'DEFINITELY NOT CRICKET' THE TIMES AND THE FOOTBALL WORLD CUP 1930-1970

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Introduction

England's forgotten World Cup heroes lifted by final goal.

The five forgotten heroes of the 1966 World Cup football campaign have been finally been [*sic*] honoured 33 years after they helped England to victory at Wembley.

Alan Ball and team-mates George Cohen, Roger Hunt, Nobby Stiles and Ray Wilson have all been appointed MBE after a year of behind-the-scenes campaigning by supporters.[1]

On 31 December 1999, before the final and definitive curtain was drawn over the second millennium, the British government decided to end what many had defined as an absurd unfairness. The government acknowledged the famous 'Forgotten Five' of 1966 and deemed them worthy of what their six team-mates of England's World champion XI had already received, an honour from the state.

Despite the fact that more than thirty years have gone by, it is clear that time cannot erase the celebration of that England performance in the collective memory, the one and only World Cup triumph of the country in which football was born. According to Polley, 'even for those of us too young to remember the event, or born after it, the Final has ... become a received memory. Images of the event are repeatedly recycled in English sport and

non-sports media, particularly during other major international footballing events'.[2] 1966 is, and will be, a lasting memory, which is likely to be carried forward until the moment when another victory will provoke a similar joy and mass participation. The aim of this article is to explore the reporting of England's famous victory in an event, which, prior to 1966, was often considered of marginal importance by the English media. Up to 1966 the World Cup was considered foreign to the British sporting tradition. It was viewed as a competition that distanced international football from its country of origin. After 1966, however, the World Cup became an event of importance for every England fan, one to experience with great trepidation, and, unfortunately for them, so often conclude with a sense of frustration and delusion.

The aim of this article is to focus on the increasing awareness of the World Cup as a sporting event, by *The Times*, a newspaper historically linked to the establishment, and to analyse the development of its journalistic coverage, especially the response of its editorial team. An attempt also will be made to demonstrate how the World Cup became a paradigm for the changes in an institution of the British press such as *The Times*. The period studied spans from 1930, the year of the tournament's first staging, to 1970, a year that can be considered as a turning point. 1970 is crucial for this analysis, and in the context of the wider social, political, and economic structure. In the late 1960s we can witness the end of a historic era, when the century long process, accelerated after the Second World War, of the decline of the United Kingdom as a great power finally reaches its culmination. This placed the UK in a lesser standing among the world powers. According to Porter, after the fall of the Empire, UK lost the leading role it had held up to that time, becoming a 'second rank power'.[3]

The Times

It does not need me to explain that *The Times* is the oldest and most representative newspaper of the British quality press. This simple fact is evidenced in that it is the only one collected in all the reference libraries, and which can be found in several foreign libraries. What does need explanation is the paper's editorial policy and an assessment of the quantity and quality of its readers.

To illustrate the editorial policy, a cartoon by Sir Bernard Partridge, celebrating the 150th anniversary of *The Times*' foundation, is worthy of examination. A *Times*' personification, explaining the reason for its health and longevity, notes that it is due to 'regular and methodical habits, a glass of pure news every morning, avoidance of over excitement, and - thinking before I speak'.[4] Those simple words clearly explain the idea behind the editorial philosophy of *The Times*. The newspaper has always proudly pointed out that it was a ' "journal of record", carrying detailed law reports, parliamentary coverage and various official announcements',[5] without digressing into excesses of news interpretation. If a curious reader compared two different issues of *The Times* from any two years of publication between 1875[6] and 1966, he or she would be unlikely to find significant differences in either the method or style of writing and presenting news.[7]

Besides, *The Times* has always been proud to keep a historical independence 'from government, parties, pressure groups, advertisers, financial interests, profit margins.'[8] Independence, however, does not mean representation of all the points of view. That is the key element in leading us to identify the nature of *The Times*' readers as, according to Seymour-Ure, 'that part of the nation's elite known in the 1950s and 1960s as "the establishment" '. He underlines that this new accepted meaning of the word had been a *Times-man* coinage.[9] Thus, if we consider the aloof voice and a higher-class newspaper too, we have an image of *The Times* which it likes to project. The 'Leaders' and 'Letters' page illustrates this. On these pages there were, and still are, voices displaying the theoretical lines of the editorial policy. If the editorials draw the guidelines of the newspaper's philosophy, the letters represent the readers' voice, 'class based, of course',[10] and a nation-wide voice, a constant point of reference and mainstay of the most important discussions among all the upper levels of British society. However, in 1966 there is a change, both graphically, by publishing news on page one instead of announcements as usual, and philosophically. It is no more *The Times* laying down the times, but the times changing *The Times*.

In 1957 *The Times* commissioned a report by the City accountants Cooper Brothers and Company. The aim of this report was to establish how and what to change in order to broaden *The Times*' appeal. The report, delivered early in 1958, made the following suggestions: style less

ponderous; more news, with shorter items; news on page one; less space allotted to leaders; increased special features; relaxed anonymity rule; changes in typography and layout. After several discussions and a long delay, in 1966 the recommendations of the report were finally enacted. 'Change is the law of life. If things do not evolve they die.'[11] from the leader column this message was launched to justify the changes. 'The prime purpose of a newspaper is to give the news',[12] surely, but now, in a world progressing towards globalisation, more and more involved in the mass-media's inexorable advance and, most of all, in minding the market's rules, *The Times* had to offer an attractive product to its potential readers. 'Some people have expressed the dark suspicion that one of the reasons *The Times* is modernising itself is to get more readers. Of course it is. And we shall go on trying to get more readers for as long as we believe in our purpose.'[13] Those new readers can belong to a wider social range: '*The Times* aims at being a paper for intelligent readers of all ages and all classes. The more it can have of them the better.'[14]

But the old ownership did not have the necessary financial resources to afford this new strategy, which only fresh cash could have delivered. This fresh cash turned up when the Canadian tycoon Herbert Thomson took control of *The Times* late in 1966. 'His newspapers were used as instruments for making as much money as possible'[15], according to Grigg. And if we examine the late 1960s and early 1970s sales data, the hoped-for performance was achieved. Between 1965 and 1970, there is a big increase of *The Times*' daily sale, growing from 254,000 sold copies to 388,000, which increased the market percentage among the quality newspapers from 2.6% to 17%, and from 1.6% to 2.6% in the whole daily newspaper market.[16]

One of the key weapons for *The Times* in the circulation war was an increased attention to sport in general, and football in particular. An excellent illustration of such a trend is the newspaper's focus on the World Cup finals. The focus on football, although necessary in the context of the late 1960s, was, in many ways, alien to the ethos of *The Times*.

1930-1962: From oblivion to gloom

The Football World Cup took place for the first time in Uruguay in 1930, but

> England ... the original masters, had other preoccupations that high summer. Only the day before that historic July Sunday in Uruguay a new sporting phenomenon had set a cricket landmark with an innings of 334 at Headingley, to twist the lion's tail. He was, of course, Don Bradman.[17]

The first thing to notice in glancing through *The Times*' sporting pages in the years of the first three World Cup editions, is the absolute absence of news about the competition. The silence was broken only in 1938, when five lines from Reuter news agency noted that

> Italy retained the World Association Football cup by beating Hungary by 4 goals to 2 in the final at the Colombes Stadium before a crowd of 50,000, including the President of the Republic, here today.[18]

About the rest, nothing. The World Cup falls into oblivion. But this silence can tell and teach us a lot of things. First of all, it tells us that Association Football, most of all in the summer-cricket-time, is not emphasised either in the newspaper or within the public mind in the way it would be in the period from the late 1950s. The exclusion of the World Cup demonstrates that *Times*' readers did not have enough curiosity or interest in the event to push the editorial staff to cover it. It is true that the World Cup's beginnings were modest, both for logistical-organising and social-political reasons: the first tournament was played in Uruguay, a very distant country; the second took place in Mussolini's Italy; while the third fell when the winds of war were blowing harder and harder. But the competition developed its own features in those heroic years. In many ways it can be regarded as quite a resonant event, even in contexts different from the sporting one. But *The Times*, as suggested by Russell, with its conservative clientele, continued covering equitably both amateur and professional sports,[19] and avoiding the World Cup.

In 1950 something changed. The Brazilian tournament was the first one that England played in, and so the Football World Cup suddenly became

more important for the *Times*. For the first time there is an interest in something other than British domestic football. Equally, the reporting is not merely a sporting chronicle. There are references to the tournament some time before it begins:

> This year the interest is greater than ever. It is world-wide, because for the first time football in the British Isles has associated itself with the World Cup through the medium of the international championship, the winners and runners-up of which are entitled to qualify for the final stages of the World competition at Rio de Janeiro in July.[20]

England managed to beat Scotland in the decisive match, but Scotland decided not to go to the competition despite the fact that they had qualified as well: 'So England are left alone to uphold the prestige of the British Isles against the rest of the world in Brazil next July'.[21] One of the most important features of all reports are the convocations, the training sessions and other meetings of the England party.[22]

However, the tournament is left in the borders of the paper, and the Association Football Correspondent was not sent to the southern hemisphere to follow its developments. The unnamed correspondent was almost surely Geoffrey Green, whose articles were first signed in 1967:[23] the only Association Football correspondent known in the period we are analysing is really Green. McDonald notes that 'Geoffrey Green, who started contributing articles in the 1930s ... provided an outstanding example in a career on *The Times* which extended over forty years'.'[24] 'He had joined the staff in 1946 and over the years had written about various sports, though principally about football. ... Green retired in 1976'.[25] The failure to send Green meant that the competition is clearly left in a second-rank place in the sporting pages. Throughout its progress, the World Cup is never considered as important enough as to be the first news on them. Commentaries and reports fluctuate between columns two and seven, usually in a middle-low position; although, it has to be said that in some days[26] its section headline turns from 'Association Football' to 'World Football Cup'. But even in this case there is no definitive decision. Besides, we have to notice that in spite of England's surprising defeat by U.S.A., and of their elimination from the tournament after another defeat, by Spain, it is not such a tragedy. That is the mirror of the typical *Times*' measured aloofness about a sport that is 'too popular'. Moreover, once

England are knocked-out, *The Times* did not pay as much attention to the event as before: there are only three further news items about the World Cup between then and the final match. Also, F.I.F.A. is never mentioned, except, indirectly, as the 'World Cup Organizing Committee'. But it is likely to be mentioned only because there is 'a meeting of the World Cup Organizing Committee in London on Sunday'.[27]

In the subsequent tournament, organised and played in Switzerland in 1954, we can see there is something new. The *Times* begins to cover the World Cup from early May, a month and a half before the tournament, as in its report that 'Scotland field an experimental team against Norway at Hampden Park this evening. This will be the first of their matches in preparation for the World Cup in Switzerland next month.'[28] We can now generally notice a clear change in *The Times*' regard for Association Football, which is now receiving dedicated and increased space, and a prominent position in the sporting pages: for instance, after England qualified for a quarter-final match it was worth two columns and first place on the sporting pages and a well pointed out headline.[29] There is also a long sequence of less cool headlines, such as 'Vital Football Matches';[30] 'Football Fever in Belgrade';[31] 'England's Game with Hungary - Hopes and Fears';[32] 'England Completely outclassed';[33] 'England Throw Victory Away';[34] 'Formidable Prospect Ahead';[35] and 'Vital Slips in Defence Give Uruguay Their Chance''[36]. The Association Football correspondent follows all the main matches played in Switzerland, and the tournament is completely covered from the beginning to the end, even after England's elimination. This is probably a result of Geoffrey Green's work. He does not restrict himself to writing about England, but tries to work more extensively. We can catch this new attitude reading the article produced for 16 June, in which the World Cup is, for the first time, presented to the readers in the context of its whole significance. It is no more an ordinary football competition played abroad. The importance of being a big world-wide event is underlined by the fact that

> football it is, and an invasion of Switzerland has taken place from many parts of the globe. Indeed there were over 3,000 applications from the world press alone. Every available bed is taken in Zurich, Lausanne, Basil, Geneva, Lugano and here [Berne].[37]

But we can see how the traditional suspiciousness with regard to football is now strengthened by the fact that it begins to show problems which were not so acceptable to *The Times*' editorial staff, most of all about football's social and economic characteristics. Finally, there are no mentions of F.I.F.A., although Jules Rimet is called 'the father of the competition'.[38]

In 1958 the coverage becomes more serious. The correspondent presents the World Cup to the readers through two specials: a third one had been promised but was never published. The first is important because of its approach to the event in all the facets that relate to it. In fact, there is discussion about the organisational aspects, as in the note that '[t]o organize a competition of this magnitude demands a vast amount of work';[39] the economic aspects:

> Quite apart from the added business to be drawn from such an influx, the organizers of the World Cup are now assured of a good profit from the games. Already tickets to the value of some £600,000 have been sold, fully covering all expenses;[40]

and about the media:

> Sweden, in fact, for three exciting weeks in June will become the hub of world football. And most of what goes on over there will be seen at the same time all over the Continent. The roving eye of the television camera will shed its beams across Europe. ... And what with sound broadcasting, the millions of words written in all languages by the Press of the world, and a complete film of the whole competition to be made by 40 cameramen of the German Film Company U.F.A., there will be no shortage of coverage. The peon in Mexico will know what has happened as quickly as the fellow in Bootle, or the collective farm worker behind the Urals. It is an enlightening thought.[41]

And on the event's income and the impact of television there is this interesting Reuter item:

> A total of 821,363 spectators paid about 620,700 sterling to see the world cup matches in Sweden. Eurovision paid 103,500 for television right, making a total income of 724,200. A Swedish football

> official said he did not think the television fee balanced revenue lost through the watching of game on television[42].

Football can no longer be undervalued by *The Times*. Inside the sporting pages it is a stronger and stronger element, the fascination of more and more readers. In 1958 all the four British teams took part in the World Cup. This result was one reason for the greater interest. The quantity and quality of space dedicated to it increase.[43] The World Cup cannot be a second-rank topic, because it is 'now the championship of the globe',[44] and its award, the Jules Rimet Cup, is 'now the greatest prize in football'.[45] So much for the Home International Championship!

There are some interesting notices on the international political situation. The draw brought together four simultaneous challenges between United Kingdom and eastern European sides, about which *The Times* claimed proudly that 'not one of the four home countries was beaten by the State-controlled legions of Eastern Europe'.[46]

Unfortunately, because of a creeping chauvinism and a badly concealed incapacity for following, in editorial policy, a consistent line regarding football, we can witness, once again, an inexplicable neglect of very important occurrences. For example, the chronicle of the final match is placed low in column six, after news of all kinds. But F.I.F.A. gains more coverage, and its allotted space, even if small, is significant enough.[47]

In Chile in 1962 there is one little step forward, but followed by another one back. The one forward is towards a definitive reinforcement of the World Cup as an undoubtedly interesting event, which must be written about. The one back is the fact that, in spite of what we have just said, the Cup is followed from afar, reporting conducted only through agencies.[48] Thus we receive a mere chronicle of the tournament, without links to all the diverse levels of the event. Only England's matches are favoured by the coverage of a special correspondent commentary, without moreover being able to add anything particularly important. *The Times* manages once again to restrict the 'game's boundaries', but there was something too strong to be segregated there for much longer.

1966: Definitely not cricket

The events of 1966 are central to this article. England, for the first time, is the World Cup host country. Equally important is the fact that Stanley Rous is chairing F.I.F.A. The F.A. is now perfectly integrated in the organisation of international football, and to host a World Cup is a tremendous test of the strength of this new fellowship. It is a nation-wide event, this time, which *The Times* acknowledges. There is an editorial, in the 11 July issue, headlined 'World Cup presents twin challenge to England'.[49] in which Green shows, with a wide ranging approach, all the organisational problems, going beyond the mere sporting aspect. Assuming that

> It is up to us to prove that even if we may now be surpassed in the skills of play we still understand the principles and spirit of the laws best, that we remain unmatched in organization and stage management, and that this island still remains the home of football,[50]

Green is quite aware that it is a world event:

> Some 60,000 visitors from 80 and more nations, together with 1,600 journalists, television and radio men - reaching an estimated world audience of 400 million viewers and listeners - are about to put us under a microscope. They will pass judgement on our accommodation, food, entertainment, transport, facilities, and our manners. For the next three weeks, indeed, England and Britain can sell itself to the world and a better chance in the sporting scene to do so will not come again during this century.[51]

Not less important is the economic side: 'the biggest money of all will probably made in the world of commerce as it cashes in on the event',[52] with sponsorship and merchandising expanding:

> With licensing rights by the Football Association, there are now a wide range of items bearing this insignia, from Watney's World Cup beer to World Cup Willie braces, tablecloths, ties, knitting patterns and the rest. Over £4m. worth of such goods have been on the market and of this the Football Association will expect to reap about £200,000 in royalties. … These are figures to emphasize the drawing power of football as a global game. ... As a merchandising

> gimmick [World Cup Willie] as big as, if not bigger than, James Bond or Mickey Mouse, World Cup Willie, the cartoon symbol in football shorts and boots, wearing the Union Jack on his shirt, has flooded the market.[53]

And social-political links are not neglected. In fact it was emphasised that football

> now spans the four corners of the globe. The World Cup may sound like some Tower of Babel with its many voices, but football remains a common language that links peoples of many creeds and colours, a game that has overstepped political iron curtains and helped to emancipate the South American Negro.[54]

Football is finally out of the shadow, and not only is it in the sunlight of the columns of *The Times*, but it even becomes the subject of a leading article. And there is a cartoon, published the day after the editorial we have just seen, in which Prime Minister Wilson encourages the England players in the dressing room saying: 'I want you to get out there and restore international confidence in the pound.'[55] By now, the attention focused on football is not only an on-pitch affair.

But we have to be careful. The editorial behaviour of *The Times* has not changed so much when compared to the position held before. If the enemy is strong enough to break into your house, it is up to you to try and make him feel uneasy. In what way? First of all, it is true that the journalistic coverage is complete enough, with a richer football section in the sporting pages. But it is equally true that, in spite of an inevitable consideration for such a big sporting event, the new *Times*' page one, now publishing news, reflects an ambiguous treatment of the tournament. In fact, we have both news about the play and news pointing out negative aspects and emphasising situations that can display football, and its world championship, in a bad light.

That is already clear from the beginning. Reports of the opening match have the gloomy headline 'England Goalless Draw - Room for 25,000 at first game',[56] and the article dwells upon the fact that the match was played 'before a crowd of 75,000 instead of the expected 100,000'.[57] In the reporting of the final match, the home team's victory is not exalted, and it

is exceeded by the paradox, headlined 'Ovations for Germany's team - Supporters claim "you won" '[58], placed alongside evidence of a photograph of the German team being cheerfully greeted coming back home. Moreover the doubtful nature of the Hurst decisive third goal is underlined:

> Commentators in all the Sunday newspapers maintain either that it was not a goal, or that it was a best uncertain. ... "[L]inesman decides world championship", is the headline in *Die Welt an Sonntag*. *Bild an Sonntag* says: "prevailing opinion of all eye-witnesses: no goal", and describes it as "the most discussed, most universally contested goal in the history of football".[59]

The Times' aim is to withdraw from the angle taken by other newspapers, and keep an Olympian detachment by refusing to take sides with the English party. This is reflected by one letter to the editor, by Lord Lovat of the Guards Club: 'England, in spite of the fanfares of the Press in every paper except your own, have got through to the last four by a lucky disqualification and the crippling of two frenchmen [*sic*] in an earlier round.'[60] If that was not enough, the main topic in this 'anti-football' crusade (most of all against criticisms of football, like those of the South American teams, except Brazil), was the bad discipline. It fell short of the proper level, and corrupted the game's basic principles. *The Times* does not miss the chance to point out the players' lack of discipline, by blaming the bad conduct of Argentine footballers in the quarter-final match against England - the famous 'Rattin case'. About that, some days after the 'incriminated' match, there is this ironic report from Reuter:

> Argentina are home like heroes - Thousands of Argentines stood in torrential rain chanting "Argentina champion", to give their defeated World Cup players a hero's welcome. ... Women rushed up to the team captain Antonio Rattin, who was sent off in Argentina's quarter-final match with England on Saturday, kissed him ecstatically on both cheeks and tried to wrap him up in an Argentine flag. Several people carried home-made posters depicting as donkeys the leaders of the international football federation (F.I.F.A.) ... After getting clear of the crowds the players boarded buses taking them to the presidential residence, where the President, General Juan Carlos Ongania, was waiting to thank them officially on behalf of the nation.[61]

Moreover Green, with his prejudices against all South American football save the Brazilian, in an article headlined 'World Cup Culprits Barred – "Referee bias" retort', wrote that in Latin America 'there is little respect for authority on the field of play'.[62] And the same day, in another article headlined 'Destructive attitude of South Americans - Persistent flaunting of authority', he opined that

> Brazil apart ... the South American effort as a whole has been dismal. ... [T]wo Argentinians and two Uruguayans sent off; and a spate of defensive play, which, for all its fiendish cleverness and masterly technical control, proved utterly suffocating for the game itself and soporific for the spectators. Their whole attitude - Brazil again excluded - has been negative. ...They deserve to be out, since they are killing the game in more ways than one, not least in certain instances by undisciplined, cynical behaviour and flaunting of authority.[63]

But finally football, as the one reckoned by Green and *The Times*, got his revenge in regard to the 'Latin cynicism':

> Here at last, after all the trial and tribulations of recent days, was a splendid spectacle, and though England emerged victorious they did so only with the skin of their teeth against a fine Portuguese side. Here also was a triumph for the game of football itself sufficient to silence all the cynics. Instead of a war of destruction here was scientific, flowing football played on the ground, where it is always the best.[64]

Another target is the rough and provocative behaviour of Alf Ramsey, the English Manager. An article headline 'F.I.F.A. want Mr. Ramsey disciplined – "Unfortunate remarks" in interview' quoted the manager as saying 'Our best football will come against the team who come out to play football and not act as animals.'[65] There were also reports of fights in Brazil between Brazilian and Portuguese supporters after the match between the two sides:

> Fighting broke out in the centre of Sao Paulo when Portugal beat Brazil. ... Brazilians and people of Portuguese origin leapt at each other in the central Cathedral Square, but police were there in force and prevented large-scale clashes. ... In Rio de Janeiro, crowds

> broke into a Portuguese shop where the owner was firing off rockets to celebrate Portugal's victory. They wrecked the shop before police could clear them out.[66]

But the conclusive evidence, leading us to the final statement that football and the World Cup is still a foreign body to establishment culture, is drawn by reading the leading article published after the events of the previous Saturday's match between England and Argentina:

> Medals are awarded for World Cup matches, and after Saturday's events a good cause could be made out for allowing them to be worn with other campaign medals. In the Wembley game there were several minutes of chaos before the Argentine captain would accept the referee's decision and go off the field. At the end a massive police escort was needed to get the referee himself out of the ground in safety. ...
>
> Set pieces, before a world audience of millions – such as World Cup matches are - can be very good or very bad. Before the Battle of Wembley last week there was the Battle of Santiago in 1962, the Battle of Berne in 1954, the Battle of Bordeaux in 1938. Personal and national reputations are at stake. The crowd at the match can be as boorish and unsporting as any player. ... Almost every country has its own styles and traditions of play - including its own idea of how and when a foul is justified. ...
>
> (… heaven help some of them when they get home to meet their disappointed, sport-loving, tomato-throwing fans.[67]) Besides, soccer is far from being the only offender. Black Saturday brought news of trouble in the Rugby League series in Australia and the Rugby Union in New Zealand. Definitely not cricket.[68]

All the real, deep ambivalence of *The Times* in regard to football, and of its 'degeneration', is present in this detached editorial. Here we can distinguish a mixture of love of fair play and nostalgia for the time when football was representative of typical British values, tinged with sarcasm. We could compare it with the article published a few days before, signed by Green, in which football and the World Cup had been presented as a very important happening, to be given the fullest treatment. There is no contradiction if we read such different judgements. In those years of social,

political and economic change (both nationally and internationally), in which to try and preserve a consistent behaviour pattern rooted deep in the past could be thought of as a symptom of weakness and not of strength, *The Times* managed to change, by paying attention to something that cannot be undervalued. Such a policy worked out at the expense of Green, who, blinded by his love for football and all its appurtenances, became an unconscious instrument of editorial cynicism.

There are three more elements to be noticed. The first is relating to the international political situation linked with the competition, which is quite delicate. North Korea were officially unrecognised by the British government, but joined the contest as a regular F.I.F.A. member. *The Times* solved this problem by not talking about it, except for some brief references. There is for instance an article in the Home News pages on the withdrawal from circulation of an official World Cup stamp by the Royal Mail, because it reproduced the North Korean flag:

> Football Cup Stamp was Banned - Bore North Korea Flag - A design for a Post Office stamp to commemorate the World Football Cup competition has been banned by the Foreign Office because the stamp bore the flag of North Korea, which is unrecognized by the British Government.[69]

Also there is a short and Sibylline mention in a sporting article, that 'news have already come to hand about preparations behind the iron curtain; about the mysterious North Koreans…',[70] in which eastern European states are also explored. But there is a general will to avoid the problem. Quite the contrary, the North Koreans became the pets of the home supporter, and *The Times* had a liking for them, too. There are, in fact, full commentaries on their matches, as amusing as this:

> Naval salute for gallant North Koreans - With two and a half minutes remaining of last night's match at Ayresome Park, the crowd got what they wanted and the North Koreans claimed the point they well deserved. Rarely have supporters taken a team to their hearts as the football followers of Middlesbrough have taken these whimsical Orientals. And when Pak Seung Zin seized on a half clearance and cracked the ball past Olivares they were on their feet. At the end a British sailor rushed on to the field to shake the Korean players by the hand.[71]

The second element is about the fact that there are a number of other related areas reported. These include bookmakers' odds, ticket touting, and television programming. The former was covered in such ways as ''World Cup Call-Over: 7-4 Brazil; 5-1 England; 7-1 Argentina; 9-1 Italy'[72] on 14 June 1966 and '7-4 on England for World Cup - The latest betting prices for the World Cup final at Wembley tomorrow seem to be 7-4 on England, 11-8 against Germany' on 29 July.[73] The coverage of touting included the following news just before the final:

> A ticket may cost from £5 to £50. Think of a price and multiply by three or four is a rough method of finding out how much a ticket will now cost. ... There were 14 advertisements in *The Times* yesterday a offering tickets ranging from 'good' to 'wonderful' and 'choice'. ... At a cigarette and sweet kiosk in Covent Garden a 10s. standing ticket costs £6 15s. in mid-afternoon, a slight increase from that morning.[74]

Television coverage was reported to stress the global spread of the game. For example

> 'Four hundred million viewers throughout the world are expected to see the final', the BBC said yesterday. Twenty-six countries in Europe and North Africa will see a 'live' transmission which will also be sent via the Early Bird satellite to N.B.C. of America, C.B.C., of Canada, and Mexico. Nearly 30 more countries have asked for video tape recordings or film of the match.[75]

There is also an amusing article about the Brazilian fans, in which the exotic keenness of some eccentric South American supporters is not forgotten:

> Futebol Fever, Brazilians' World Cup of Joy - Over here to watch now and pay later. - Brazil is the most fanatical nation of football supporters: Brazilians committed suicide over their team's defeat by Uruguay in 1950. ... Estimates of the size of all Brazilian invasion range between 3,500 and 12,000. ... Each time Brazil play, everything at home stops. Priests pray for them among the skyscrapers of Sao Paulo, in the small towns of the interior and along the banks of Amazon. ... Most of Brazil's supporters are not, however, people of

> wealth and position. They are from the middle class - civil servants, engineers, businessmen, shopkeepers. Probably no more than 10 per cent have paid for the trip outright. The rest are paying over two or three years under schemes run by travel agencies. Some will still be paying for the trip in 1967. ... It is among the poorest people that enthusiasm has its deepest roots. The game is an escape from poverty and drudgery - often the only escape. ... A wild young fan at the stadium put it another way. 'If Brazil *lose*, we shall have a revolution and get rid of the Government'. The Brazilian feeling for football is more than passionate. It is religious. ... After their victory on Tuesday, carnival burst upon the surprised streets of Liverpool.[76]

The third element is about F.I.F.A., now recognised, through a lot of references regarding the disciplinary side, as the World Cup creator and as the greatest football power in the world. But there is a simple explanation for that: the President of F.I.F.A. is now the Englishman Stanley Rous. An Englishman presiding over F.I.F.A., England organising the World Cup tournament, England's team winning the contest: football has come back home!

1970: A necessary evil

As the times changed, *The Times* changed. It mediated such change in its own way, but change it did. It had to learn how to face certain realities, which a few years before could be confidently ignored, assured, as it was, of the safety of the cultural heritage of a particular segment of the market. The world was now giving over more time to frivolous leisure. The choice for *The Times* was almost dramatic: either ignore what it considered not to be up to the elite's level, or tolerate it as a necessary evil. *The Times*' solution followed the track of what had been done four years before, only that in 1970 it was amplified.

1966 was a time of early changes. By 1970 television was in the ascendancy, and newspapers were no longer the primary means of communication. If they wanted to survive they not only had to give news, but also comments about it. In the sporting sector this meant that it was now starting the 'gossip age', that people, at the higher as well as the lower class, did not merely want to know the way a goal has been scored, given that they had seen it on TV; they were interested in what happened behind the

scenes, and in the protagonists' personalities. It was a bitter pill to swallow, especially for a newspaper that always fed pure news.

The 1970 World Cup made a massive impact on the pages of *The Times*. Not only was Green sent to Mexico to follow the defending champions from the start of their training, but he was even joined by four reporting staff.[77] This was done to 'offer readers of *The Times* a coverage to match the momentous occasion'.[78] The World Cup competition was presented through a whole page special, on which it was stated that the Jules Rimet Cup 'with the Olympic flag ... is the most widely travelled sporting trophy on earth'.[79] The contest was followed day by day on at least a half a page section. Green's portrait appeared over every one of his articles, and there was an icon, reproducing the Rimet Cup and the word MEXICO. But that is only until England's elimination. After that, the tournament slowly loses its importance, and the paper has removed both Green's portrait and the Rimet Cup. The news of Brazil's final victory was on page one, yes, but it was overshadowed by exalting Tony Jacklin's triumph in the U.S. Open golf. A British triumph, obviously, in a favoured sport of *The Times*' readers.

That there was a technical change in the way of reporting news is also clear. In the first articles we get to know how players spend their free time. For example, on 7 May we read that the players had 'eggs and bacon for breakfast and English sausages. ... The world champions spent most of the day enjoying the sunshine ... and swimming in the hotel pool'.[80] Two days later, we read that they

> have been allowed to relax with golf, television and the inevitable games of cards. Yesterday they were guests at a Mexican rodeo sponsored by a handful of British societies and business firms. [T]he weekend programme includes such non-serious events as a cricket match against a local side and football games against teams of British reporters and children of the British founded Reforma Club;[81]

while on 11 May, we see that 'Keith Newton and Terry Cooper showed sparkling form... in a cricket match'.[82] There is also news of tourism and relaxation, as in the following examples: 'England's World Cup squad played the role of typical tourists this morning when they visited the 2,000-

year old Teotihuacan Pyramids',[83] and '[t]here is a blue heated swimming pool around which the England players relax in the freshness of a spring day at home'.[84] There are, as well, references about facts going beyond the mere commentaries on the matches. Surely you would not expect to read news about Winston, the dog-mascot of England's team, too, and with what pseudo-seriousness:

> Mexican authorities last night turned down an appeal for Winston, the English team's mascot bulldog, to attend his team's matches at the Jalisco Stadium. Local dog-lovers, headed by a pro-Winston press, asked the cup committee last week to reconsider a decision banning the ten-month-old bulldog from running across the playing pitch before England's games. 'There are no tickets for Winston. The decision has been made by my superiors', the committee chief Enrique Ladron Guevara announced last night.[85]

But the clearest sign of this change of route is illustrated by the 'Moore case'. Bobby Moore, England's captain, was accused of theft by a jeweller from Bogota during the England team's pre-tournament trip to Colombia. News about the case was featured on page one for four days in a row,[86] with sensationalistic headlines and photographs of the protagonists.[87] Therefore, if before it was football that was to be considered a creature degenerating from its pure origins, by now it is *The Times*' journalistic coverage revealing a manifest degeneration from the original nature as a measured instrument of information for the 'top people'. Once again it displays some ambivalence when it suggests that the World Cup is a rival to the general election, due on 18 June: 'World Cup and Good Weather Slow Political Pulse'.[88] It is, moreover, to be pointed out that a certain nationalistic tone resurfaces. John Hennessy, responsible for the sporting pages, before the contest starts, haughtily writes:

> British football stands on a pinnacle ... The World Cup would be a glorious clean sweep of all the prizes open to Britain and it is encouraging to know that no team will enter the fray better prepared. ... [O]nly a run of bad luck will stand between them and the trophy.[89]

Finally, there is no lack of some self-pity, related to a dislike of South Americans, in which the 'Moore case' becomes paradigmatic. There are several occasions for this dislike to be noticed. On 7 May, for example, we

read that the Mexicans, 'not sharing England's taste in music, complained that they were playing their portable record players too loudly'.[90] Two days later, *The Times* reports that

> Since England's football team arrived here on Monday evening, waves of recrimination have already begun to reverberate to and fro across the Atlantic. ... The most savage retort has come from a columnist of the mass circulation *La Prensa*: he harks back to 1966 and contrasts the allegedly shoddy treatment meted out to Mexican team in London with the regards as the lavish reception afforded to the English team here.[91]

On 14 May, more active hostility is reported:

> England's World Cup players were pelted with bottle tops and jeered and whistled at by Mexican football fans after their first full scale [training session] at the Olympic Stadium here today. Throughout the 80 minute work out, the world champions were the target of boos and catcalls from the scattering of young spectators, who chanted 'Brazil' and 'Mexico'. The throwing incidents occurred as the players left the field and made their way down through the tunnel to the dressing rooms. Several players covered their heads with their hands to protect themselves.[92]

On 27 May, it was reported that 'Jeff Astle has been accused by a local newspaper of having emerged from the aircraft here last night the worse for wear with drink. This is a complete fabrication';[93] while conspiracies were alleged the following day:

> A Turkish journalist here wrote an article nearly a month ago forecasting that England would face big dangers here in Latin America in their defence of the World Cup - and not only on the field. He forecast that some plot or other would be hatched to undermine our morale.[94]

Finally, anti-Rous opinion was noted on 16 June: 'The Uruguayans regard Rous as a European enemy of Latin America.'[95]

But Green, with wit and as wise as usual, tries to find the causes of what is called 'the Rattin's revenge':

> Particularly unfortunate was the anti-British feeling that grew from the earliest days. It was not only personal vendetta, just a blind general mob reaction. The reasons were suggested to me by a calm, sophisticated Mexican, who deeply regretted it all.
>
> The causes, he felt, were probably threefold: (a) England, on arrival, were regarded impostors as world champions, having, it was thought, 'fixed' their title at home four years earlier; (b) poor public relations and the cold, distant attitude - often regarded as arrogant - of Sir Alf Ramsey, the team manager; and (c) the early reports by the british [*sic*] press ridiculing hotel muddles when the team first arrived here, reports that came back to roost only to be magnified and distorted for whatever ends.
>
> Certainly we have much to learn in the art of public relations. ... The Italians had 5,000 roses sent from home which their players threw to the crowd before the final. These were little gestures. They may have been shallow, perhaps, or cynical, but they counted for popularity.[96]

And even *The Times* had not got out of the practice of ridiculing the accommodation arranged for the England team by the host country:

> England's players also ran into difficulties over bedrooms in the Parc de Princes hotel. Some of them complained that the rooms were too small and part of yesterday morning was spent in reorganizing the accommodation.[97]

To compare the 1970 editions with those of 1966 is very instructive, especially if we look at the nationalistic side of the matter. If previously jingoism was to be left to other newspapers, which were far from *The Times*' style, now *The Times* also starts to be trapped by easy chauvinism, attracting more readers from the lower class. Therefore, the 1970 World Cup can be judged as a junction between past and future, between tradition and innovation. Innovation does not always mean improvement.

Conclusion

At the end of this coverage of over 40 years of sporting-journalistic history, the conclusions that can be drawn can be summarised as follows.

First, the coverage of the chosen event passes through three different phases. The first, in the 1930s, is of indifference, when the event was ignored because of its extraneousness to the sporting-cultural interests of *The Times* and its readers. The second, from 1950 to 1962, is one of incubation, and represents the discovery of the World Cup and its slow rise towards a more suitable rank. The third is one of consecration, and sees, in 1966 and 1970, the definitive identification of the World Cup.

Second, editorial policy and behaviour with regard to football and its world contest reveal some incoherence and ambiguity. In fact, if on the one hand there is the journalistic side, with reports and commentaries of the event considered as the highest expression of the most important sport in the world; then on the other hand there are incessant attempts to minimise the event's real importance within the whole sports coverage and most of all in regard to the other typical British sports, by putting it into the background, by employing it as in instrument of sullen nationalism, and even casting discredit on it.

Finally, if we look at the 1966 and 1970 World Cups, especially if compared with previous ones, *The Times* displays a large growth in coverage, suggesting a growing sense of the importance of football and its world championship. It also shows an equal change in the style in which it is reported. But, as we have previously noted, to change course as *The Times* does is to move towards something that before was considered insufficiently important, almost an evil to be avoided. And through a shouted and semi-scandal-mongering journalism, that became stronger and stronger, day by day. This could be considered one of the factors that characterised this moment in the history of *The Times*, when the London newspaper was under the Thomson ownership, though keeping its role of chief reference point for all the quality press, has narrowed the gap between itself and the tabloids in terms of journalistic style and the topics included. And sales reasons must have played no small part in this kind of evolution. Or should I say 'devolution'?

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Notes

1 *The Times*, 31 December 1999.
2 Polley, 1998 (b), p. 1.
3 Porter, 1987, pp. 113-114.
4 Bishop, Woods, 1983.
5 Seymour-Ure, 1991, pp. 243-244.
6 The year of its foundation.
7 Considering obviously apart the historical contents.
8 Seymour-Ure, 1991, p.242.
9 The modern meaning of 'Establishment', an early-1900 coinage according to *The New Shorter Oxford*, is as follows: 'The group in society exercising authority or influence and seen as resisting change; any influential or controlling group', *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1993; 'The class in a community or in a field of activity who hold power, usually because they are linked socially, and who are usually considered to have conservative opinions and conventional values', *The Chambers Dictionary*, Edinburgh, 1993; 'A group or class of people having institutional authority within a society, especially those who control the civil service, the government, the armed forces, and the Church: usually identified with a conservative outlook', *Collins Softback English Dictionary*, Glasgow, 1994.
10 Seymour-Ure, 1991, p. 243.
11 *The Times*, 3 May 1966, quotation in Smith, 1974, p. 71.
12 Smith, 1971, p. 71.
13 Smith, 1971, p. 73.
14 Smith, 1971, p. 73.

15 Grigg, 1993, pp. 1-2.
16 Data from Seymour-Ure, 1991, pp. 28-29.
17 *The Times*, 28 May 1970.
18 *The Times*, 20 June 1938.
19 Russell, 1997, p. 104.
20 *The Times*, 15 April 1950.
21 *The Times*, 17 April 1950.
22 There are short news on 18 April, 8 May, 10 May, and 24 May 1954 issues.
23 January 1967, editor William Rees-Mogg in writing down the new guiding lines of its editorial policy: 'Sports writers should also use their names for full-length reports of matches or events'. In Grigg, 1993, p. 26.
24 McDonald, 1984, pp. 473-4.
25 Grigg, 1993, p. 334.
26 *The Times*, 31 May, 2 June, 29 June, 30 June 1950.
27 *The Times*, 27 April 1950. On the meeting there is a news item on 1 May issue.
28 *The Times*, 5 May 1954.
29 On 21 June 1954. The same treatment, plus a photograph, is given for England's defeat by Uruguay, on 28 June 1954.
30 *The Times*, 11 May 1954.
31 *The Times*, 15 May 1954.
32 *The Times*, 22 May 1954.
33 *The Times*, 24 May 1954.
34 *The Times*, 18 June 1954.
35 *The Times*, 21 June 1954.
36 *The Times*, 28 June 1954.
37 *The Times*, 16 June 1954.
38 *The Times*, 5 July 1954.
39 *The Times*, 16 April 1958.
40 *The Times*, 16 April 1958.
41 *The Times*, 16 April 1958.
42 *The Times*, 1 July 1958
43 In that time there is more than one news item in a first-rank position in the sporting pages: 8 May, 12 May, 19 May, 9 June, 12 June, 13 June, 16 June, 18 June, 20 June, and 28 June 1958.
44 *The Times*, 16 April 1958.
45 *The Times*, 25 June 1958.
46 *The Times*, 10 June 1958.
47 There are mentions on 22 April, 3 May, and 12 June 1958.
48 Reuter and Associated Press.
49 *The Times*, 11 July 1966.
50 *The Times*, 11 July 1966.
51 *The Times*, 11 July 1966.
52 *The Times*, 11 July 1966.
53 *The Times*, 11 July 1966.
54 *The Times*, 11 July 1966.
55 *The Times*, 12 July 1966.
56 *The Times*, 12 July 1966.

[57] *The Times*, 12 July 1966.
[58] *The Times*, 1 August 1966.
[59] *The Times*, 1 August 1966.
[60] *The Times*, 26 July 1966.
[61] *The Times*, 28 July 1966.
[62] *The Times*, 25 July 1966.
[63] *The Times*, 25 July 1966.
[64] *The Times*, 27 July 1966.
[65] *The Times*, 26 July 1966.
[66] *The Times*, 20 July 1966.
[67] This is probably a reference to the Italian players coming back home after their total defeat by North Korea.
[68] *The Times*, 25 July 1966.
[69] *The Times*, 27 April 1966.
[70] *The Times*, 9 May 1966.
[71] *The Times*, 16 July 1966.
[72] *The Times*, 14 June 1966.
[73] *The Times*, 29 July 1966.
[74] *The Times*, 29 July 1966.
[75] *The Times*, 29 July 1966.
[76] *The Times*, 15 July 1966.
[77] Frank Keating, Roger MacDonald, John Young and Gerry Harrison.
[78] *The Times*, 4 May 1970.
[79] *The Times*, 28 May 1970.
[80] *The Times*, 7 May 1970.
[81] *The Times*, 9 May 1970.
[82] *The Times*, 11 May 1970.
[83] *The Times*, 16 May 1970.
[84] *The Times*, 23 May 1970. Besides, on 23 May, there is a photo of Jack Charlton sunbathing.
[85] *The Times*, 27 May 1970.
[86] Between 26 and 29 May. There is another article on the case in the sporting pages on 15 May 1970 issue.
[87] Moore on 26 May, Moore with two F.A. officials plus the portrait of a self-styled female witness on 27 May, again Moore on 28 May, Moore's wife with their two children on 29 May 1970.
[88] *The Times*, 1 June 1970.
[89] *The Times*, 4 May 1970.
[90] *The Times*, 7 May 1970.
[91] *The Times*, 9 May 1970.
[92] *The Times*, 14 May 1970.
[93] *The Times*, 27 May 1970.
[94] *The Times*, 28 May 1970.
[95] *The Times*, 16 June 1970.
[96] *The Times*, 23 June 1970.
[97] *The Times*, 7 May 1970.