



Quelle

Barassi, Ottorino: The World Organisation Urgently Requires Modernising (1960)¹

The F.I.F.A. Congress in Rome has proved the absolute necessity for strengthening the continent Organisations by clearly defining their relationship with F.I.F.A. and the National Associations: to solve these questions the Congress extraordinary in London in 1961 must prove both dedicated and decisive.

At the last General Meeting, held in Rome in August, the F.I.F.A. did not have to deal with the usual subject "proposals to modify the regulations", in spite of the fact that many National Football Associations had, within the time limit, had several such proposals put on the agenda.

There was instead a proposal by the Executive Committee to postpone the whole matter until a Congress Extraordinary to be held in London at the end of September 1961. And the General Meeting, concerned at the impossibility of carrying out the task in an ordinary meeting, affected by the influence of the elections and above all by the Olympic Games taking place at the same time, and which were taking up every-one's attention, accepted the said proposal.

It was a wise decision, because in actual fact, over and above a few proposals to be considered in detail, in the imposing regulations governing football there is a need for an all-over revision of relations between the hundred and odd National Associations and the F.I.F.A. which unites them.

To explain the situation clearly it is necessary to go back a step or so. Ten years ago exactly, in 1950, on the occasion of the Congress held in Rio de Janeiro; coinciding with the World Championship, there came under discussion a proposal made by the Argentines and seconded by the English to revise the F.I.F.A. constitution based on direct relations with the separate national member Associations, and creating bodies for each continent with the International Association at the head.

The proposal seemed too bold a one to the older executives and especially to the late president Rimet who expressed deep-felt fears for the disintegration of the F.I.F.A.

The only practical element in favour of the reform proposal, was the South-American Confederation, already constituted, and which, while not immune from the defects due to the particular characteristics of Football in South America at that time, later overcome, had shown the utility of decentralisation, also in relation to an increasing immobility of the world football organisation.

Despite keen opposition, the General Meeting appointed a Study Commission, to which I was called, and which presented its conclusions in 1952 at the Helsinki Congress, within the time limit set in Rio.

The Congress on that occasion too coincided with the Olympic Games and was affected by the elections, and so found it necessary to postpone examination and decisions until a Congress Extraordinary which was held the following year in Paris.

The meeting in Paris 1953, exceptionally well attended, developed in a somewhat disorderly manner, so much so that by the third day only a few of the items of the voluminous scheme had been examined and discussed. All the others were then approved in a lump, without even being read.

To-day simultaneous translation brings more rapid and profitable work within reach. However, in the long run, there was a certain amount of tangible results and first of all, the constitution of the European Union, which came into being amid unending difficulty and distrust, the particular characteristics of a world full of important individualities in football, such as Europe is, the home of football and of the International Federation.

¹ Excerpt from magazine "Calcio", published in Milan by the F.I.G.C. Lega Nazionale II [1960], No. 1/3, pp. 36/40; Distributed to the delegates of the FIFA XXXIIInd Congress held at the "Confederazione Italiana Dirigenti d'Azienda", Via Nazionale 75, in Rome on August 22 and 23, 1960.

Regulations were laid down which were more precise and more fitting to the new demands of modern football, and new institutions were established as the increased number of member Associations required.

The direct relations between the main international body and the separate national Associations became increasingly difficult on account of the rising number of F.I.F.A. members due to the enormous spread of the game in every continent, but specially in Asia and Africa.

Until then football as a game was wide-spread practically only in Europe and South America, but the World Championship with the exceptional renown it obtained, was the most effective advertising medium. From the Paris Congress until to-day the number of Associations which are members of the F.I.F.A. has doubled and will increase still further with the gradual constitution of new independent States.

It has therefore appeared obvious that the old constitution must be further brought up to date along the lines suggested in Rio and only partly followed out in Paris.

Ten years after the pressing need shows itself for consolidating the Continent Organisations and laying down plainly the relations between them and the F.I.F.A. and between the National Associations which will no longer be directly under the direction of the F.I.F.A., unless in a few special cases of appeal against any particular arbitration by the majority.

The General Meeting of all the National Associations is by now an event of lesser importance and the most outstanding of its acts apart from the nomination of the Association president, is the choice of the organisers for the World Cup, and the modification of regulations referring to inter-continental activity. The Executive Committee is already separate from the various Continental Associations, which however, continue to lodge requests for bigger representation groups, with the danger of swelling the principal organisation, and making it inefficient on account of the impossibility of holding frequent meetings, cost of which would be prohibitive. So that in actual fact decisions in practice end up by being made by the Commissions, whereas it is right that much of what to-day has to be done by the F.I.F.A., should go to the Continent Associations, some of which are already too big. In the continent of Asia, for example, the difference in interests between the countries near Europe and the others is such (even on account of the serious problem of distances) as to recommend a further subdivision. Which in any case exists in America, where there are three bodies: south, centre, north, despite the fact that the members of each group are not very numerous.

The F.I.F.A., in addition to organising competitions on a world basis, must control relations between the various continent associations, publicity and development of the game, technical playing rules (the good fortune of football as a game lies in the rigorous application of the one and only set of playing rules and in the strenuous defence of the said rules against too frequent and too simple proposals for variations) and all that does not fall into the independent working of each continent group.

The situation of football is not at the same point for development and perfection, in the various continents. It is the job of F.I.F.A. to facilitate progress in the areas most requiring improvement, but it is no longer possible to contemplate further indiscriminate application of the democratic concept resulting from the idea of National Association groups, which equal voting rights at the General Meetings.

Sport is not a question of politics but of technique, and it is not conceivable that England, who led all the rest, and is a powerful national Association, must count the same as the youngest and smallest of member Associations. Either a new system of valuation must be sought, as anyway is applied in many other sports, or those continent confederations only before which the separate national Associations are equal in rights and duties, must be developed.

The relations with the F.I.F.A. will then be regulated by the continental confederation alone.

Serious anxiety must be felt at the prospect of what might happen if the group of new African and Asiatic Associations (only to give an example) lumped together, formed a numerical majority at the General Meeting of the F.I.F.A. and intended to make decisions without taking into account the isolation of the European and American groups or one of them. The number of the respective National Associations and their quality, would allow for sufficient and interesting life on an interna-

tional plane, and a European, or American, or mixed Championship would be the same as a World Championship, at least for the Europeans.

Luckily in football Europe is an authentic and total entity, which unfortunately is not the case in politics. For this reason it is in the general interest to work in a spirit of true collaboration for the creation of new regulations which will avoid holding up development and progress in football.

The Congress Extraordinary in London next year, will be called upon to perform a truly weighty task, and one which will be decisive for world football.

Eine Druckversion der Übersetzung dieser Quelle findet sich in Hohls, Rüdiger; Schröder, Iris; Siegrist, Hannes (Hg.), Europa und die Europäer. Quellen und Essays zur modernen europäischen Geschichte, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2005, S. 297-298.

Auf diese Quelle bezieht sich ein einführender und erläuternder Essay von Eisenberg, Christiane, Europäische Interessenpolitik im Weltfußball im zuvor genannten Sammelband, S. 293-297.

Eine Übersetzung dieses Dokuments ist in der Rubrik Quellen im Themenportal Europäische Geschichte (www.europa.clio-online.de) zu finden.