

Recognition, *Ma Non Troppo*: How FIFA Dribbled the Spanish Football Schism During the Civil War¹

Bernat López

Department of Communication Studies, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain

bernat.lopez@urv.cat

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8416-7956>

Abstract

One of the facets of the Spanish Civil War's sportive dimensions which has received relatively ample attention by scholars is the attitude of FIFA in the battle between the republican and the Francoist football federations for international recognition. The dominant interpretation of the facts is that the Francoists had already won this battle in late November 1937, when FIFA allegedly recognized it, and that this was somehow due to FIFA's elite conservatism or even Nazi-fascist leanings. We contend that this was not the case. On the basis of a broad examination of Spanish, French and Belgian newspapers of the time, and a thorough search of FIFA archives in Zurich, we conclude that, although ambiguously, a FIFA dominated by a liberal elite remained true to its 'no politics' principle, avoiding to take sides, and actually suspending both sides until the end of the war, although tolerating unofficial international activity of both.

Keywords: History, FIFA, Spain, Spanish Civil War, Spanish Football Federation

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Introduction

A considerable body of research regarding the development of sport during the Spanish Civil War has expanded in the first two decades of the Twenty-first century, in contrast with the paucity of previous references. One of the most reviewed topics is the international dimension of Spanish football during the war, and in particular the attitude of FIFA in the battle between the republican and the Francoist football federations for the monopoly on Spanish football's international representation. The reviewed literature almost unanimously contends that the latter won this battle when FIFA recognized the Francoists as early as November 1937. This would be the result, according to several academic sources, of some sort of FIFA's foul play derived from an alleged conservative bias of, or even Nazi-fascist grip on the entity.

On closer examination, though, there is room for ample nuancing concerning both claims. Our aim in this article is to review them under the light of an extended examination of the available sources, mostly the archival ones. Most research on the matter has so far relied on a partial review of press sources and the FIFA archives, as its main direct source of evidence has been a dossier compiled by the international federation's archival services years ago which included a selection of documents generated up to the crucial November 6-7, 1937, FIFA executive committee meeting. The post-November documentation had remained mostly unexplored. Our research has combined a thorough search in several online press archives,¹ including a day-by-day examination of *El Mundo Deportivo*, for the period July 1936-December 1939, with on

site consultation of the whole 1936-1939 relevant documentation kept in the FIFA archives at Zurich.²

The present article aims at throwing new light on the foreign dimension of sport during the Spanish Civil War, as well as on FIFA's coping with international tensions and conflicts in the pre-WWII period, thanks to a broader and deeper revision of the sources (both journalistic and archival).

Literature review

Concerning the fight for international sporting recognition during the Civil War, Domínguez and Pujadas contend that 'the Francoist diplomacy achieved the best results',³ while Viuda-Serrano and Ibarrodo-Merino claim that 'the rebels were victorious in [the sporting] (...) war'.⁴ FIFA's official history explains that the international body 'recognized for the first time two Spanish federations' in 1937.⁵ Rieck makes a very similar claim: that FIFA 'decided to recognize both football associations in Spain', which meant 'a huge defeat' for the republicans and 'not a total, but a huge success' for the Francoists, as it 'offered both sides the same condition'.⁶

With the permission of FIFA, the rebel team was now allowed to play international games (...) From then on, the Francoist association was a member of an internationally-respected organization (...) and thus could present an image of absolute order and normality to the world.⁷

The examined amateur Spanish football historiography unanimously shares a similar perspective. Martínez Calatrava contends that 'all chances played in favour of the new [Francoist] federation's recognition', which, he states, was eventually agreed by FIFA

in November 1937. José del Olmo and Juan Luis Franco make the same claim.⁸

Martialay states that ‘the victory of the San Sebastián Spanish federation over the Madrid one (...) [was] total and overwhelming’. Fernández Santander goes as far as to claim that FIFA recognized ‘the Nationalist Spain as the only entity representing Spanish football’, thus endorsing the propaganda circulated by the Francoists after the November 1937 decision.⁹

When dealing with the reasons for this outcome, the reviewed literature points at a more skilfull and determined Francoist sports diplomacy,¹⁰ coupled with an alleged conservative bias of, or even Nazi-fascist grip on the international football governing body, which ensured its sympathy towards the rebel side and facilitated the latter’s plans. For instance, Rieck considers that the Francoist federation’s recognition was ‘a very political decision and enforced by fascists movements’.¹¹ Castro Montes contends that ‘the very conservative international bodies such as the FIFA and the IOC were not averse to the Franco regime (...) the political sympathies of both organizations were clearly with the conservative side’.¹²

This interpretation can be traced back to the reactions to the November 1937 decision published in both the Francoist and the republican newspapers. A much circulated claim in the loyalist press and political circles concerning the matter is that FIFA’s executive committee was a bourgeois, conservative and even fascistoid body dominated by representatives of the Nazi-fascist regimes which were supporting the Spanish rebel side.¹³ This was for instance bluntly expressed in a letter sent by the president of the Basque regional government, José Antonio Aguirre, to fellow Basque nationalist Manuel de Irujo, a minister in the Spanish Republican government, concerning the June

1937 FIFA ban of international matches with Spanish teams which turned ‘illegal’ the team sent abroad by the Basque government (see below):

The issue of the football team seems to have gotten entangled these days because the international federation, which is in the hands of fascists, wants to prohibit the Basque team to play on grounds of it having done it previously in Russia. The fascist fauna’s venom has even reached sport.¹⁴

The reverse equivalent of these complains can be found in the praises to Rimet’s alleged sympathy for the rebel side published in the Francoist press. Thus, for instance, *La Voz de España*’s reference to Rimet as ‘a great admirer of decent Spain’¹⁵ or *El Ideal Gallego*’s allusion to the latter attitude towards the rebel federation as ‘the true representation of the legendary French gentlemanship’ to which ‘the good Spaniards’ must grant their ‘admiration and profound gratitude’.¹⁶

Nazi-fascist FIFA?

The contention that the Francoists won the international football diplomatic battle when FIFA ‘recognized’ the Francoist federation in November 1937 will be discussed below. Let’s first examine the claim concerning the alleged Nazi-fascist grip on the international federation’s governing body.

The FIFA executive committee which dealt with the Spanish affair in 1937 included Jules Rimet (France, President), Giovanni Mauro (Italy, Vice-president), Rodolphe Seeldrayers (Belgium, Vice-president), Joseph ‘Peco’ Bauwens (Germany), Maurice Fischer (Hungary), Anton Johanson (Sweden), Karel Lotsy (The Netherlands), Rudolf

Pelikan (Czechoslovakia), Luis F. Dupuy (Uruguay), and the General Secretary, Ivo Schricker (Germany). Of these ten members, only two could be deemed to be acting on behalf of national federations dominated by Nazi-fascist regimes: Mauro and Bauwens, and even these have been considered by the authoritative opinion of sports historians Vonnard and Quin ‘sporting actors of liberal adscription who act[ed] on behalf of authoritarian or totalitarian regimes and agents working since the 1910s (...) for the development of international football’.¹⁷

Mauro’s career is particularly ambivalent, as despite having served as vice-president of the Fascist Italian federation (FIGC) and head of the 1934 World Cup organizing committee, in 1943 he was appointed by the Badoglio government as ‘reggente’ (director, ruler) of the post-fascist federation; in 1946 he became the latter’s ‘Commissario straordinario per l’Alta Italia’,¹⁸ and kept his chair in the FIFA’s executive committee until his retirement in 1952.¹⁹

Other than Mauro, the three most influential members of the board in the late thirties and early forties were Rimet, Seeldrayers and Schricker, none of whom could be labelled as an extremist, an ultra-conservative or being in the service of Nazi-fascist regimes.²⁰ On the contrary, according to Vonnard and Quin, they were diplomatic figures central in ‘defusing conflict’ and resisting the Nazi-fascist attempts at controlling the organization in the late thirties and during WWII.²¹

Rimet, a central figure in the governance of world football during the 30-plus stormy years spanning from 1920 to the early 1950s, has been unanimously considered a liberal, moderate, social-Christian, universalist and diplomatic figure. He was removed

from the chairmanship of the French football federation by the Vichy regime and joined the *résistance* at the end of World War II.²² Tomlinson considers Seeldrayers ‘as very much a figure in the Rimet mould’.²³ Concerning Schricker, although he was born in Strasbourg (part of Germany at that time), he was a Swiss resident, and several authors have underlined his left-wing liberalism, cosmopolitanism, diplomaticism and anti-Nazism.²⁴

Concerning FIFA as a whole during those years, Carpentier considers it a ‘progressive federation’ as opposed to the conservative and elitist International Olympic Committee.²⁵ According to Eisenberg, one of the basic principles of FIFA, ‘no politics’, or neutrality in the international arena, was a necessary evil which allowed the entity to be ‘successful in organizing international sporting activities or achieving global representation’.²⁶ Concerning the specific case of the Spanish Civil War, FIFA confronted these years important international issues, like the British (including the Irish issue) and Soviet dossiers and the pressures coming from Nazi Germany, which were also linked with the financial problems of the entity. In this stormy context, political ‘neutrality’ was a convenient strategy to try and stay out of trouble as much as possible.

There is therefore little trace, if any, in the reviewed literature of a FIFA controlled by Nazi-fascists. What we find, instead, is the depiction of a body ruled by a liberal, cosmopolitan elite, who strove to navigate through highly turbulent waters in international relations, and succeeded in keeping the entity relatively independent from attempts by the Nazi-fascist powers at taking control over it, despite making some concessions to the latter, like awarding the 1934 World Cup to Fascist Italy.

The Republican FEF: from revolutionary seizure to contestation by the Francoists

Spanish football was no minor player in the international arena at the height of the late thirties. Representatives of the country had attended the 1904 FIFA's foundational conference in Paris.²⁷ A Spanish team reached the final match of the Antwerp Olympic tournament in 1920, while the Spanish federation (FEF) offered to host the first World Cup in 1930.²⁸ In 1934 the FIFA congress followed Jules Rimet's advice and elected FEF's president, Leopoldo García Durán, as a permanent member of the elitist international federation's executive committee, a political decision aimed at recognizing the international prominence of Spanish-speaking (mainly Latin American) football in the twenties and the thirties.²⁹ Shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War, García Durán and FEF's general secretary, Ricardo Cabot, were expected to attend the FIFA congress to be held in Berlin during the Olympics, and correspondence was exchanged with FIFA's general secretary, Ivo Schricker, in this regard.³⁰

One can therefore guess the alarm and concern that the outbreak of the Civil War triggered among FIFA's executive committee members, aggravated by the news about the seizure of the FEF by a Frente Popular committee in early August 1936. This was followed by an informational blackout concerning both the federation's institutional activity and the personal fates of, among other members of FEF's pre-war executive committee, Cabot and conservative García Durán, a potential target of the political violence unleashed in the country during the early months of the war. Cabot resumed correspondence with Schricker six months after the outbreak of the war, but FIFA remained without direct news from García Durán until mid-1938.³¹ This filled the

executive committee's members with worry, as shown in several letters from Schricker to Cabot where the former insists in asking about García Durán's fate.³²

News from other FEF members, if they ever reached Zurich or Paris, would have added to the impression caused by the federation's seizure and the 'vanishing' of García Durán. FEF's executive committee member Eusebio Oliver Pascual volunteered to the Francoist army as a medical officer during the rest of the war,³³ while the person appointed by the federation as its representative in Paris, Joan Baptista Roca i Caball, was himself an exile who had fled Barcelona in December 1936 escaping from far-left political persecution.³⁴ Other national sports organizations suffered an even worst disruption. Spanish CIO members, baron of Güell and count of Vallellano, and Spanish Olympic Committee (SOC) members José Mesalles Estivill and Narciso Masferrer fled to the Francoist territory escaping political persecution, while August Pi i Sunyer, the liberal-progressive president of SOC, had to spent several months in France in 1937 also due to threats to his life coming from anarchist extremists.³⁵ Far more unfortunate was Gonzalo Aguirre, vice-president of Madrid FC and president of the Spanish Basketball Federation, who was arrested and shot by left-wing extremists in August 1936.³⁶

Direct news on the seizure of FEF on August 6, 1936, reached the FIFA headquarters shortly after in the form of a letter from the new FEF president, José María Mengual, to Ivo Schricker, where the former informed that

As a consequence of the present circumstances in Spain and in agreement with the persons who integrated the executive committee of the Spanish Football Federation, a new committee has been set up.³⁷

‘None of the members of this new committee was a member of the Spanish Federation’s old committee’, wrote Schricker in a memorandum sent to FIFA executive committee’s members concerning the events in Spain.³⁸ In fact, these men were totally unknown in the FIFA headquarters, and almost totally alien to Spanish football elite circles. The seizure had happened in the name of the leftist political coalition which had won the February 1936 general election, the Frente Popular, and the Federación Cultural Deportiva Obrera (Spanish communist-inspired workers sport organization)³⁹, whose president at that time, Juan José Vallejo, became one of the new vice-presidents of the FEF.⁴⁰ This meant that the most important ‘bourgeois’ sports federation in Spain had come to the hands of an organization explicitly opposed to ‘bourgeois sport’.

During the following months, the FEF stopped all sporting institutional activity and devoted all its energies and resources to the propaganda and war efforts. In late August 1936 the loyalist press informed about the setting up of a militia organized and funded by the federation, named Batallón José Suñol after the president of FC Barcelona and republican politician who was shot by the rebels in the early days of the war (later to be known as Batallón Deportivo).⁴¹ The members of this militia worn in their uniforms the badge of the FEF ‘so proudly sported by the international players [of the national team]’.⁴² In September 1936, the FEF donated 34.229,65 pesetas to a Spanish republican government’s special fundraiser aimed at financing the war effort.⁴³ Later this month, the new board decided to ‘cancel the season’s activity for all kind of official

competitions organized by this federation' at a national level, a situation which lasted for the rest of the war.⁴⁴ Shortly after, FEF's general secretary, Ricardo Cabot, acknowledged to a journalist: 'the National federation does not operate at present',⁴⁵ and later complained to Schricker about the 'series of hesitations by the [new] Spanish federation's committee' which had left him 'inactive for several months'.⁴⁶

This paralysis of all football-related activity lasted until mid-January 1937, when Cabot was summoned to Madrid by the new FEF authorities to discuss the future of the entity.⁴⁷ As a result of this meeting, Mengual sent Schricker a letter informing about the FEF decision to 'create a delegation (...) in Barcelona during the present circumstances that affect our country and regarding international relations (...) directed by our general secretary Mr. Cabot'⁴⁸. This is the last letter from Mengual kept in the FIFA archives.

Cabot wrote Schricker to confirm this appointment and the inscription of a Spanish team in the 1938 World Cup.⁴⁹ From that moment on, the FEF executive committee (minus Cabot) disappears both in the press of the time and in the FIFA archives. In fact, its two most prominent members, president Mengual and vice-president Vallejo, had enrolled in the Republican army in late 1936 and spend the whole war fighting in the fronts. We found no evidence of their continued involvement with the federation's affairs.⁵⁰ The loyalist FEF became embodied for the rest of the war in a single man: Ricardo Cabot. A further symptom of the republican FEF's paralysis is the fact that it failed to pay to FIFA the 1937 and 1938 yearly membership fee.⁵¹

The FIFA did of course notice these evident facts pointing at the highly uncertain and abnormal situation of the Spanish federation, as reflected in its *1937 Handbook*, were in

the section including the data of the affiliated national associations one can read: ‘Due to lack of exact information about the present situation in Spain only the data concerning championship and international matches as published in our Handbook 1935 are reproduced hereunder’.⁵² This note was included despite the fact that Schricker had wrote to Cabot asking for particulars about the situation of the FEF, that Cabot had attended the meeting of FIFA’s executive committee held in Paris in March 14, 1937, and that the Spaniard kept insisting in his correspondence that ‘the sporting situation of our federation is fully normal taking into account the circumstances’.⁵³ This indicates that FIFA deemed Cabot’s reports insufficient,⁵⁴ as expressed in the minutes of the March 1937 meeting of the executive committee, where Spain’s registration for the 1938 World Cup was discussed. In view of the existing uncertainties an ambiguous decision was taken at that meeting: that ‘the executive committee (...) [will] examine at a later stage’ its definitive status, which amounted to a suspension of the Spanish rights regarding the World Cup.⁵⁵

In this context, the loyalist press published in early March the first news about a Basque team being set up to play a series of games abroad aimed at raising funds for the Basque refugees, and awareness for the Basque cause.⁵⁶ ‘Almost a Spanish national team’, optimistically wrote *El Mundo Deportivo* in early April 1937.⁵⁷ Indeed, the recently created Basque autonomous government promoted the setting up of an ‘Equipo Euzkadi’, a selection of players most of them belonging to Athletic de Bilbao.⁵⁸ Although the FEF had had nothing to do with the initiative, Cabot cleared it and even put a word for it with president Rimet, ‘hoping that [the latter] (...) will grant it a good reception and all the available facilities’.⁵⁹

The Basque team arrived in Paris on April 25,⁶⁰ and soon became entangled in controversies derived from its intrinsically political mission: for instance, in mid May 1937 the Dutch Football Federation denied its permission for the Basque team to play against Dutch sides, which prompted direct démarches of the Basque government with FIFA.⁶¹ During the June 1937 meeting of the FIFA executive committee in Paris, Dutch representative, Karel Lotsy, raised the issue of the Basque team, which was playing abroad ‘with political propaganda purposes’. He justified the Dutch ban on grounds that, according to his interpretation, ‘the executive committee did not recognize the Spanish federation in its (...) [March] meeting’.⁶² These arguments, possibly coupled with the alarming antecedents discussed above and the news circulating about the Basque team being bound for an illegal (according to FIFA’s regulations) Russian tour, which indeed would start in mid-June, prompted the executive committee to issue an international blanket ban on Spanish teams:

The committee, in view of the lack of precise information on Spanish football and its federation, decides that, until further notice, matches with teams from Spain cannot be authorized.⁶³

The French and Belgian press immediately echoed this decision,⁶⁴ which apparently went unnoticed in Spain until almost three months later, despite Schricker having communicated it to Cabot in a letter dated the fourth of July.⁶⁵ The latter acknowledged receipt only in mid-August, in a letter where he announced the postponement of any official reaction to the ban and informed about him travelling to Valencia, where the Spanish republican government was provisionally based, presumably to get instructions concerning the issue.⁶⁶ One can safely guess that Cabot’s trip to Valencia prompted a

letter the president of the republican Consejo Nacional de Educación Física y Deporte, Álvaro Menéndez, sent to 'FIFA', informing about the recent creation of the Consejo and naively asking for details 'about international competitions taking place soon, about regulations (...) as well as letting us know about the current situation of the Spanish Football Federation vis-à-vis the International Federation'.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, the Francoists had decided to make an ambitious move in the until then neglected sports domain. Rieck posits that 'the international success of the Euzkadi team was obviously considered a problem for the Francoist propaganda',⁶⁸ and this prompted the decision to set up their own football federation to counter the republican sporting-diplomatic initiatives. The fact is that, shortly before the start of the Basque tour, all the clubs and regional federations sitting in the territories controlled by the rebels were summoned to a general assembly aimed at constituting a Francoist football federation which would substitute the republican one.⁶⁹ According to the rebel press, the new federation was the result of a personal decision by Franco.⁷⁰ The Francoist newspapers also leaked one of the main objectives of the initiative: 'The celebration of two football matches in Lisbon and Sevilla between the Portuguese and the Spanish national teams', which was in direct contradiction with the June 1937 FIFA ban.⁷¹ The foundational meeting took place in San Sebastián on June 12, 1937, where an executive committee was elected, chaired by Julián Troncoso, an officer in the Francoist army and head of the Basque-French borders supervision.⁷²

Direct news about the foundation of the Francoist federation arrived in Zurich only in mid-August, in the form of a letter from Troncoso to Rimet: 'We are honoured to inform you that, following article 18 of our Regulations, our federation's assembly met

in our village [San Sebastián]'.⁷³ The letter included the composition of the new board members. Schricker commented to its FIFA executive committee fellow members that 'none of the sirs mentioned in this letter used to be a member of the old Federation's executive committee'.⁷⁴ The political nature of the new federation's board was as obvious as the republican's.

The summer break also seemed to affect the republicans, as Cabot only reacted to the June ban in early September through a protestation letter where he deemed the ban 'not statutory enough' and discharged the republican FEF from any responsibility in the Soviet tour of the Basque team.⁷⁵ The head of the latter, Ricardo de Irezábal, also sent a letter to Schricker begging for the ban to be lifted in view of the matches the Basque team had contracted in Mexico for the Fall 1937.⁷⁶

Also much belatedly, in September the Spanish press of both sides eventually reported about the June ban, and did it in bitter terms. The republican newspapers denounced this 'degrading decision for the Spanish federation'⁷⁷ being the result of 'fascist manoeuvres', and the risk of FIFA's being seized by 'non-interventionist diplomacy'.⁷⁸ The Francoist press, more cautious (or more censored), complained about 'politics (...) [getting] mingled with sporting issues and (...) seizing such lofty entities as the FIFA'.⁷⁹ At the same time, though, both sides expressed satisfaction at the fact that the FIFA's ban thwarted its opponent's international plans.⁸⁰

At this point, Rimet's public reaction to the Spanish events was highly diplomatic and circumspect. In an interview published by a leftist French newspaper in early September 1937 he expressed discomfort at 'some of the decisions' of the republicans, like the

Basque tour in the URSS⁸¹ and the Spanish team sent to the Antwerp Workers' Games that summer. In view of this they had 'decided to wait and see until the end of the events that are devastating the Peninsula (...) For us, the FEF keeps existing and there are no reasons to stop (...) [our] rapport' with it. This relationship was kept alive through Cabot, 'whose signature is the best guarantee for us'.⁸² Rimet denied having received any official request from the Francoist federation and only acknowledged that the latter had sent him a letter informing about its creation. Asked about the stance of FIFA regarding a hypothetical membership petition by the new federation, Rimet was blunt: 'We will not grant membership, it cannot even be a matter of discussion by the committee. FIFA only recognizes one ruling federation per country'.⁸³ Concerning the possibility of a Francoist team playing international matches with the Italian or German national teams, he was also emphatic: 'No, that's impossible (...) One cannot be a slave of his ideas, whatever they are, when dealing with sport administration'.⁸⁴ A few days later Rimet insisted in his stance in a Belgian sports newspaper:

We have decided, since several months already, the sporting neutrality of Spain. FIFA has chosen to not permitting international matches between any of the two Spanish teams and those from other countries. We are waiting to get information about the current sporting situation in Spain in order to act and lift our ban.⁸⁵

What stands out of these statements, which are fully attuned with the June 1937 ban, is the FIFA's desire to wait and see, trying to prevent all Spanish international football activity until the end of the war. This decision, as seen above, met with strong criticism and opposition from both the Francoist and republican federations, as well as the representatives of the Basque team (which set sail to Mexico the 21st of October 1937)

and the regional government supporting it, all of which put pressure on the FIFA for the ban to be lifted. The stage was set for the crucial November 1937 decision.

November 1937: apparent recognition, effective suspension

The FIFA executive committee met in Paris on November 6 and 7, with the Spanish affair as one of the star points in the agenda. Schriker invited representatives of both Spanish federations to plea their case:⁸⁶ Cabot and FEF's representative in Paris, Joan Baptista Roca i Caball,⁸⁷ attended in the name of the republicans, while Genaro de la Riva and Luciano Urquijo heralded the Francoists. Both sides had sent beforehand, at Schriker's request, lengthy reports stressing their legitimacy and attacking the rival's, which Schriker distributed among FIFA executive committee's members.⁸⁸ During his hearing, Cabot denied any plans to set up a republican national team; in fact, he had clearly refused such a possibility in his report, where he stated that 'as long as Spain remains divided, no national competitions nor national team can exist'.⁸⁹ De la Riva and Urquijo expressed just the opposite: the new federation's goal to play international matches, and received the reproach by Rimet concerning its plans for a Spain-Portugal match for which no permission had as yet been sought from FIFA. After the hearings, Rimet summarized the situation and its take on the affair:

A cooperation between the two groups is impossible (...) Spain's internal situation does not matter to us; concerning the external situation, facts need to be recognized and permission needs to be granted for the two groups to play against FIFA members.⁹⁰

Giovanni Mauro supported the ban lift but proposed that matches played under the new permission 'shall never be considered international matches'.⁹¹ It is noteworthy that this proposal, which was eventually accepted, came from the representative of the Fascist Italian federation, whose national team was expected to play against the Francoist one. Only Seelldrayers expressed opposition at lifting the ban, but to no avail. Eventually,

the executive committee, taking into account the current situation, which does not allow for a single federation to effectively rule over football in the whole of the Spanish territory, decides on a provisional basis that the affiliated associations and their clubs will be able to play against clubs of both organisations ruling football in Spain and also against their combined teams, although the latter matches shall not be considered nor called international matches.⁹²

Not only the Francoist new federation had been invited to the FIFA executive committee's meeting as an equal to the republican one; another outcome of this meeting concerning Spain was that the executive committee transferred authority over the Basque team from the republican to the Francoist federation, on grounds that its players belonged to teams now under the latter's rule. Does this mean that the executive committee overturned Rimet's earlier determination concerning the new entity? The answer is, in our view, yes and not. That is, FIFA adopted an ambiguous decision which cannot be considered a victory of the Francoists over the republicans, but rather a disguised suspension of both sides.

The FIFA's decision was a recognition of the Francoist entity in the sense of *acknowledging* its sheer existence and the evident fact that it now ruled over a majority of Spanish clubs and regional federations. But this does not amount to membership or affiliation, which according to FIFA's statutes could only be granted by its congress, and was never awarded to the Francoist entity as a separate second federation for Spain. That is, the dual situation of Spanish football during the Civil War did not prompt a solution like the ones later adopted for divided countries like the two Chinas, the two Koreas, the two Vietnams and the two Germanies, where two separate federations were granted full membership (in an international context quite different to the one of the late thirties, indeed).⁹³ What FIFA did was acknowledging that the representativeness of Spanish football was split in two, and recognizing both sides as interlocutors. On the other hand, the June ban was only lifted *de facto*, not *de iure*, in the sense that from then onwards FIFA would tolerate international matches involving Spanish teams, but only under the condition of considering them unofficial. This was the case of the two matches played between the Portuguese national team and a Francoist combined one in late 1937 and early 1938, none of which feature in the official records of neither the FIFA, the Spanish nor the Portuguese federations.⁹⁴ Concerning the transfer of authority over the Basque team from the republicans to the Francoists, it can be interpreted as a move which furthered FIFA's policy on Spain, since the Francoists were determined to cancel the Basque team's tour, which fitted very well the international federation's desire to curb any international activity by Spanish teams during the war.

The outcome of the November 1937 FIFA meeting was an ostensibly solomonic one, as it satisfied both the republican/Basque and Francoist aspirations to be allowed to play against foreign teams, but at the same time *suspended* Spain's international activity at

an official level until further notice. The Belgian representative, Rodolphe Seeldrayers, expressed this very clearly to the press. Concerning the Francoist federation's request 'to be recognized by FIFA',

we deemed impossible to oblige; however, we must, as much as we can, allow for Spanish football to keep developing everywhere in the country. For the time being, therefore, none of the two Spanish groups will be entitled to represent Spain, and thus no match will be considered official. On the other hand, Spain's enrolment in the World Cup has been cancelled. Thus, for instance, San Sebastián's new Spanish federation has not been allowed to officialize the Portugal-Spain match to be played soon in Vigo.⁹⁵

Post-November 1937: the republicans fade away and FIFA disavows the Francoists

No letters from Cabot to Schricker subsequent to the November decision are kept in the FIFA archives. The former left a handwritten note in Schricker's Paris hotel just after the November meeting with a notorious tone of farewell: 'If, as I hope, the circumstances allow me to stay in my post as secretary of the Spanish Federation, even when it retrieves its integral unity, there will be future occasions where I can show you my sincere gratitude'.⁹⁶ The republican FEF, quite active until then thanks to Cabot, just faded away—forever.

During the following months, Schricker only exchanged with the Francoist federation, mostly concerning the issue of the Basque team. FIFA's general secretary played in this correspondence a diplomatic game for several months, acknowledging the Francoists

full authority over the Basque team and at the same time interceding on behalf of the Latin American federations interested in the continuation of the Basque team's tour.

On December 16, 1937 Santiago de la Riva wrote to Schricker expressing concern at the possibility that the Basque team would be extending its tour against the Francoists' will.⁹⁷ Schricker replied reassuring the San Sebastián federation: 'I am totally in agreement with your attitude of having categorically refused (...) permission to play' other matches with the Basque team.⁹⁸ Shortly after, though, Schricker tried to persuade the Francoists to allow for an extension of the Basque Team's American tour, and later for its affiliation to the Mexican federation, although he eventually bowed to the Francoists' categorical refusals.⁹⁹

This stance of granting authority over the Basque team to the Francoist federation was initially confirmed during the executive committee's meeting held in Paris on March 5-6, 1938, where Luciano Urquijo was heard concerning the case. He informed the FIFA members that 'the Basque team's players were suspended by the San Sebastián federation for an unspecified period', a suspension endorsed by the FIFA executive committee.¹⁰⁰ This resulted in the Basque team getting stuck in Argentina, where they had travelled from Cuba and arrived on February 25, 1938, but were 'unable to play and got a living out of charity matches, excommunicated by FIFA, resourceless and countryless'.¹⁰¹ This turned into a thorny affair for the international federation, which became wedged between the pressure it was getting from several South-American national federations for a continuation of the tour, and the uncompromising opposition of the Francoists.

Meanwhile, Schriker sent both Spanish federations an invitation to attend the June 3, 1938, FIFA congress to be held in Paris, but he stressed that these were invited as mere ‘observers’, a clear indication of the fact that FIFA considered Spanish football’s international rights as suspended¹⁰². We could find no trace of protestation over this decision by none of the rival entities.

Definitive proof of this came in September 1938, when FIFA simply overturned the Francoists’ suspension of the Basque players. The perfect excuse arrived thanks to a letter sent by Luciano Urquijo to Rimet the 7th of July¹⁰³, where the former proposed delegating to FIFA the task of communicating the denials of Spanish players’ international transfers (as dictated in San Sebastián) to the requesting national associations, for the sake of bureaucratic efficiency.¹⁰⁴ Thanks to a twisted interpretation of this suggestion which purposely ignored the Basque players’ suspension, Schriker was able to drop this bomb in the headquarters of the San Sebastián federation in mid-September 1938:

Concerning the letter you sent to Mr. Rimet on July 7, and on the basis of your kind suggestion concerning the changes of national association by players belonging to the Spanish federation, according to which, for the time being, the registration of Spanish players would be conducted through the FIFA secretariat, I take the liberty of informing you that the Comité d’Urgence has decided to lift the *sine die* suspension pronounced upon the players of the Basque team who are at present in America, on the condition that these players state, before four weeks, their affiliation to a FIFA-member association [the Mexican one for the

occurrence, which had requested permission to FIFA for this affiliation months ago].¹⁰⁵

Schricker hurried to communicate this decision to the FIFA delegate in Central America, the Mexican federation and the FIFA executive committee's members,¹⁰⁶ shortly before the backlash from San Sebastián arrived in the form of this angry telegram: 'Concerning decision cancelling suspension Basque team we strongly protest decision disdaining our federation expect urgently getting complete references as your wrong interpretation (...) cannot be accepted'.¹⁰⁷

The general secretary resorted again to his diplomatic talents, sending shortly after two separate letters the same day: an 'official', sober and circumspect one, to 'Federación Española, San Sebastián', insisting in the FIFA's skewed interpretation of the July letter to Rimet; and another, labelled 'personal', to Luciano Urquijo, which contains the keys to understand FIFA's disavowal of the San Sebastián federation's suspension of the Basque players:

It would have been almost impossible in this particular case to sustain a perpetual suspension only based in the Basque players' refusal to return to their homeland during the present circumstances (...) We are utterly sure that this measure (...) will contribute to put an end to this situation and to dissipate the appearance that this team is a particular victim of FIFA's severity.¹⁰⁸

After their initial hot reaction, the Francoist federation adopted a lower profile, as it took them more than three months and a half to send a lengthy reply justifying its stance

and asking for a reversion of the September 1938 decision.¹⁰⁹ Schricker wrote back informing that this would be a matter of discussion in the executive committee's meeting to be held later in the year.¹¹⁰ In view of the state of hostilities in Spanish soil, both the San Sebastián federation and FIFA were dragging their feet over the issue, as the rapidly approaching victory of the rebels made irrelevant for the latter whatever continued activity of the Equipo Euzkadi. On the other hand, with the Basques now included as just another team in the Mexican league for the 1938-39 season, the political nature of its international tour just faded away.¹¹¹ Its disbanding in August 1939 would put an end of the issue.¹¹²

The FIFA executive committee met in Paris on July 3, 1939, ten months after the entity's Comité d'Urgence had lifted the ban to the Basque team and once the Civil War was over. The Francoist federation, by then the only existing one, had meanwhile moved to Madrid, and its president, Julián Troncoso, declined the invitation to attend due to agenda issues and asked for the discussion over the Basque team affair to be postponed, which FIFA executive committee accepted.¹¹³ On July 24, the Francoist federation renewed its executive committee, keeping Troncoso as president, and informed Schricker about the changes.¹¹⁴ The latter attentively replied that he had no doubt that 'the best relations will keep reigning between your honourable federation and FIFA'.¹¹⁵ Fluent correspondence followed between both sides, and in early October 1939 Schricker announced the full restoration of the Spanish rights and duties inside the international football community, which implies that until then the FIFA had considered these rights suspended:

Taking into account that the Spanish Football Federation has officially resumed its sporting activity inside FIFA's national associations, of which all member associations have been informed by this secretariat, I take the liberty of begging you to settle at your convenience the yearly fee of 260 Swiss francs. Your federation's last fee was paid in and for the year 1936, but, needless to say, in view of the exceptional situation of your country after the summer of 1936, the 1937 and 1938 fees have been waived.¹¹⁶

Further proof of the Francoist federation's 'normalization' inside FIFA is the inclusion, in the Supplement to the Handbook 1937 published in January 1940, of the former's address in Madrid: 'Calle San Agustín 3'. The friendly match a Spanish national team played against Portugal on January 12, 1941, was considered official by FIFA, as were the other seven matches Spain played during WWII.

Conclusion

Our interpretation of the facts examined above does not support the double contention, broadly shared in the reviewed historiography, that the Francoist football federation set up in June 1937 won to the republican one the battle for international recognition during the Civil War, and that this happened thanks to some sort of connivence by a conservative, even fascistoid FIFA governing body.

On the contrary, the international federation's executive committee was dominated in the late thirties and early forties by a liberal, cosmopolitan elite led by president Rimet and general secretary Schricker, unyielding with Nazi-fascism, and above all zealous of the organization's political independence, which was ultimately preserved in the most

averse of contexts thanks to a strategy based in a pragmatic stance of ‘political neutrality’.

The decisions on Spanish football taken by FIFA during the Civil War amount to a suspension of both sides in contention, rather than to a recognition of the Francoists to the detriment of the republicans. As early as June 1937, FIFA had decided to suspend all international activity by Spanish teams, prompted by the uncertainties surrounding the republican federation after its seizure by representatives of the rival workers sports movement (including serious concern about the personal fate of president García Durán), as well as the unmistakable political nature of the Basque team’s international tour started in May 1937, which included multiple matches against non-FIFA affiliated Soviet teams.

By that time the Francoists had started a separate federation in San Sebastián aimed at countering the republican international football diplomacy by trying to reel back the Basque team and by playing matches with combined teams from allied countries. Confronted with multiple pressures coming from the republican federation, the Basque regional government, Latin American federations involved in the Basque team’s American tour and the newborn Francoist federation, FIFA eventually adopted an ambiguous decision in November 1937, whose implementation was facilitated by the subsequent withdrawal from contention of the republicans: on the one hand, it *de facto* lifted the international ban on Spanish teams and acknowledged the Francoists as interlocutors (without affiliating the San Sebastián federation as a new FIFA member, though); on the other, it kept a *de iure* ban on matches by Spanish combined teams, which would not be considered official.

Further confirming our interpretation that FIFA decisions amounted to a suspension of Spanish football until the end of the war, the entity invited both Spanish federations to its 1938 congress as mere observers; it waived 1937 and 1938 Spain's yearly membership fee, and, after initially granting authority to the Francoists over the Basque team (presumably in order to further FIFA's desire of curbing or cancelling the latter's controversial international tour), it disavowed the San Sebastián federation's suspension over the Basque players and set these free in September 1938.

Our interpretation of FIFA's handling of the Spanish dossier during the Civil War is therefore fully attuned with Vonnard and Quin's contention that the international federation decided

to not actually choosing sides and waited until the end of the internal conflict to accept (...) the new [Francoist] Spanish federation (...) For a while, the international federation even considered accepting both federations. Although hesitations existed, what seems clear is the will of the FIFA's executive committee to not pick one side rather than the other.¹¹⁷

Rimet's and Schricker's diplomatic talents allowed for the FIFA to skilfully dribble the thorny Spanish dossier, before getting into much deeper waters after September 1939.

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² The archival search in Zurich was conducted in early December 2022, much facilitated by the courteous and highly professional assistance by FIFA staff members Michael Schmalholz and Silvano Berti, to whom the author remains much obliged.

³ Domínguez and Pujadas, 'Estadios y trincheras', 199.

⁴ Viuda-Serrano and Ibarrondo-Merino, 'Doomed Youth'; other works sharing the same perspective: Pujadas, 'Les combats du sport républicain'; Pujadas, 'Entre estadios y trincheras'; Castro Montes, 'Ambassadeurs op het sportfront'.

⁵ Eisenberg et al., *FIFA 1904-2004. Un siglo de fútbol*, 277. All translations to English in this article by the author.

⁶ Rieck, 'Football as Alternative Diplomacy', 242.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁸ Martínez Calatrava, *Historia y estadística del fútbol español*, 660; Olmo, 'Asamblea de la FIFA de noviembre de 1937'; Franco, '1937, dos federaciones españolas de fútbol'.

⁹ Martialay, *El fútbol en la guerra. Vol. III*; Fernández Santander, *El fútbol durante la guerra civil y el franquismo*, 36.

¹⁰ Pujadas, 'Les combats du sport républicain'.

¹¹ Rieck, 'Football as Alternative Diplomacy', 242.

¹² Castro Montes, 'Ambassadeurs op het sportfront', 653.

¹³ See, for instance, 'El deber mínimo de las federaciones deportivas españolas, adscritas a las internacionales', *El Mundo Deportivo*, January 9, 1937, 1; J. Torrens, 'España y la próxima copa del

mundo. ¿Hubo también “maniobra” fascista en el comité de la FIFA para dejar en suspenso la inscripción remitida por la F. Española?’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, March 26, 1937, 1; ‘La prohibición se levanta y todo el fútbol español puede jugar con quien quiera’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, November 17, 1937, 1.

¹⁴ Letter from José Antonio Aguirre to Manuel de Irujo, 16-9-1937. Archivo Histórico del Gobierno Vasco. Fondo del Departamento de Presidencia. Correspondencia mantenida, entre el 14 de julio y el 11 de octubre de 1937, por José Antonio Aguirre con Manuel de Irujo.

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¹⁵ ‘Ante el partido del 21 en Vigo. Declaraciones de Genaro de la Riva, directivo de la Nacional’, *La Voz de España*, November 13, 1937, 9.

¹⁶ ‘El presidente de la FIFA M. Jules Rimet’, *El Ideal Gallego*, November 13, 1937, 2.

¹⁷ Vonnard and Quin, ‘Promouvoir et jouer au football pendant la guerre’, 333.

¹⁸ Lanotte, ‘1934: gli stadi della vittoria’; Miletto, ‘Invasione di campo’; Impiglia, ‘Der Fußball in Rom’.

¹⁹ Vonnard, ‘Reorganising European Football’.

²⁰ Vonnard and Quin consider Seeldrayers as ‘probably the most influential’ member of the FIFA executive committee (‘Promouvoir et jouer au football pendant la guerre’, 314). The international federation’s ‘comité d’urgence’ in the late thirties and early forties included Rimet, Mauro, Seeldrayers and Schricker, to whom Bauwens joined at the beginning of WWII (ibid., 320).

²¹ Vonnard and Quin, ‘Promouvoir et jouer au football pendant la guerre’, 316.

²² Quin and Vonnard, ‘La présidence inamovible du football’; Goksøyr, ‘The Rings and the Swastika’; Eisenberg, ‘From Political Ignorance to Global Responsibility’. Tomlinson, ‘FIFA and the Men who Made it’.

²³ Tomlinson, ‘FIFA and the Men who Made it’, 55.

²⁴ Eisenberg, ‘From Political Ignorance to Global Responsibility’; Wahlig, ‘Dr. Ivo Schricker’; Vonnard and Quin, ‘Promouvoir et jouer au football pendant la guerre’; Quin and Vonnard, ‘Switzerland – a stronghold in European football’.

²⁵ Carpentier, ‘Le conflit entre le CIO et la FIFA’, 26.

²⁶ Eisenberg, ‘From Political Ignorance to Global Responsibility’, 387.

²⁷ Tomlinson, ‘FIFA and the men who made it’.

²⁸ Vonnard and Quin, ‘Jules Rimet: FIFA’s Missionary President’.

²⁹ Vonnard and Quin, ‘Promouvoir et jouer au football pendant la guerre’.

³⁰ Letter from Cabot to Schricker, July 9, 1936; letter from Schricker to Cabot, July 13, 1936. All letters cited in this article, unless otherwise stated, are kept and were consulted by the author in the FIFA archives, Zurich, December 2022.

³¹ Cabot mentioned in several letters sent to Schricker in 1937 that he had met García Durán in Madrid and that the latter was fine. See, for instance, letter from Cabot to Schricker, February 17, 1937. Schricker complained to Cabot about the lack of direct news from García Durán (letter from Schricker to Cabot, February 23, 1937). According to Martialay, García Durán hid during the first months of the war to escape persecution and fled Madrid at some point during the war, reappearing in the Francoist side in late March 1938 (Martialay, *El fútbol en la guerra. Vol. III*). He was appointed a member of the Francoist Federation in 1946 and held other relevant positions under the Franco regime. Letter from Schricker to García Durán, June 12, 1946; ‘Necrológicas. Don Leopoldo García Durán’, *ABC*, April 19, 1966, 86.

³² Letter from Schricker to Cabot, April 21, 1937: ‘I certainly hope you will send me a very detailed report in case you have met Mr. Duran’. Letter from Schricker to Cabot, August 27, 1937: ‘I am very pleased to hear that Mr. Duran is fine’.

³³ ‘Ha fallecido el doctor Oliver Pascual’, *ABC*, December 24, 1968, 59. The pre-war coach of the Spanish national team, Amadeo García Salazar, also sided by the rebels and coached the Francoist team which played against Portugal in November 1937 and January 1938.

³⁴ Camps and Monclús, *Joan Baptista Roca i Caball*.

³⁵ Aragón, ‘El renacimiento de un COE con acento barcelonés’; Pi-Sunyer i Bayo, *Del vell i del nou món*.

³⁶ Corcuera, ‘Dirigentes del fútbol caídos en la Guerra Civil’; García Candau, *El deporte en la guerra civil*; ‘Don Gonzalo Aguirre y Martos’, *ABC*, October 31, 1939, 12.

³⁷ Letter from Mengual to Schricker, August 8, 1936. Composition of the new board: José María Mengual Febrero (president), Juan José Vallejo (vice-president) Francisco Hernández Coronado (vice-president), Cristino Lorenzo Martínez (vice-president), Ángel Rodríguez García (treasurer). The letter did not mention Ricardo Cabot as general secretary, although in early January 1937 he was confirmed in this position and officially charged with FEF’s international relations (see below).

³⁸ Memorandum 1937/41 of September 9 from Ivo Schricker to the members of the FIFA executive Committee, FIFA archives.

³⁹ ‘La federación española tiene nuevo Consejo Ejecutivo interino. Nombrado por la Federación Cultural Deportiva Obrera y el Frente Popular’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, August 12, 1936, 1; letter from José María Mengual to the president of the Biscay Federation, August 8, 1937. Further information on the FCDO can be found in Gounot, ‘El proyecto de la olimpiada popular de Barcelona (1936)’, and De Luis, *Historia del deporte obrero en España*.

⁴⁰ Nieva Expósito, ‘El presidente del Real Madrid más ignorado’. Vallejo also led the seizure of the Castilian Football Federation and Madrid CF (present-day Real Madrid). ‘La reorganización del fútbol madrileño. El Club Madrid FC, dirigido por entusiastas elementos del Frente Popular’, *El Sol*, August 6, 1936, 2.

⁴¹ The Batallón Deporivo was based in the headquarters of the seized Madrid CF. ‘Milicianos deportistas. El batallón José Suñol ha formado su primera compañía’, *La Voz*, August 27, 1936, 3; ‘Milicias populares. Glorioso batallón deportivo’, *El Liberal*, January 1, 1937, 2; ‘Los deportistas en el frente. El glorioso Batallón Deportivo de Madrid’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, January 3, 1937, 3.

⁴² ‘Comentando el momento deportivo’, *Crónica*, September 27, 1936, 21.

⁴³ *Gaceta de Madrid*, 259, September 15, 1936, 1818-1819.

⁴⁴ Regional competitions were allowed ‘under (...) [the regional federations] exclusive responsibility’.

‘Se suspende la temporada oficial de la F. Española’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, October 4, 1936, 1.

⁴⁵ ‘Parece en principio descartada la participación del “Madrid” en el campeonato’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, October 21, 1936, 1.

⁴⁶ Letter from Cabot to Schricker, February 17, 1937.

⁴⁷ ‘Viendo el amistoso Barcelona-Español y ante el comienzo de la Liga Oficial Levante-Cataluña’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, January 18, 1937.

⁴⁸ Letter from Mengual to Schricker, January 25, 1937.

⁴⁹ Letter from Cabot to Schricker, February 17, 1937; ‘Todo en el posible orden. La Federación Española mantiene el contacto internacional. España inscrita para la III Copa del Mundo’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, February 12, 1937, 1.

⁵⁰ Concerning Mengual, see *Diario Oficial del Ministerio de Defensa Nacional*, May 3, 1938, 383.

Vallejo’s military career is summarized in Nieva Expósito, ‘El presidente del Real Madrid más ignorado’. Both survived the war.

⁵¹ Letter from Cabot to Schricker, May 6, 1937.

⁵² FIFA, *FIFA Handbook 1937*, 276.

⁵³ Letter from Cabot to Schricker, April 10, 1937.

⁵⁴ Letter from Schricker to Cabot, February 9, 1937.

⁵⁵ Minutes of the FIFA executive committee’s meeting held in Paris, March 14, 1937, FIFA archives.

⁵⁶ Estomba, *Competir en años convulsos*.

⁵⁷ ‘Fútbol. Tournée de refugiados. Casi una selección nacional española... con once internacionales, de jira [sic] por Europa’. *El Mundo Deportivo*, April 3, 1937, 1.

⁵⁸ Estomba, ‘El equipo Euzkadi’; Estomba, *Competir en años convulsos*; Navarro, ‘Escaramuzas españolas en el fútbol mexicano’.

⁵⁹ Letter from Cabot to Rimet, April 6, 1937.

⁶⁰ ‘Les footballeurs basques arrivent ce matin à Paris’. *L’Auto*, April 25, 1937, 6.

⁶¹ Letters from Pedro Vallano, president of the Basque government’s ‘Sports Commission’, to Schricker and to Karel Lotsy, president of the Dutch federation, May 21, 1937.

⁶² Minutes of the FIFA executive committee’s meeting held in Paris, June 19, 1937, FIFA archives.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ ‘Le comité exécutif de la FIFA s’est réuni à Amsterdam’, *L’Auto*, June 20, 1937, 6; ‘Pas de rencontres avec les Espagnols’, *Le Vingtième Siècle*, June 21, 1937, 5.

⁶⁵ Letter from Schricker to Cabot, July 4, 1937.

⁶⁶ Letter from Cabot to Schricker, August 17, 1937.

⁶⁷ Letter from Menéndez to FIFA, August 25, 1937.

⁶⁸ Rieck, ‘Football as alternative diplomacy’, 236.

⁶⁹ ‘En la próxima asamblea de clubs de fútbol se elegirá el nuevo comité de la Federación Española’, *ABC* (Sevilla edition), May 21, 1937, 16.

⁷⁰ Pepe Atocha, ‘Nota del día. Hacia la normalidad’, *La Voz de España*, May 6, 1937, 9; ‘El partido Portugal España. Declaraciones del vicepresidente de la Federación Nacional de Fútbol’, *El Adelanto*, October 21, 1937.

⁷¹ Pepe Atocha, ‘Nota del día. Próximos acontecimientos’, *La Voz de España*, May 16, 1937, 9.

⁷² ‘Notas deportivas’, *La Voz de España*, June 16, 1937, 8.

⁷³ Letter from Julián Troncoso to Rimet, 13 August 1937.

- ⁷⁴ Memorandum 41/1937 of September 9, 1937, from Schricker to the FIFA's executive committee members, FIFA archives.
- ⁷⁵ Letter from Cabot to Schricker, September 6, 1937.
- ⁷⁶ Letter from Ricardo de Irezábal, head of the Basque team, to Schricker, September 17, 1937.
- ⁷⁷ 'Una "Federación Española" facciosa improvisada en San Sebastián'. *El Mundo Deportivo*, September 20, 1937, 1.
- ⁷⁸ 'También el fútbol víctima de manejos fascistas', *La Vanguardia*, September 14, 1937, 2. See also '¿La FIFA reconoce beligerancia a Franco?', *El Mundo Deportivo*, September 13, 1937, 1; 'Una "Federación Española" facciosa improvisada en San Sebastián', *El Mundo Deportivo*, September 20, 1937, 1.
- ⁷⁹ 'La FIFA y España', *La Voz de España*, September 18, 1937, 9.
- ⁸⁰ 'El "fascismo" de la FIFA', *El Diario Vasco*, September 26, 1937, 4; 'Un resto de pudor. La FIFA rechaza a la Federación Española facciosa', *El Mundo Deportivo*, October 7, 1937, 1.
- ⁸¹ From mid-June to mid-August 1937. Estomba, 'El equipo Euzkadi'.
- ⁸² 'L'Espagne 'nationaliste' dans le football européen? Non! Répond M. Rimet président de la FIFA', *Ce Soir*, September 8, 1937, 4.
- ⁸³ Ibid.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid. Other French newspapers echoed Rimet's stance. For instance, the conservative *Le Figaro* reported that FIFA 'only recognizes one federation, the old one'. 'La deuxième équipe d'Espagne', *Le Figaro*, September 16, 1937, 8.
- ⁸⁵ 'La situation espagnole ou la Fédération divisée!', *Les Sports*, September 17, 1937, 4.
- ⁸⁶ Letter from Schricker to Cabot, October 6, 1937. No equivalent letter to the Francoist federation's representatives has been found in the FIFA archives.
- ⁸⁷ Letter from Cabot to Schricker, October 12, 1937.
- ⁸⁸ Minutes of the FIFA executive committee's meeting held on November 6 and 7 in Paris, FIFA archives.
- ⁸⁹ 'Rapport confidentiel pour les membres du comité exécutif de la FIFA au sujet de la Fédération Espagnole de Football', FIFA archives.
- ⁹⁰ Minutes of the FIFA executive committee's meeting held on November 6 and 7 in Paris, FIFA archives.
- ⁹¹ Ibid.
- ⁹² Ibid.
- ⁹³ Homburg, 'FIFA and the "Chinese Question"'.
⁹⁴ Relaño, Alfredo, "Los fascistas consiguen que por fin perdamos contra Portugal", *El País*, June 6, 2021. elpais.com/deportes/2021-06-06/los-fascistas-consiguen-que-por-fin-perdamos-contra-portugal.html (accessed December 2022).
- ⁹⁵ A. Collignon fils, 'En bavardand avec Mr. Seeldrayers vice-président de la FIFA', *Les Sports*, November 11, 1937.
- ⁹⁶ Handwritten note from Cabot to Schricker, November 11, 1937. Cabot was reinstated as general secretary of the Francoist federation in 1946 and both men could resume their professional relationship until their retirement in the early 1950s (letter from Cabot to Schricker, May 27, 1946; letter from Schricker to Cabot, June 12, 1946).
- ⁹⁷ Letter from Santiago de la Riva to Schricker, December 16, 1937. During the November 1937 meeting, the Francoist delegates had agreed to grant the Basque team permission to play four matches in Mexico to allow them to earn enough to pay their way back to Spain.
- ⁹⁸ Letter from Schricker to Federación Española de Fútbol, December 27, 1937.
- ⁹⁹ Letter from Schricker to Federación Española, San Sebastián, January 5, 1938; letter from Schricker to Federación Española, San Sebastián, February 12, 1938; telegram from Federación Española, San Sebastián, to Schricker, February 13, 1938; letters from Schricker to Federación Española, San Sebastián, February 18 and 25, 1938; letter from Schricker to Federación Española, San Sebastián, March 12, 1938.
- ¹⁰⁰ Minutes of the meeting of the FIFA executive committee held in Paris on March 5 and 6, 1938, FIFA archives.
- ¹⁰¹ Estomba, 'El equipo Euzkadi'; 'En Argentina. Una odisea de los vascos', *El Mundo Deportivo*, May 2, 1938, 1. The Basque team returned to Mexico in early June, still unable to play. 'Los vascos por el mundo', *El Mundo Deportivo*, June 13, 1938, 1.
- ¹⁰² Letters from Schricker to Federación Española, Barcelona, and Federación Española, San Sebastián, March 12, 1938. Schricker made a point to insist about the fact that both entities had been invited only as 'observers' in the letters he sent to Cabot and to the San Sebastián federation on May 11, 1938.
- ¹⁰³ Rimet's correspondence is not kept in the FIFA archives.
- ¹⁰⁴ This denial had been communicated through the letter from Santiago de la Riva to Schricker, June 8, 1938.

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- ¹⁰⁵ Letter from Schricker to the San Sebastián federation, September 13, 1938.
- ¹⁰⁶ Memorandum from Schricker to the FIFA executive committee's members, September 19, 1938, FIFA archives.
- ¹⁰⁷ Telegram sent by the San Sebastián federation to FIFA, October 4, 1938.
- ¹⁰⁸ Letter from Schricker to Luciano Urquiyo, October 11, 1938.
- ¹⁰⁹ Letter from Juan Antonio Sánchez Ocaña, new general secretary of the San Sebastián Federation, to FIFA's executive committee, January 23, 1939.
- ¹¹⁰ Letter from Schricker to Sánchez Ocaña, February 7, 1939.
- ¹¹¹ Navarro, 'Fútbol y españoles en la ciudad de México'.
- ¹¹² Estomba, 'El equipo Euzkadi'.
- ¹¹³ Telegram from Julián Troncoso to Schricker, July 1, 1939; letter from Schricker to Sánchez Ocaña, July 10, 1939.
- ¹¹⁴ Letter from Troncoso to FIFA, July 29, 1939.
- ¹¹⁵ Letter from Schricker to Troncoso, August 8, 1939.
- ¹¹⁶ Letter from Schricker to Sánchez Ocaña, October 3, 1939.
- ¹¹⁷ Vonnard and Quin, 'Promouvoir et jouer au football pendant la guerre', 316.