Bigby, 15 April 1948. *Ibid.*, L 2512/110/405.

<sup>89</sup> Geoffrey Wallinger to Sir Clifford Norton, 6 May 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Minute, John Henniker-Major to Japan and Pacific Department, 18 June 1948. *FO 370/1594*, L 3902/110/405.

<sup>91</sup> Minute, 19 June 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> John Henniker-Major to Lord Burghley, 19 June 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Minute, Brian MacDermott, 22 June 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Lord Burghley to Sigfrid Edstrom. 19 June 1948; copy on *ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Sigfrid Edstrom to Lord Burghley, 23 June 1948; copy on *ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Foreign Office to Tokyo, 23 June 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> United Kingdom Liaison Mission, Tokyo, to Foreign Office, 28 June 1948. *Ibid.*, L 4051/110/405.

<sup>98</sup> Minute, 8 July 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> Sir Oliver Harvey to Sir Orme Sargent, 30 June 1948. *FO 371/73009*, Z 5654/5654/17.

<sup>100</sup> Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick to Lord Inverchapel, 8 July 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Lord Inverchapel to Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, 10 July 1948. *Ibid.*, Z 5837/5654/17.

<sup>102</sup> Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick to Lord Inverchapel, 15 July 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick to Sir Oliver Harvey, 15 July 1948. *Ibid.*

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<sup>104</sup> Sir Orme Sargent to Viscount Portal, 23 July 1948. *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Lord Inverchapel to Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, 28 July 1948. *Ibid.*, Z 6387/5654/17.

<sup>106</sup> *FO 370/1592*, L 1353. 1596/110/405.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, L 603/110/405.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, L 1595/110/405.

<sup>109</sup> *FO 370/1593*, L 3007, 3491, 3535, 3584, 3736, 3737, 3738, 3739, 3909, 4261, 4308, 4682/110/405,

<sup>110</sup> Ernest Bevin, February 1948. *FO 370/1592*, L 1595/110/405.

## Conclusion

In 1986, former Minister for Sport Neil Macfarlane prefaced his account of his four years in office with an original variation on a familiar theme:

In the 1933 edition of the *Shorter English Dictionary* I keep on my bookshelf, politics are described as being the 'science and art of government', and sport as 'participation in games and exercise, especially those performed in the open air'. I have no doubt that when the dictionary was being prepared by a Fellow of Corpus Christi, Oxford, he would have claimed with justification that there was and should be no relation between politics and sport.

He went on to claim that until recently, such occasional crises as the Bodyline controversy had drawn politicians into sport, but that 'by and large, the two did not mix.'<sup>1</sup> This situation was contrasted with his own period of office, 1982 to 1986, in which the problems caused by the Zola Budd affair, the Heysel Stadium disaster, and the Soviet Union's Olympic boycott brought sport and politics together in a highly publicised manner. It is a truism to note that Macfarlane's opinion here is typical of popularly held views on the often controversial subject of whether sport and politics can and should mix. With the general exception of the 1936 Olympic Games, the recalled examples of political involvement in sport all come from the late 1960s onwards, and are thus easily portrayed and perceived as aberrations caused by the complex nature of modern international relations. The location of anti-apartheid demonstrations, Black Power protests, Arab terrorism, and Cold War boycotts in sporting events are more simply understood if they are seen as typically modern ills with no roots in the

history of sport, rather than as recent incarnations of one of international sport's oldest characteristics. Since an early stage in its development, the rituals and characteristics of international sport have easily lent themselves to taking on political value. The treatment of sport in many sectors of society, including educational systems and the mass media, has helped this process. As a result, international sport has consistently been used as a vehicle for political statements by various agencies, including governments, royalty, extra-governmental organisations, and international organisations.

To approach the sport and politics dilemma through only one such agency, the British Foreign Office, cannot provide anything like a complete picture of the history of the subject. But the Foreign Office is a useful body to use, particularly because of the myth of non-involvement in sport that is associated with it. The evidence shows that, far from remaining uninvolved with sport, the Foreign Office has consistently used the medium as an instrument of policy. Except in the relatively minor area of the British Council's use of sport, this instrument was never financed or co-ordinated from Whitehall. But, when appropriate, Foreign Office time was expended on attempting to ensure that certain sports events were managed with a view to Britain's diplomatic interests. These interests naturally varied with the international situation, and involvement in sport varied with them. As has been demonstrated, in 1908, the Foreign Office assisted the running of the Olympic Games as a means of supporting France; between the wars, sport was variously used to appease Germany and isolate the USSR; after 1945, the sports field was one of the locations for the attempted rehabilitation of the Soviets. Despite the *ad hoc* basis of much of this involvement, to deny a tradition of Foreign Office intervention in sport for political ends is to ignore this evidence.

While this involvement was never planned to the degree employed in other European states, it is possible to see an evolutionary pattern of four stages in the Foreign Office's intervention over the 40 year period in question. Before the First World War, involvement was infrequent, minimal, and conducted in a generally sceptical manner. The novel nature of international sport partially explains this detachment. The IOC had only been formed in 1894, and the BOA in 1905: to expect the Foreign Office to take their internationalist idealism of the organisers of sport totally seriously in 1908 is unreasonable; and the lack of faith that Eyre Crowe and his colleagues displayed in the Olympic Games is understandable. The second stage came in the post-war period. As international sport spread around the world, and the knowledge of its customs and institutions became more widespread, so a slightly lesser degree of scepticism was displayed by the Foreign Office. This process was also helped by the growth in political credibility of the administrators of sport. Individual events and contests were dealt with by the Foreign Office when possible advantage could be seen, although the Olympic Games continued to be avoided whenever possible.

But the rare and reluctant intervention that was characteristic of the 1920s was replaced by a third stage in the 1930s, when a response had to be made to the centralised political sport of Germany and Italy. With these countries' governments promoting sporting events as tests of the quality of their national characters and political systems, the Foreign Office had no option but to offer assistance and advice to British sport when required. The Foreign Office was able to learn from this process that the huge publicity that surrounded international sporting events made them a suitable location for popular dialogue between the nations involved. As a result, the England v Germany

football match of 1935, and the Olympic Games of 1936 and 1940, became the occasions for governmental intervention to ensure that the political messages sent were the approved ones. The appeasement of the running track was used to reflect that of the conference room. At the same time, sport was used casually by the British Council in its work of cultural propaganda in various countries where pro-British sympathy was being courted. The final stage came after the war, when the lessons of wartime co-operation between the government and the governing bodies of sports were appreciated by a comparatively progressive and imaginative Labour Government. This led to a more regular and less detached involvement with sport, seen most remarkably in the Foreign Office's structural involvement in the planning and management of the 1948 Olympic Games.

Against this gradual evolution of involvement, the role of the governing bodies of the sports concerned must be appreciated. The inherent conservatism of the majority of the British sports authorities ensured an immediate community of interests with the state; and despite the frequently claimed neutrality of British sport, governing bodies have generally worked with the Foreign Office when required. This close ideological relationship also ensured that the structure of the Foreign Office's involvement, generally based around the private letter and the semi-official conversation, could be kept relatively secret.

In the period since 1948, involvement has become more obvious. In 1960, a survey of British sport was undertaken by the Wolfenden Committee on behalf of the Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR), and its recommendations for a government-sponsored Sports Council and a specific minister for sport were met, although the continued existence of the CCPR and the BOA as rival and often overlapping umbrella organisations has ensured a recent history of in-

fighting and confused allocation of funding. The location of the minister at the departments of Education and Environment has not prevented Foreign Office interests from being focused on sport, although the nature and quantity of that involvement cannot be seen until the opening of relevant documentation under the 30 year rule. It remains for future researchers to assess the actions taken for diplomatic and political interests over the many significant issues in the sports and politics debate, including German representation, the place of Israel, the recognition of the Peoples' Republic of China, the Moscow boycott of 1980, and the continuing problem of South Africa.

It was the 1980 boycott of the Moscow Olympics that has probably caused the most publicity for the sport and politics debate in Britain. It provided an exception to the general trend of governmental relations with sports bodies, as the Thatcher Government attempted unsuccessfully to stop the BOA from sending a team, and elicited a public debate over the respective rights of sportspersons, sports federations, and government. Recalling the Commons debate on the matter in his memoirs, Neil Macfarlane described this issue as 'the first time that this country had entered the arena of political exploitation of a major world sporting event'<sup>2</sup> This is open to debate, with the 1948 Olympics coming most obviously to mind as an event publicly backed by the government. But the evidence from the records of the Foreign Office demonstrate that even if 1980 was its first time on the pitch, it had certainly gained plenty of experience in the board room and on the manager's bench.

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## Notes on Conclusion

<sup>1</sup> Neil Macfarlane with Michael Herd, *Sport and Politics: a world divided*, London: 1986, p.i.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.



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