

# CHAPTER ONE

## African Soccerscapes

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how a Continent Changed the World's Game

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MAP 1 Colonial Africa, 1914. Map by Claudia K. Walters. Source: <http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/images/colonialism1914.jpg>.



MAP 2 Contemporary Africa and major cities. Map by Claudia K. Walters. Source:  
<http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/images/capitals.jpg>.

# CHAPTER ONE

Ch A pter one

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## “The White Man’s Burden”

*Football and Empire, 1860s–1919*

Modern Sports start with European imperial expansion in the last two centuries. The agents of that imperialism played sports among themselves, but also saw sport as a tool of civilization. For example, British soldiers, sailors, traders, and government employees enjoyed football for their own entertainment, but they also saw it as pivotal in the European “civilizing mission” in Africa. Building on their experiences with youth and urban workers in industrial Britain, teachers and missionaries used this inexpensive, easy-to-learn fun to satisfy “the white man’s burden.” This expression, taken from Rudyard Kipling’s famous formulation, meant teaching African converts and colonial subjects about the virtues of Christianity, capitalist commerce, and Western civilization. In this opening chapter, I intend to show how the game of football arrived in Africa in the late nineteenth century through the major port cities and then began to spread into the interior by the 1920s by means of newly laid railway lines, Western-style schools run mainly by missionaries, and the colonial armed forces.

Africans, of course, had their own sports, but these activities were little esteemed by their new imperial masters. Sports such as wrestling, martial arts, footraces, canoe racing, and competitive dancing offer compelling evidence of how agrarian African societies embraced *Sportgeist*—the spirit of sport.<sup>1</sup> As the historians William Baker and Tony Mangan explain: “Through-out pre-colonial Africa . . . dances and games were long performed with a seriousness akin to sport in modern industrial societies, and for purposes not altogether different: the striving for status, the assertion of identity, the

maintenance of power in one form or another, and the indoctrination of youth into the culture of their elders.”<sup>2</sup> Indigenous sports were spectacles of fitness and physical prowess, technical and tactical expertise. Major competitions were community festivals with their rituals of spectatorship, including oral literary performances of bards (griots) and praise singers in honor of the athletes. Clearly, precolonial athletic traditions had much in common with Western sport. As such, they provided the “soil into which the seeds of [European] sport would be later planted.”<sup>3</sup>

Not surprisingly, the first recorded football matches come from South Africa, where Europeans began settling nearly four centuries ago. The games involved whites in the Cape and Natal colonies. The record of this European sport seems to begin in 1862, when games between teams of soldiers and civil servants, between “home-born” (i.e., British) and “colonial-born” (i.e., South African) whites, were played at Donkin Reserve in Port Elizabeth and on the Green Point racecourse in Cape Town.<sup>4</sup> In 1866, “city” and “garrison” sides played in the Market Square in Pietermaritzburg, the capital of Natal colony. These early rough-and-tumble games featured elements of both rugby and soccer, which was not unusual because different forms of the game existed before the rules of association football were codified on October 26, 1863, in London. Devotees of the kicking game were soon referred to as “soccers” (an abbreviation of “assoc”), as opposed to “ruggers,” who played the handling game of rugby, the rules of which were devised in 1871.<sup>5</sup>

The influx of working-class British soldiers into southern Africa during colonial military campaigns against the Zulu state and the Afrikaners (mainly descendants of the Dutch and also known as Boers) inspired the founding of the first official football organizations in Africa. Pietermaritzburg County Football Club and Natal Wasps FC were formed around 1880 and the Natal Football Association in 1882. The whites-only South African Football Association (SAFA), founded in 1892, was the first national governing body on the continent. SAFA became the first member of FIFA on the continent in 1910.<sup>6</sup> Despite its colonial origins, soccer in South Africa by the 1920s would be increasingly perceived as a blue-collar, black sport, while rugby, cricket, and other middle-class sports such as tennis and golf became intimately linked to white power and identities.

### Looking around the Continent

In other parts of the continent, football’s early history was also connected to expatriate European colonizers. Between 1894 and 1897, for example,

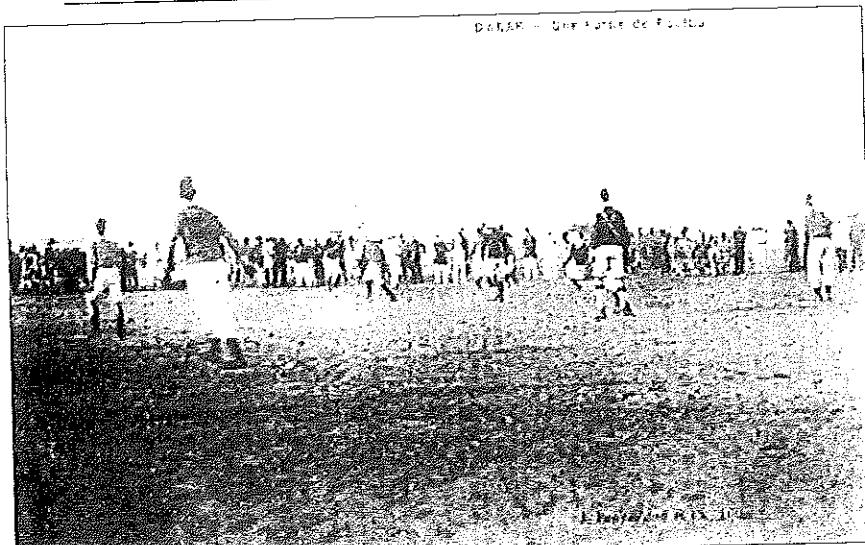


FIGURE 1 "Dakar—a Football Match," c. 1919 (*Alegi collection*)

French settlers in Oran (Algeria) channeled their sporting passion into the formal creation of a football club.<sup>7</sup> In Tunis there was enough interest in the game by 1906 to warrant the formation of Racing Club. The following year in Cairo saw the formation of Al Ahly, which initially included some Europeans but would become an all-Egyptian club in 1924—and a venue for anticolonial protest, as we will see. By 1913, French and other Europeans were playing regular matches in Dakar and Brazzaville, the capitals of French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa, respectively.<sup>8</sup>

The game was on an even firmer footing in the Belgian Congo, where a whites-only Ligue de Football du Katanga began in May 1911 in the copper-mining town of Élisabethville (today Lubumbashi).<sup>9</sup> Since only four teams competed in the 1925 B. Smith Cup—the Katanga championship—white football was limited in scope. In Léopoldville (Kinshasa), the capital, matches were taking place around 1912. By 1919–20, a formal association existed that later assumed the name Fédération de Football Association du Pool and affiliated with the Belgian football association in 1927. Much like colonists in other parts of Africa, the French, Flemish, Portuguese, and British in the Congo organized teams along the lines of European nationality. In the 1920s, a new championship against Brazzaville teams energized local football, which by this time had started to attract small sponsorships from private firms.

### Africans take hold of the ball

The shared patriarchal assumptions of European and African cultures curtailed sporting opportunities for African women. Colonial racism also underpinned practices of domination and exclusion in African football and society. In the Congo, for instance, white teams enjoyed access to adequate playing facilities built with African taxes, a privilege not afforded to colonial subjects. Furthermore, racial segregation reigned at the grounds. Europeans occupied the more expensive and comfortable grandstand seats, while ordinary Congolese paid to stand around the pitch. Passions ran high in white football, with reports of violent incidents on and off the pitch appearing quite frequently in the records. Despite these trying conditions, African fans enjoyed watching different styles of play on display. They even assigned top white players nicknames, tangible proof of Africans' passion and active involvement in the sport through spectatorship.

The evidence from Francophone Africa was less unified. While the British rapidly introduced modern sport to sub-Saharan Africa after conquest, the French, along with the Belgians, Portuguese, and Italians, were considerably slower.<sup>10</sup> Two factors are relevant here. First, during the scramble for Africa and immediately after conquest, most European countries lacked a sporting culture comparable to that of Britain. A second consideration is that many Europeans "were less certain than their British rivals that modern sports created moral fiber along with muscle mass."<sup>11</sup>

These factors partly explain why in Francophone Africa few provisions were made for team sports before the Second World War. The focus, particularly in French territories, was more on expanding physical education programs in the schools, a policy made compulsory in 1923 in French West Africa.<sup>12</sup> Students at elite institutions like the École Normale William Ponty in Dakar, Senegal, which opened in 1918, played football and other games, but it was only in the 1930s and 1940s that French colonial administrators began to connect sport more explicitly to their self-ascribed *mission civilisatrice*.<sup>13</sup> Similar changes occurred in the Belgian Congo in the 1930s and 1940s, although the influence of the Catholic Church was stronger than in French-ruled territories due to the less rigid division between church and state. The Catholic rendition of muscular Christianity, encapsulated by the Latin phrase *mens sana in corpore sano* (a healthy mind in a healthy body), found a receptive audience among the Belgian authorities. As a result, in Léopoldville and Élisabethville, sports like football would gain favor

as a way “to provide civilized black youth with healthy distractions and to complete their physical and moral education at the school of discipline and endurance that the practice of sport entails.”<sup>14</sup>

In general, the arrival of football in Africa paralleled the global pattern of the game’s diffusion. It precisely followed the assertion of British commercial and imperial power. It was, of course, no accident that expatriates and local men played football in the major port cities of Barcelona, Genoa, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Cape Town, and Calcutta. These ports were important nodes in an increasingly connected world economy based on Western extraction of cheaply produced African, Asian, and American crops and precious metals and their conversion into manufactured goods for sale in international markets.

The importance of African coastal trading towns extended beyond the earliest areas of settlement such as South Africa and Algeria. In West Africa, for instance, British sailors are credited with making Cape Coast the birthplace of the game in the Gold Coast (the colonial name for what would become Ghana). At the turn of the twentieth century, Cape Coast was the colonial capital and thus “was home to a large number of British nationals and other European civil servants and company officials,” many of whom liked to play football in their free time.<sup>15</sup>

In Nigeria as well, the game arrived first in the port towns of Calabar in the east and Lagos in the west. Historian Wiebe Boer discovered that the first documented match in Nigeria was played on June 15, 1904, at the Hope Waddell Training Institution in Calabar, an elite school described in more detail below.<sup>16</sup> Hope Waddell students and staff members took the field against sailors from the HMS *Thistle*, which was docked in the harbor. Thanks in large part to Hope Waddell, the popularity of football grew rapidly in Calabar. The Beverley Cup, possibly the first organized soccer tournament in West Africa, was held there in 1906. In Lagos, Frederick Mulford, a British commercial agent, was instrumental in the game’s initial diffusion. He organized matches on the racecourse between teams of European traders, soldiers, and civil servants. But Mulford also invited Nigerian teams to play, and he even coached local school teams. Nigerian football enthusiasts referred to him as “Baba Eko,” meaning “Our Father” in the Yoruba language. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Nigeria’s first president (see chapter 3), provided a glimpse into how the British game was finding its way into the everyday lives of Africans around the time of the First World War. “We played football there with mango seeds, limes or oranges or old

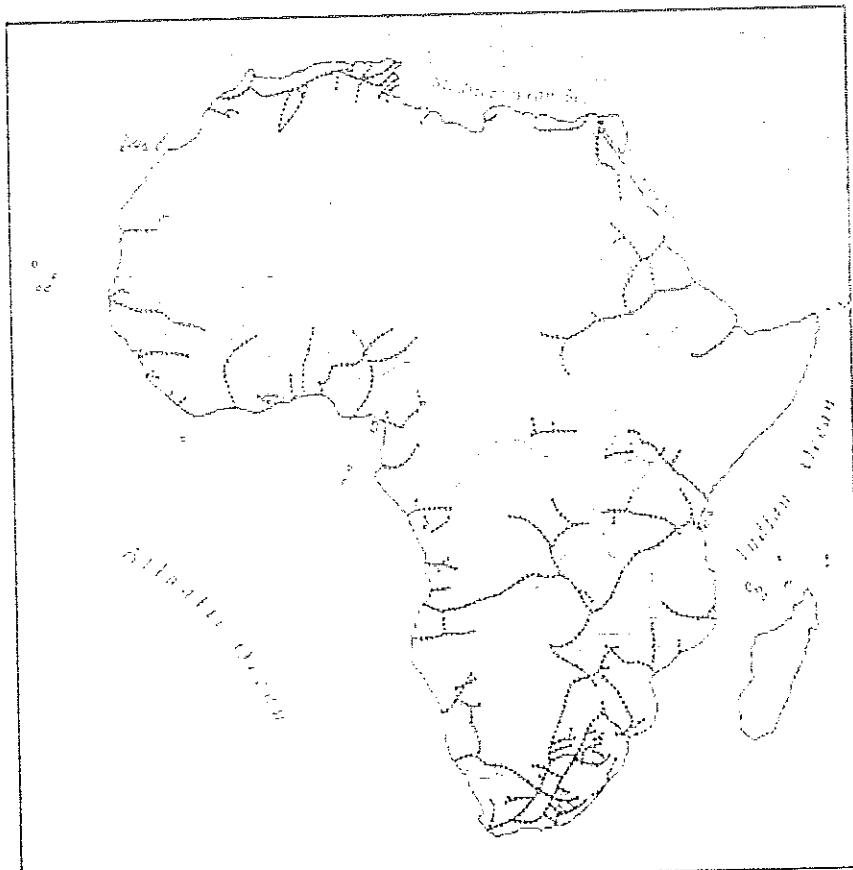
tennis balls," Azikiwe wrote in his autobiography. "Any collection of boys would be divided into two sides and a spirited game would ensue. We made and altered our rules to suit each game and so we emerged to become self-made soccerists."<sup>17</sup>

A similar pattern unfolded in eastern Africa. In the late 1870s, football first came to Zanzibar island. European and Asian employees of the Eastern Telegraph Company, a huge British firm laying the submarine cable from Aden that would eventually reach South Africa, spent their evenings playing team sports.<sup>18</sup> Ordinary Zanzibari men of different ethnic and class backgrounds learned the game by watching and occasionally playing with the workers from overseas, as well as with students from St. Andrew's College of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa. By the 1910s, according to Khamis Fereji, the game had become a popular urban pastime.

Football started in *uzunguni* [Europe] but everyone here learned how to play. For a football we would buy a tennis ball; they were cheap in those days—for a few cents we could buy a ball. And then we would run off and play anywhere there was a little space. We played with each other in the narrow streets (*vichochoroni*) . . . or we would go over near the port. Before they had built the Public Works it was a big football ground. In the evening the men would come down and rest, enjoy the breeze, or fish and we kids would play football. This was the very beginnings of football, us kids playing in the narrow streets with our tennis balls.<sup>19</sup>

#### into the interior: railroads and the Armed forces

Once football had filtered through Africa's ports, it closely followed the path of railroads into the interior. Railroad lines were central to the development of colonial capitalism, as they connected the coast to the interior for the purpose of evacuating crops and minerals and transporting military forces to suppress anticolonial rebellions. Railway towns became important nodes of cultural transmission and exchange where football featured prominently. In the town of Atbara, headquarters of the Sudan Railways, the sport developed rapidly in the 1920s. According to historian Ahmed Sikainga, the British attempted to use sport to promote team spirit; football was "considered an essential ingredient for molding railway employees and helping them internalize the norms and values of the industry."<sup>20</sup>



MAP 3 Africa's railroads, c. 1995. Map by Claudia K. Walters. Source: <http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/images/map23.gif>.

One of the first documented examples of football in Yaoundé, the main city in central Cameroon, is illustrative of the importance of colonial railways in the history of football in Africa. In March 1927, as part of the festivities celebrating the arrival of the first locomotive from Douala, football matches were staged before large crowds. Representative sides from Douala and Yaoundé played in two racially segregated contests. First, Africans from Yaoundé defeated their counterparts from Douala; then the European teams played to a draw.<sup>21</sup> Many more examples could be made, but in the interest of brevity I will just point out that the development of railways in southern, central, and eastern Africa from the 1890s to the 1920s propelled the formation of numerous football clubs and associations in Southern and Northern Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe and Zambia), Congo, and Uganda.

In addition to the ports and railways, colonial militaries and police forces were important vectors for the spread of football in Africa.<sup>22</sup> At first, British army officers did not encourage football among the rank-and-file members of the Kenya African Rifles and Royal West African Frontier Force. For some time, games were “either viewed as part of soldiers’ physical training programs or were so *ad hoc* as to amount to little more than knockabout evening football among off-duty soldiers.”<sup>23</sup> African servicemen generally played soccer informally, often barefoot and “with mixed results.” In the 1930s, however, support for the game grew in both the Kenya African Rifles and Royal West African Frontier Force. As British officers warmed to football (as well as track-and-field and boxing) as a means to enhance troops’ self-discipline, aggressive masculinity, and camaraderie, African soldiers enthusiastically participated in army championships and (in West Africa) even national competitions. By 1946, a British Army Physical Training Corps instructor was so impressed that he noted how, in the Gold Coast, “football creates great interest among the population and all matches are well attended. The spectators are sensibly critical and always show a knowledge of the game.”<sup>24</sup>

#### Schools, Sport, and “Muscular Christianity”

The knowledge and practice of football owed much to the establishment of Western-style schools across the continent. British public schools (privately funded boarding institutions) provided a model for the educational training of an indigenous elite with the clerical and leadership skills needed for jobs in colonial administration. In nineteenth-century Britain, elite schools spawned a movement devoted to using sport for academic education and moral training. For middle- and upper-class reformers of the Victorian age, sport became a highly valued component of a broader program of rational recreation, and “muscular Christianity” aimed at producing disciplined, healthy, and moral citizens.<sup>25</sup> “Through sport, boys acquire virtues which no books can give them,” pontificated Charles Kingsley, a leading proponent; “not merely daring and endurance, but, better still, temper, self-restraint, fairness, honour, unenvious approbation of another’s success, and all that ‘give-and-take’ of life which stand a man in good stead when he goes forth into the world, and without which, indeed, his success is always maimed and partial.”<sup>26</sup>

Legions of colonial administrators and missionaries graduated from public schools and universities in Britain. These individuals brought with them to

Africa a deep commitment to the “games ethic,” the belief that sport forged physically strong, well-rounded men of sound moral character for imperial service.<sup>27</sup> Reverend J. E. C. Welldon, headmaster at Harrow (1881–95), stressed the significance of the sporting cult for British power abroad: “The pluck, the perseverance, the good temper, the self-control, the discipline, the co-operation, the esprit de corps, which merit success in cricket or football, are the very qualities which win the day in peace or war. In the history of the British Empire it is written that England has owed her sovereignty to her sports.”<sup>28</sup>

Mission schools and government schools made sport into an important meeting ground for Western and indigenous cultures. Before 1930 less than 1 percent of the African population received secondary education. Nevertheless, students organized many of the first teams and competitions. In South Africa, for example, *kholwa* (Christian Africans) made up a significant portion of the membership of the earliest clubs.<sup>29</sup> Sport was a mainstay of the academic curriculum and the student experience at elite mission schools such as Adams College near Durban. Known as Amanzimtoti Training Institute before 1914, Adams was founded in 1849 by Congregationalist missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, based in Boston, Massachusetts. It had a reputation as one of the best schools in southern and central Africa. The Adams College football team, the Shooting Stars, was among the oldest and most prestigious African sides in Durban, having competed against outside opponents since the 1890s.<sup>30</sup> American Board missions had produced many of the earliest African clubs in Durban, such as Ocean Swallows of Umbumbulu (established in the 1880s), Natal Cannons of Inanda (1890s), and Bush Bucks of Ifafa (1902). Other mission schools, such as Healdtown, Lovedale, and St. Matthews in the Cape, also fielded football teams, though these schools were better known for their excellence in rugby and cricket.<sup>31</sup>

Similarly, the Hope Waddell Training Institution in Calabar, a prestigious Presbyterian mission school for Nigerian boys and girls founded in 1895, gave birth to soccer in that colony. Rev. James Luke reportedly introduced the game in 1902, two years before the aforementioned documented match between the school and British sailors.<sup>32</sup> Best known for its large campus and strong programs in physical sciences and physical education, Hope Waddell produced about a third of Nigeria’s teachers through the 1930s and “provided early incubation for budding nationalist politicians,” including Nnamdi Azikiwe.<sup>33</sup> In Lagos, sport and physical education was part of the

curriculum at the Church Missionary Society Grammar School (founded in 1859) and at the Wesleyan High School (1878), much as it was later at King's College (1909) and Yaba Higher College (1934).

By the interwar years, the British authorities in Nigeria had incorporated sport as a core component of colonial education. This policy had gained further legitimacy with the publication in 1922 of Lord Lugard's treatise on *indirect rule*, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, in which the former governor-general of Nigeria endorsed sport and physical education in schools for the training of an African elite. "It is, of course, essential that playgrounds and gymnasia should be provided," Lugard wrote. "In Nigeria we have found that polo was a specially good game for the sons of chiefs and others who could afford it, while for other boys cricket, football, and 'athletics' bring the staff and pupils into close touch, and have the best effect in training character."<sup>34</sup> Nigerian students complied. "You had to play games, it was compulsory," remembered Raphael Shonekan, a former King's College student. "The games that used to draw a crowd was this inter-secondary school football match . . . between King's College and St. Gregory . . . and so games played a dominant part in the upbringing of Kings College boys. In fact one of the mottos of the school says, 'always play the game' which means you are always fair, honest and a good sportsman when you play."<sup>35</sup>

In 1903 in colonial Gold Coast, the Government Boys School at Cape Coast inspired the creation of the first local team. In a town with a small but growing football culture among the Europeans, it was not surprising that African students would prove to be among the first practitioners of the sport. Having already launched cricket and tennis, Mr. Briton, a Jamaican headmaster, organized a football side for the students. According to one source, soon thereafter "the urge for the game spread beyond the confines of the school. A few boys from the Cape Coast township showed interest and soon it was decided to bring all of them together to form a club which Mr. Briton named *Excelsior*."<sup>36</sup> A quarter of a century later, "even academically weak students could be saved, nay, thrust into the limelight, by agility in sports and games" at the new Achimota College established in 1927 outside Accra.<sup>37</sup> Elsewhere in British West Africa, Fourah Bay College and the Church Missionary Society Grammar School in Freetown, Sierra Leone, also boasted sports programs. At the latter, "games were compulsory . . . we played cricket in the dry season, and football in the rainy season . . . there were competitions for the house shields in cricket, football, and athletics, including cross-country training."<sup>38</sup>

In Northeast Africa, Gordon Memorial College was singularly responsible for popularizing football in Sudan. Known among the British as the “Eton of the Sudan” and “Winchester by the Nile,” this institution, like Fourah Bay, Achimota, and Makerere College in Uganda, emphasized vocational and technical training with a view to preparing students for government jobs. At Gordon, “character-building activities—sports first, and literary and social activities second—took up almost as much of the daily schedule as did classes.”<sup>39</sup> Historian Heather Sharkey has shown that students played regular afternoon football matches while college staff organized intramural competitions that promoted team spirit and rewarded individual achievement with trophies and prizes. As we shall see in later chapters, Gordon alumni went on to form government departmental teams and, in the 1950s, took control of the Sudan Football Association—an example of both the role of Western schooling as a crucible for African nationalism and the resonance of football in the popular struggle against colonialism (see chapters 3–4).

In British-controlled eastern Africa in the 1880s, local students learned football in the schools in Zanzibar of Universities’ Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), run by young “muscular” Christians like Henry Good-year, whom a sports newspaper editor praised as a “splendid football player and so genial a man.”<sup>40</sup> In 1887, the UMCA’s jubilee celebrations closed with a “game of football played by the Kiungani boys in smart blue and white caps . . . with many thousands looking on.”<sup>41</sup> By 1891, the school’s daily routine regularly featured football and other sports. On the mainland, the Anglican G. L. Pilkington was another missionary who actively promoted soccer in the 1890s at a school in Mengo, Uganda. A few weeks before his death, Pilkington wrote: “We have started football lately. I play most afternoons. It is great fun and good for the boys.” A visitor observed that Pilkington was “diligently coaching the boys . . . he enters with great earnestness into it. I, with my boys and about ten others, stood Pilkington and another lot. We got two goals each. We play on a large grass field between Kampala and Rubaga.”<sup>42</sup> Not all “muscular Christians” were men. For example, Marion Stevenson, a Scottish teacher at Tumutumu mission school in Kenya, embraced football to such an extent that, her biographer noted, “one might wax lyrical over the part that football has taken in attracting and educating the lads, and giving them an outlet for their energies, in place of fighting and bad dances.”<sup>43</sup> At notable secondary schools like King’s School in Budo, Uganda, Alliance in Kenya, and Tabora

("the Eton of Tanganyika"), one contemporary observed, "Christianity and games were only a part of the life of the school but were indeed its most important elements."<sup>44</sup>

A vignette from Kenya captures the extent to which British and other European colonizers believed football to represent the "stylized epitome of a moral order and the metaphoric essence of a cultured civilization."<sup>45</sup> In Central Province, missionaries taught Kikuyu and other local youths the game and in 1909 organized the first interschool cup. Teams from the Church of Scotland mission in Thogoto and the Church Missionary Society school in Kabete contested the trophy. John Arthur, a newly arrived missionary doctor, reported on this match in the *Kikuyu News* (without mentioning the final score). His evocative column, entitled "A Great Football Match," is worth quoting in full.

There was a goodly gathering of spectators, amongst whom were seen quite a number of highly painted warriors, relics of a day fast giving place to a new, in which the battlefields of spear and knife will give place to the playing fields of sport, in which manliness, courage, and unselfishness shall add their quota to the formation of true character It is our hope in these our games to stiffen the backbone of these our boys by teaching them manliness, good temper, and unselfishness—qualities amongst many others which have done so much to make many a Britisher, and which we hope to instill into our boys in such a way as to make them strong men indeed. Our belief is that our games may be, when properly controlled, a mighty channel through which God can work for the uplifting of this race. They need to be strengthened in the realm of their physical nature, where Satan so strongly reigns, and how better than by the substitution of their own evil dances by such a game as football, inherent in which are magnificent uplifting qualities.<sup>46</sup>

For Europeans like Arthur who were dutifully carrying out the "white man's burden," football was potent enough to keep the devil at bay and to provide a healthy and moral outlet for Africans' supposedly savage instincts. As the consolidation of colonial rule took root in the first two decades of the twentieth century, football gained a central place in African education and in the development of a new culture that bridged "traditional" and modern, rural and urban, and indigenous and Western worldviews and experiences.

Needless to say, Africans were not simply duped into adopting Western sport: they enjoyed the game for their own reasons and on their own terms. As the next chapter shows, football was an attractive aspect of Western culture that Africans appropriated and deployed in different ways—and often for different purposes than those originally intended by European colonizers and capitalists.

## Notes

### PROLOGUE

1. Ahmed Kathrada, *Memoirs* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004), 371.
2. *Mercury*, March 15, 2007.
3. See William James Murray, *The World's Game: A History of Soccer* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1995); and David Goldblatt, *The Ball Is Round: A Global History of Soccer* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2002).
4. Paul Dietschy and David-Claude Kemo-Kembo, *Le football et l'Afrique* (Paris: EPA, 2008), 336.
5. I have borrowed the term "soccerscape" from Richard Giulianotti, *Football: A Sociology of the Global Game* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), 24. Giulianotti uses *soccerscape* to refer to the geographic and cultural "circulation of players, coaches, fans and officials, goods and services, or formation and artifacts." As per Michael Schatzberg's suggestion, indigenous cultures of power should be included in an expanded definition of *soccerscapes*; see Schatzberg, "Soccer, Science and Sorcery: Causation and African Football," *Afrika Spectrum* 41, no. 3 (2006), 351–69.

### chapter one    "The White Man's Burden" *Football and Empire, 1860s–1919*

1. Stephen Hardy, "Entrepreneurs, Structures, and the Sportgeist: Old Tensions in a Modern Industry," in *Essays on Sport History and Sport Mythology*, ed. Donald G. Kyle and Gary D. Stark (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1990), 45–82.
2. William J. Baker and James A. Mangan, eds., *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History* (New York: Africana, 1987), viii. For more on this topic, see Peter Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, Politics and Society* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2004), 7–14; Laura Fair, "Ngoma Reverberations: Swahili Music Culture and the Making of Football Aesthetics in Early Twentieth-Century Zanzibar," in *Football in Africa: Conflict, Conciliation and Community*, ed. Gary Armstrong and Richard Giulianotti (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 103–13; and John Blacking, "Games and Sport in Pre-colonial African Societies," in Baker and Mangan, *Sport in Africa*, 3–22.
3. John Bale and Joe Sang, *Kenyan Running: Movement Culture, Geography and Global Change* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 49–50.
4. *Eastern Province Herald*, May 23, 1862; *Cape Argus*, August 21, 1862.

5. These early forms of the modern game resembled both the football of British public schools and universities and the preindustrial "folk" game of artisans and farmers; see John Goulstone, "The Working-Class Origins of Modern Football," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 17, no. 1 (2000), 135–43. On early football, see also James Walvin, *The People's Game: A History of Football Revisited* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1994), 41–43.

6. SAFA withdrew from the world body in 1924, along with the British associations, before regaining full membership in 1952. See chapter 4 on the subsequent suspension of SAFA (later renamed FASA) in the early 1960s.

7. Paul Dietschy and David-Claude Kemo-Keimbou, *Le football et l'Afrique* (Paris: EEA, 2008), 57.

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

9. This paragraph is based on Bénédicte Van Peel, "Aux débuts du football congolais," in *Itinéraires croisés de la modernité au Congo Belge, 1920–1950*, ed. Jean-Luc Vellut (Paris: Karthala, 2001), 141–87. Additional information is from Dietschy and Vellut (Paris: Karthala, 2001), 141–87. Note that the Katanga association did not affiliate with the Belgian FA.

10. Allen Guttmann, *Games and Empires: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 68.

11. Ibid., 64.

12. Deville-Danthu, *Le sport en noir et blanc*; and Phyllis Martin, *Leisure in Colonial Brazzaville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 100.

13. According to Alice Conklin, the French believed their civilizing mission stemmed from the fact that "France's colonized subjects were too primitive to rule themselves, but were capable of being uplifted. It intimated that the French were particularly suited, by temperament and by virtue of both their revolutionary past and their current industrial strength, to carry out this task. [France] had a duty and a right to remake 'primitive' cultures along lines inspired by the cultural, political, and economic development of France." Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 1–2.

14. *Le Courier d'Afrique*, November 22–23, 1936, cited in Van Peel, "Aux débuts du football congolais," 164.

15. Stephen Borquaye, *The Saga of Accra Hearts of Oak Sporting Club* (Accra: New Times Press, 1968), 27.

16. Details about Nigeria in this paragraph are from Wiebe Boer, "Nation-Building Exercise: Sporting Culture and the Rise of Football in Colonial Nigeria" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2003), 238–49.

17. Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey: An Autobiography* (New York: Praeger, 1970), 402.

18. Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890–1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press; London: James Currey, 2001), 228–33.

19. Ibid., 231.

20. Ahmad Alzawad Sikainga, "City of Steel and Fire": A Social History of Abbaria, Sudan's Railway Town, 1906–1984 (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002), 82–83.

21. Soter Tsanga, *Le football camerounais: Des origines à l'indépendance* (Yaoundé: Centre d'Édition et de Production de Manuels, 1969), 52–54.

22. Anthony Clayton, "Sport and African Soldiers: The Military Diffusion of Sport," in Baker and Mangan, *Sport in Africa*, 114–37.

23. Ibid., 120.

24. Ibid., 122–23.

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37. Francis Agbodeka, *Achimota in the National Setting: A Unique Educational Experiment in West Africa* (Accra: Afram, 1977), 160 (on sport see 124–27).

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39. Heather Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 44.
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41. *Ibid.*, 287.
42. Mangar, "Ethics and Ethnocentricity," 164.
43. *Ibid.*, 152.
44. *Ibid.*, 147. Mangar also notes the role of individual educational administrators in propagating the game ethic across colonial boundaries. Alexander Garden Fraser did so, for instance, as headmaster at King's in Uganda and then at Achimota in the Gold Coast.
45. James A. Mangar, "Soccer as Moral Training: Missionary Intentions and Imperial Legacies," *Soccer and Society* 2, no. 2 (2001), 53.
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# CHAPTER TWO

## African Soccerscapes

how a Continent Changed the World's Game

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MAP 1 Colonial Africa, 1914. Map by Claudia K. Walters. Source: <http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/images/colonialism1914.jpg>.



MAP 2 Contemporary Africa and major cities. Map by Claudia K. Walters. Source:  
<http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/images/capitals.jpg>.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Chapter two

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### The Africanization of Football, 1920s–1940s

During the interwar years, as African towns and cities grew in size and importance, football expanded in scope and popularity. Town dwellers formed football clubs and organized competitions from Accra and Algiers to Zanzibar and Zululand. From the point of view of colonial officials and white residents, football might have seemed like a characteristically British or French or Portuguese pastime; but African players and fans made football distinctively Nigerian or South African or Senegalese. When employers and colonial officials organized the first teams, those Africans drafted into participation initially saw games as another kind of work. But a passion for the game among these workers—and then among youth—soon turned an obligation into pleasure.

In every city and town, and then spreading out into the countryside, football players and ex-players joined in school and work teams or scrambled to form their own. These voluntary associations often became the focus of social life for new urbanites, and the teams they sponsored attracted the support of urban communities—and in turn defined those communities. “In those days [Orlando Pirates] players used to weep if they lost. They had the commitment of a soldier fighting for his country. This patriotism was because he is from Orlando and his family and friends are watching,” remembered Skumbuzo Mthembu, a longtime supporter of one of the South Africa’s oldest and most popular clubs.<sup>1</sup>

Participation in football was exciting and fun, but it also was a way to make connections and build networks in the rapidly growing towns of that

era. In the larger contest between residents and rulers for control of urban areas, football could sometimes be a tool in the hands of players and fans to find some leisure activities they could call their own and in the process build a local culture beyond the reach of colonial rulers, missionaries, and employers. And as Africans wrested control of football from the hands of those European officials who had first seen the game as a means to inculcate the values of colonial capitalism and empire, they also turned the game into an activity that was distinctively African. The game may have been played according to international rules, but the incorporation of magicians and healers, the rise of different playing styles, and the performance of various rituals of spectatorship revealed that football was taking on distinctive indigenous characteristics.

#### Making Men: Gender, Class, and Generational dimensions

Until the 1970s, the world's game was predominantly male. African soccer-scapes were no different. Public culture in colonial Africa was initially dominated by men, but that did not mean that women were absent from football. Through their work inside and outside the home and their moral support, many mothers, sisters, and wives made it possible for boys and men to play the game. Younger, unmarried women also went to the games to have fun and socialize with men, while other women earned money by selling liquor, food, drinks, and other goods to fans. In the 1960s in South Africa, black women assumed leadership roles in fan clubs, but far too little is known about women's involvement in men's sports elsewhere in colonial Africa.<sup>2</sup> What we do know is that African women, like Western women, became increasingly involved as players in the 1970s and 1980s (see chapter 6).

Recent scholarship in African studies has looked at how sport influenced, and was influenced by, changing relationships between men and women and the elaboration of different kinds of masculinities.<sup>3</sup> The strength, skill, courage, and tenacity required of footballers enabled precolonial martial and athletic masculinities to be reborn, albeit in different forms, in the colonial setting. Rowdy fans sometimes turned to hooliganism as a way to prove their manhood and acquire fame and social honor, while other fans and supporters transformed football into a public stage for the display of an educated, middle-class masculinity.

As we saw in chapter 1, male students at government and mission schools played a pivotal role in the early years of the game. Another key constituency was made up of wage-earning urban workers with some Western

education—men with discretionary income and leisure time. The development of formal football organizations owed much to African civil servants, clerks, interpreters, soldiers, policemen, port and railway workers, and traders. Dressed in jackets and trousers, the pioneers of organized football in Africa were secretarial workers engaged in a struggle for self-advancement in racist colonial societies. They were situated in what African historian Andreas Eckert describes as “a position of intermediary ambivalence. They acted as cultural commuters or brokers, as mediators between different worlds.”<sup>4</sup> Having excelled in sport and physical education in mission schools, many clerks embraced an aspect of colonial culture that enabled some to acquire social honor through individual sporting skills rather than wealth and family pedigree.<sup>5</sup>

Graduates of elite schools were crucial to organized football in Africa. In Sudan, for example, graduates of Gordon Memorial College absorbed the lessons of the British game ethic and later went on to play for government department teams in cities and towns, where they taught in schools or worked as accountants or in other relatively well-paid professions.<sup>6</sup> Gordon College graduates would go on to assume the mantle of leadership in the Sudan Football Association in the 1950s. A similar process unfolded in Nigeria involving alumni of the Hope Waddell Training Institute in Calabar, as we saw in chapter 1. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Hope Waddell graduates popularized the game in Lagos—capital of the new Protectorate of Southern Nigeria after 1906—where they eagerly took white-collar government jobs.<sup>7</sup> The prestigious École Supérieure in Cameroon was a reliable supplier of players and administrators to African clubs in both Douala and Yaoundé. In Tanganyika in the 1920s, former students of the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa school in Kiungani, Zanzibar, fostered the growth of football both on the island and in Dar es Salaam. In South Africa, the *kholwa* (Christian Africans) learned the game at institutions such as Adams College and Ohlange Institute and then became instrumental in the rise of an indigenous football culture in Natal and in Johannesburg.

African intermediaries planted the seeds of the game in the interior of the continent. For example, in Bobo Dioulasso, a military, administrative, and commercial center in what is today Burkina Faso, the presence of many African soldiers, functionaries, and employees of large French firms underpinned the gradual growth and expansion of local football. One year after the railway reached Bobo in 1934, the director of the Compagnie française

de la Côte d'Ivoire recruited Gold Coast, Togolese, and Beninois employees into his company team. That team later took the name Union Sportive Bobolaise, and in 1949 would merge with Union Soudanaise (comprised of workers from Mali) to become Racing Club de Bobo, which remains active today.<sup>8</sup> The involvement of Malians in Burkina Faso illustrates the significance of expatriate African functionaries of the colonial administration in the early history of the game in French Africa. West Africans and Gabonese formed the first black teams in Porto Novo, Benin; in Douala, Cameroon; and also in Brazzaville, then the capital of French Equatorial Africa (and now of the Republic of the Congo).<sup>9</sup>

Hyder Kindy, a Swahili civil servant and influential political leader in Mombasa, Kenya, devotes a full chapter of his autobiography to his favorite sport: football. He describes growing up Muslim and learning the game like most African boys: by kicking a tennis ball with friends and participating in rough-and-tumble street matches against other neighborhood teams. Then, in 1922, Kindy enrolled at the elite Government Arab School, where he was immediately picked to play for the school team. At club level, he played for Britannia FC, a team comprising young men living in the Kuze and Mkanyageni areas of the city.

Mombasa resembled most colonial African cities in that the first organized football teams identified closely with particular neighborhoods. Territorial affiliations and club fealties were taken seriously. According to Kindy, "Any player from one locality who joined another team was considered as having committed high treason. He would be isolated and no one would talk to him."<sup>10</sup> Initially, teams played informally, but in 1926 an official Mombasa league began under the control of a newly established Coast Province Athletic Association, a local affiliate of the white-run African and Arab Sport Association in Kenya (formed the previous year). Kindy reports that despite his club's poor performances, his scoring prowess was good enough to earn him a spot in the starting eleven of the Mombasa representative side in the Remington Cup, Kenya's intertown tournament. In 1932, Kindy's playing career, like that of many African footballers of the period, ended with fatherhood. With age, gender identities, norms, and expectations changed as youthful athletic masculinity gave way to patriarchal notions of masculinity. Kindy continued to be involved in the game but in an administrative capacity. He managed the Mombasa team in the Remington Cup in the 1940s and also served on the executive committee of Coast FC, Oxford Sports Club, and the Mombasa league.

Beginning in the 1910s, football became a distinguishing feature of life in the dramatically growing colonial African cities (see table 1).<sup>11</sup> It is no accident that several of contemporary Africa's most important and oldest football clubs trace their origins to this pioneering era, including Accra Hearts of Oak (1911), Espérance of Tunis (1919), Jeanne d'Arc of Dakar (1921), Canon and Tonnerre Yaoundé (1930 and 1934), Young Africans and Simba of Dar es Salaam (1930s), Diables Noirs and Renaissance of Brazzaville (1930s), AS Vita Kinshasa and TP Englebert Lubumbashi (1930s), and Orlando Pirates from outside Johannesburg (1937).

European influence was visible in the names of African teams. Aston Villa and Wolverhampton Wanderers in Accra, Sunderland in Dar es Salaam, and Blackpool in Johannesburg mimicked the names of elite English clubs. Black clubs like Devonshire Rovers in Cape Town and Highlanders in both Johannesburg and Bulawayo reflected the influence of the military. The active role of European missionaries surfaced in the adoption of religious names such as Jeanne d'Arc in Dakar and Saint-Éloi in Élisabethville.

Moonlighters Football Club in Johannesburg illustrated the strong connections between football, family, and neighborhood identity.<sup>12</sup> Founded in 1892, when Johannesburg was just six years old, this working-class Indian club was based in the Doornfontein area of the city. It was taken for granted that sons would join Moonlighters and continue the tradition, following in the footsteps of their fathers before them. From the 1930s through the 1950s, Moonlighters represented a particular group of families, including Asvat, Moodley, Moosa, Naidoo, Padayachee, Thomas, and Vassen. Club elders spent considerable time and energy fostering this tradition of continuity and family ties, coaxing, cajoling, and coercing youths into membership. Movement from the second team to the first team was almost a rite of passage from boyhood into manhood.<sup>13</sup> Those youngsters who rebelled and attempted to break away from Moonlighters to join a different club faced disciplinary action or, in extreme cases, social exclusion. Like traditional family heads, football's patriarchs oversaw the everyday business of organized sport festivals, settled disputes, and assigned playing fields. Players frequently called club and league officials "elders."

Referees represented another form of patriarchal authority. Despite the elders' efforts to enforce obedience, hooligans sometimes disrupted matches. Fans often saw referees as biased and set about settling scores on the pitch. A local colonial officer in Cameroon reported that the vigorous nature of football rivalries led to teams "protesting almost every decision of the

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TABLE 1 POPULATION OF SOME MAJOR AFRICAN CITIES  
IN THE COLONIAL ERA (IN THOUSANDS)

Date	c. 1900	c. 1939	c. 1960
Cairo, Egypt	910 (1897)	1,312 (1937)	2,852 (1959)
Lagos, Nigeria	74 (1910)	127 (1931)	364 (1960)
Accra, Ghana	18 (1901)	61 (1931)	491 (1960)
Dakar, Senegal	18 (1904)	92 (1936)	383 (1960)
Kinshasa, DR Congo	5 (1908)	27 (1936)	420 (1961)
Nairobi, Kenya	12 (1906)	119 (1948)	267 (1962)
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania	25 (1906)	69 (1948)	140 (1962)
Johannesburg, South Africa	102 (1896)	283 (1931)	1,097 (1959)

Source: Bill Freund, *The African City: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 66.

referee and to matches ending in general chaos.”<sup>14</sup> African football’s patriarchal elite clearly had trouble keeping control over younger, independent men eager to assert their manhood during competitive spectacles. In the late 1940s in Johannesburg, South Africa, Orlando Pirates Football Club, an ethnically mixed black team that stood as a symbol of civic pride and social responsibility, temporarily stopped competing due to an ongoing conflict with the white authorities over playing grounds. The young men fully understood the reasons for the decisions by the club’s older officials, but the players resented missing games and the small sums of cash they were sometimes paid, as well as the notoriety that came with being well-known athletes in the community. Tensions eventually subsided after Pirates joined the Johannesburg African Football Association.

While Pirates was a cosmopolitan and multilingual team, ethnic sides were common elsewhere in Africa during this period, mainly because club membership was linked to residential patterns. By the 1930s, many of these clubs started to recruit top players from outside their immediate community, sometimes offering them material compensation and employment. But club administration usually remained in the hands of individuals who identified as members of a particular ethnic group. Ethnic football was also common in the mining compounds of southern and central Africa.

European mine managers encouraged African employees to form ethnic football teams as a way to boost production and as an inexpensive means of social control (i.e., by dividing workers along ethnic lines). As a supervisor on a Rhodesian gold mine in the 1920s put it: “The native is intensely imitative, often vain, and always clannish, and all these are qualities which

would further 'sport'—a parochial spirit of sport if you like—but one which would forge ties of interest and *esprit de corps* between the laborer and his work-place. A patch of ground, a set of goal-posts and a football would not figure largely in the expenditure of a big mine.<sup>15</sup> On the Zambian and Belgian Copperbelt, football and ethnicity were closely connected. On the Zambian mines in the late 1920s and early 1930s, according to historian Hikabwa Chipande, Lions were linked to Lozi workers; Elephants to Bemba; and Tigers to Ngoni and Chewa people.<sup>16</sup> On the Belgian side of the Copperbelt, the mining giant Union minière du Haute Katanga (UMHK) provided crucial assistance to the colonial government and the Catholic Church in establishing in 1925 the Union des fédérations et associations sportives indigènes, which ran an immensely popular football league aimed at fostering an obedient, efficient, and healthy African working class.<sup>17</sup> On the gold mines of the Witwatersrand in South Africa, black workers formed a league in 1917 in accordance with a major segregationist aim: that football should be separated by race and ethnicity. But after the mine league collapsed in 1929, Zulu clerks resurrected it in 1931 without ethnic sections. A new propensity had developed among some mine clerks to think of themselves as African, as well as Zulu, and ethnically defined sport lost some of its appeal. The cosmopolitan character of urban Africa and the spirit of competition led some ethnically homogenous teams to recruit players from outside their cultural group.

Teams representing urban workplaces were critical to the Africanization of football. Nigeria was a typical case. Historian Wiebe Boer highlights the extent to which Nigerian football culture in the pre-1960 period was shaped by teams from government agencies and departments such as Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Regiment, Public Works Department (PWD), Nigerian Railway, Marine (i.e., Ports and Harbors), and Posts and Telegraphs.<sup>18</sup> As we have seen, policemen and soldiers were traditionally strong sportsmen. According to former Nigerian international footballer Justin Onwudiwe, "they have all the facilities. They are given the wherewithal, the money to buy equipments [sic]. They had time and they are physically fit."<sup>19</sup> PWD opened its first sports club for both white and black employees in 1927 in Lagos. Subsequently, other PWD sports clubs were developed across the colony, which contributed to the growth of football and other sports as well. In 1929, PWD Lagos organized a football team under the stewardship of H. A. Porter, an English architect in the department. Porter ultimately became the first president of the Lagos League and the founding

president of the Nigerian FA (see chapter 3). Nigeria Railways was another government agency that built leisure clubs for its workers in railway towns across Nigeria. Unlike the PWD clubs, however, they were segregated into Railway Institutes for whites and Railway Recreational Clubs for Africans. Football's prominence in railway workers' leisure underpinned the success of African railway teams in Nigeria from the mid-1940s to the late 1950s.<sup>20</sup>

The dominant role of government departmental clubs was by no means unique to Nigeria. In Dar es Salaam's top league in 1942, historian Tadasu Tsuruta identifies Government School, Post Office, Railways, Kings' African Rifles, Police, and Medical Department as the main competitors for Young Africans and Old Boys (later known as Sunderland and Simba)—the most popular clubs in Tanzania today.<sup>21</sup> Government agencies, like the mine companies, believed in football's capacity to engender team spirit among employees as well as loyalty to the colonial state. According to Kindy, Mombasa's medical officer of health built the Nianda team by securing government employment for skilled players and by obtaining the use of an enclosed football ground (with a small stand)—a rare and highly prized possession for any African club.<sup>22</sup> In Zanzibar, colonial agencies also gave talented players jobs so as to strengthen teams like Public Works

Department, Police, and Medical Department. As a soccer-playing tailor employed by the police explained: "I had no choice. If you worked for a department they could take any player they wanted. The department teams took all the best players! Really they did! They even gave people jobs because they were good footballers."<sup>23</sup> In South Africa, too, enterprising clubs in the 1930s recruited players with promises of a wage-earning job. "With soccer skills a player could get a job, easily too!" Peter Sitsila, a player and manager at the time, told me: "Even the association, not just his own team, the association would join forces with his team and try to look for a job for him because the association would be making use of that good player" and benefiting from his performances.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, top-notch black players in South Africa could circumvent racist laws by securing passes (identity documents designed to control the movement of Africans) at a time when the government was tightening restrictions on black people's freedom of movement through legislation such as the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act, which sharply limited African migration into towns and laid the foundations for urban residential segregation.

Football also bred familiarity, thereby encouraging the creation of mixed teams. Recalling the rise of "pan-ethnic" teams in Zanzibar in the 1940s,

a former player noted how the game reduced racial and ethnic tensions: “It helped a lot. Because now you would find a Comorian playing with an Arab together with an African in one club . . . You can’t hate me while I’m playing with you in the same club. You love me because I’m playing with you. You learn to appreciate me like a brother.”<sup>25</sup>

### Football and resistance

This evidence underscores that while European colonizers intended for sport to prop up their self-proclaimed “civilizing mission” in Africa, they unwittingly created new opportunities for various forms of African resistance, not only against colonialism but also against social inequalities within African communities. Local football clubs occasionally expressed opposition to colonial power and authority. The “political” character of a club could be overt, as in the case of Al Ahly of Cairo, the most successful club in Africa and the Middle East. Its name means “National” in Arabic, and its red insignia came to symbolize patriotic resistance to British rule in the late 1920s when Europeans were excluded from the club.<sup>26</sup> But most times, players found more subtle ways to express their opposition to colonial authorities. In the railway town of Atbara in Sudan, Sudanese railway workers gave their football side the name the “Forty Team”; according to historian Ahmed Sikainga, “the number forty [w]as a rejection of the European football rule, which limited the number of players on each team to eleven.”<sup>27</sup> In Namibia, Tigers FC, a team of clerks and government employees based in Windhoek’s Old Location, and one of the earliest black sides, was forced to change its name in the 1920s because the authorities associated it with the name of a local resistance movement. The Tigers responded by simply rearranging the letters and renaming themselves Rigets.<sup>28</sup>

In Brazzaville in the 1930s, French authorities imposed a rule requiring Africans to play football in bare feet. Even though most players could not afford football boots anyway, they resented colonial domination, the lack of proper equipment, and shoddy playing facilities.<sup>29</sup> Older players quit the game, while many younger ones moved over to the mission league. Challenges to colonialism and white power occurred in eastern and southern Africa. In Zanzibar, local footballers protested against the perceived bias of referees appointed by the British-run Sports Control Board.<sup>30</sup> In South Africa in 1932, the Durban association dropped the term “Native,” which by then had acquired a derogative connotation, and adopted the new, more racially affirmative name of Durban and District *African* Football

Association.<sup>31</sup> At the time, Africa's first Nobel Peace laureate, Chief Albert Luthuli, later president of the African National Congress, was actively involved in the Durban association. Similarly, in Bulawayo in the mid-1940s, protests erupted against white oversight of African football. Among the leaders of the protest were activists like Benjamin Burombo, founder of the British African National Voice Association and a member of Mashonaland FC, and Sipambaniso Manyoba, a trade unionist and captain of Matabelo Highlanders and the Bulawayo representative team, or "Red Army."<sup>32</sup> Involvement in football and formal resistance politics went hand in hand for many urban, Western-educated, Christian Africans.

But the forms of resistance more commonly associated with the game between the wars were less overtly oppositional. African clubs exhibited an ethos of self-reliance and solidarity that highlighted their partial autonomy from white interests—the government, missionaries, and private companies. In colonial Africa, it was not uncommon for teams to function like mutual aid societies that provided a social safety net for members in the form of money for a variety of purposes, including lost wages, educational scholarships, weddings, and funerals. Clubs like Orlando Pirates and Durban Bush Bucks in South Africa, Sunderland/Simba in Dar es Salaam, and Botafogo in Angola built a sense of *communitas* (oneness).<sup>33</sup>

Regional variations meant that challenging colonial control of football was virtually impossible in areas like the Belgian Congo, where the game spread quickly among urban Africans.<sup>34</sup> Catholic missionary Raphael dela Kethulle (1890–1956) was a key figure in Léopoldville, where there were 815 registered players in 53 teams by 1939. A passionate football fan and former player, he launched a league for Africans in 1919 and then convinced the colonial authorities to build the first sports facilities for blacks, an effort that would culminate in the opening of the fifty-thousand-seat King Baudouin Stadium in 1952. "Tata Raphael's" counterpart in Élisabethville was Father Gregoire Coussement, who organized a league in 1925 with the assistance of other elite Congolese men. By 1937, the African Football Association featured eleven teams and two major football grounds: the fifty-thousand-seat Leopold II stadium and the smaller St. Jean stadium at the mission. While organized on a smaller scale than in Léopoldville, football was by far the most popular sport in Katanga. Team names reflected multiple local identities, including religious (Vaticano), government (Union Sportive Militaire Saio), ethnic (Empire Lunda), and urban (Lubumbashi Sports).

### An Urban Culture of Competition

The indigenization of soccer in Africa had much to do with the rise of prominent city leagues and intertown contests. These institutionalized the game and entrenched it in urban popular culture.<sup>35</sup> One of the first colonial cities in sub-Saharan Africa to host a formal league was Accra in the Gold Coast. After a false start in 1915, the league kicked off in 1922 with Hearts of Oak taking the coveted Guggisberg Shield, named for the progressive British governor of that period.<sup>36</sup> In Senegal, the Union sportive indigène was formally constituted in 1929 in Dakar, the capital of French West Africa. In Nigeria, the Lagos league began play in 1930, one year before the formation of the Lagos and District Amateur Football Association. In 1937, the Ibadan District Amateur Football Association supervised that city's league.<sup>37</sup>

In Léopoldville, the Association sportive congolaise, formed in 1919, started an annual league for Africans in 1924.<sup>38</sup> The following year, the FASI emerged as the controlling body for African sport, including football, in the southern copper-mining center of Élisabethville.<sup>39</sup> In Brazzaville, the Native Sports Federation was set up in 1929 to organize local African football.<sup>40</sup> In French Cameroon, the Union sportive indigène de Douala and the Union sportive indigène de la région de Yaoundé were both founded in 1934, and in 1935 these two bodies organized a "national" tournament between the champions of the two cities.<sup>41</sup>

In East Africa, the Dar es Salaam Association Football League was underway by 1928–29, although the precise founding date is not known.<sup>42</sup> On the nearby island of Zanzibar, the Zanzibar Cup was inaugurated in 1926, with the only European team in the competition, Mnazi Moja, defeating New Kings 1–0 in front of four thousand spectators. Two years later, when the Sports Association of Zanzibar came into existence, the size of the crowd at the final match swelled to ten thousand spectators.<sup>43</sup> In South Africa, mission-educated, Zulu-speaking clerks from Natal, known as the *umabhalana*, were pioneers in the institutionalization of black football. These men formed the Durban and District Native Football Association in 1916 and also helped to establish the Witwatersrand and District Native Football Association in 1917. "Attending football competitions along with thousands of other fans was one of the defining characteristics of urban living during the 1920s," explains historian Laura Fair, "and one of the highlights of a trip to town for visitors from the countryside."<sup>44</sup> But the segregated nature of colonial society also fostered separate spheres of black

and white leisure, including sport. Racism and segregation plagued settler colonies like South Africa, Algeria, Kenya, and Rhodesia, but was by no means unusual in non-settler colonies as well. It was only in places where there were too few Europeans to form their own “national” teams that racially mixed games took place.<sup>45</sup>

In South Africa, the game continued to grow but in a racially balkanized form typical of colonial societies. By the 1930s, “national” tournaments for different racial groups held sway. These included the Currie Cup for whites (established in 1892), the Sam China Cup for Indians (1903), the Moroka-Baloyi Cup for Africans (1932, but known as the Bakers Cup prior to 1938), and the Stuttaford Cup for Coloureds (sponsored by a department store, 1933). North of the Limpopo River, “by the end of the 1920s soccer pitches had sprung up in remote villages and towns across Zimbabwe . . . and by the end of 1930s soccer was flourishing in colonial Zimbabwe’s main urban centres.”<sup>46</sup> As of 1937, the Osborn Cup determined the “African” champions of Southern Rhodesia, which often came from Bulawayo, the economic center of the colony and a hotbed of African football.

Segregated football was also the norm in colonial Zambia.<sup>47</sup> In 1922, a British mine employee named William Nelson Watson formed the whites-only Broken Hill (Kabwe) Amateur Football Association, and in 1929, Africans were excluded from the new Northern Rhodesia FA. With the assistance of some European officials, African players and organizers in the 1930s responded by founding the Rhodesia Congo Border African FA, which would be renamed the Copperbelt African FA in 1950. Teams from the Copperbelt came to dominate Zambian football, winning the prestigious Inter-District championship (established in 1930) twenty of twenty-three times. Also, Copperbelt clubs claimed the Northern Rhodesia Challenge Cup (first played in 1938) eleven times in fifteen editions. Farther south, in Mozambique in the 1930s, racially separate leagues prevailed in Lourenço Marques (Maputo), Beira, and Inhambane. In the colonial capital, Portuguese and English whites competed in the Associação de futebol de Lourenço Marques, while most blacks played in the Associação africana de futebol. A small number of mixed-race players were allowed to participate in the white-run league, a reflection of how local football followed the Portuguese colonial logic of reserving “assimilation” rights for a carefully chosen few.<sup>48</sup>

The North African Champions Cup, beginning in 1920, initiated inter-territorial competitions on the continent, building popular excitement for the game. Over a period of twenty years, this knockout (single elimination)

tournament involved the winners of regional leagues in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco (Morocco first entered a team in 1928–29). The same colonial territories also fielded teams in the North African Cup, which began in 1930–31. This tournament initially featured eight teams also playing in a knockout format. After World War II it expanded to sixteen teams, a format it kept until its demise in 1955 on the eve of Tunisian and Moroccan independence. Elsewhere in francophone Africa, in 1923 teams of Europeans in Brazzaville and Léopoldville competed in the maiden Stanley Pool Championship, which honored the broad expanse of the Congo River separating the two cities. In 1931, thousands of supporters from both sides of the river watched Étoile of Brazzaville defeat visiting Union of Kinshasa 5–1 in the African version of the Pool championship.<sup>49</sup>

The British in East Africa matched French enthusiasm for interterritorial contests. In 1926, for example, representative sides from Uganda and Kenya contested the William Gossage Cup for the first time. In one of the earliest examples of business sponsorship of African sport, a soap manufacturer donated the trophy. This annual single match contest, which alternated between Nairobi and Kampala through 1945, attracted enormous popular and media interest in East Africa. During that period, Uganda won the Gossage Cup twelve times (including six times in a row in 1935–40) and Kenya five. Tanganyika entered the tournament in 1945, followed by Zanzibar in 1949.

### **the role of Magic**

As African enthusiasm for football grew, players, teams, and fans “Africanized” the game. While it was played according to international rules and standards, the use of magic and religious specialists infused the game with distinctive African traits. Anthropologist Christian Bromberger has noted how occult practices in football are part of a global pattern of “domesticating luck.”<sup>50</sup> As a way to cope with uncertainty and unpredictability, players and fans are known to practice rituals without necessarily “believing.” As a former player in South Africa confided to me: “I didn’t believe in that stuff. It was mostly people who come from the rural areas who believed in witchcraft. People born here [in the city] don’t believe in those things.” That may indeed have been the case, but it also undeniable that many African players from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds, from rural traditionalists to urban, Western-educated Christians, seemed to accept—either by choice or peer pressure—the use of magic. The ritual use of magic had strong psychological and team-building qualities.

Almost from the very beginning of the game in South Africa's major cities, African clubs, to swing results in their favor, employed healers, diviners, and sorcerers to ritually prepare their squads before important matches.<sup>51</sup> Ritual preparations included pregame consultations with a diviner who threw the bones to predict the outcomes of the match. *Izinyanga* (healers) also tried to strengthen athletes by rubbing players' legs with *umuthi* (traditional medicine) or making them inhale "some smoke from herbs so that they bring fear and weakness on the opponents."<sup>52</sup> The discovery of a small bottle filled with *umuthi* in one of the goals during a championship game in the early 1920s in Durban led to accusations of witchcraft, which exploded into a major controversy. Some African officials of the Durban association, as well as its English president, Douglas Evans, attacked the use of magic in football, labeling it an example of "uncivilized" behavior. But the practice continued. An elderly Cape Town-born former player told me in an interview that in the 1940s and 1950s, before important matches, "a witch doctor or whatever will come and smear some Vaseline on our shoes and whatever it was. When I ask him what it is all about he says: 'this is going to make you run faster, kick great' and so on. [Laughs]." During the first decade of apartheid, these practices had become so widespread that it was common for black South African clubs to pay large amounts of money to acquire the services of an *inyanga*. Naturally, fierce competition for the best magicians developed.

The making of locally distinctive football cultures also drew in proprietary rituals associated with precolonial military campaigns. In South Africa, a symbolic regeneration of nineteenth-century Zulu military prowess in the name of sport displayed virtuous cultural identities while fostering team spirit. Match preparations often commenced with team officials consulting a diviner who threw bones to predict the outcome of a game. Before a key contest, clubs went on a retreat to reenact purification ceremonies similar to those performed by nineteenth-century Zulu *amabutho* (age-regiments) before major military encounters. This tradition of prematch seclusion is common elsewhere in Africa, as well as in Europe and Latin America. What was distinctive in the case of KwaZulu-Natal, as the area is now known, is that the players drank an emetic and vomited, thus emulating the *ukuhlanza* (cleansing) practice of nineteenth-century Zulu soldiers on the eve of war. Moreover, the sprinkling of *umuthi* on the football and on boots recalled the doctoring of warriors' weapons, as did the burning of special roots.

The infusion of agrarian spiritual beliefs and ritual practices into modern football was evident also in French Africa. According to Martin, “in the early days of Brazzaville football, the potency of rituals and medicines controlled by West African marabouts [Muslim holy men] were [sic] particularly sought after by leading clubs.”<sup>53</sup> One particularly successful man who worked for several local teams earned the nickname “Merci beaucoup” (Thank you very much). Many believed that a “skilled magician could turn the opponent’s ball into stone or make the ball invisible until it was in the back of the other team’s net.” In West Africa, it was reported that in May 1950 pregame pleasantries between teams from Guinea and Senegal were upset when the Senegalese captain refused to touch the pennant offered by his Guinean counterpart, for fear that it had been “doctored” with polluting magic.<sup>54</sup> In 1936, the Cameroonian newspaper *Gazette du Cameroun* reported that “superstition” in football was commonplace: “One consults a sorcerer to obtain from him herbs whose immediate effect is to paralyze opposing players, or drugs that give diarrhea to the enemy, etc.”<sup>55</sup> “On the Middle Congo,” Martin writes, “where resources were seen as finite, a match started with a preordained number of goals. The role of team magicians in this zero-sum game was to steal points from their opponents while protecting their own goals. African sport is ‘bathed in the occult,’ wrote a [Congolese] referee.”<sup>56</sup>

Magicians produced charms, talismans, and amulets that African players wore as bracelets, chains, and rings to defend themselves from the spiritual onslaught of opposing religious specialists.<sup>57</sup> Individual match preparations usually included rubbing specially treated ointments on skin, shoes, jerseys, and other equipment. These magical practices aimed to enhance a striker’s shooting accuracy, ward off opposing wizards’ curses on a midfielder (a ferociously contested area in football), or assist a goalkeeper in keeping the ball out of his net. Anthropologist Arnold Pannenborg observed similar traditions in contemporary Cameroon:

The team manager received instructions as to how to prepare the jerseys himself. “I had to put all the jerseys on the table,” Kalla says. “I lit five candles around it, a red one, yellow, black, blue and green. I was merely following orders. He [the spiritual adviser] wanted me to fill a glass of water and say some prayers. The water turned green. This means that the spirits were present and helping. The water started to give out a very strong

scent. I poured the water over the jerseys. The next day I gave the players their jerseys. Any evil spirits that may have been among them would disappear. It brought unity to the team. One spirit.<sup>58</sup>

Teams did not always shy away from deploying “negative” magic, or sorcery either. In one common practice, a charm was buried below the playing surface to adversely affect opponents’ performance. Sorcerers also unleashed “sympathetic magic,” as shown by Royer in Burkina Faso: “In order to paralyze a football team, eleven pieces of a broom, one for each player, are cut and tied together, or to paralyze a goalkeeper, the legs of a frog are tied on its back.”<sup>59</sup> Sorcerers cast spells and curses to disable the opposition. Strikers and goalkeepers—key players on the field—were preferred targets, although referees were also targeted to elicit favorable calls or prevent adverse decisions. In this spiritually loaded context, the duties and responsibilities of religious specialists included protecting playing grounds and stadiums, as well as hotels, eating facilities, buses, and other spaces used by the players, coaches, and staff. Political scientist Michael Schatzberg has interpreted sorcery as an African way to “level the playing field” between unevenly matched teams and also as a means to gain individual success and financial returns.<sup>60</sup> Despite repeated attempts by regulatory bodies to stamp out magic and sorcery, this “game within a game” between magicians, sorcerers, and spiritual advisors continues to shape African soccerscapes. A famous incident took place on the pitch in Bamako in 2002, when the Malian police beat up and arrested Cameroonian goalkeeping coach Thomas Nkono before an African Nations Cup semifinal between Cameroon and host Mali. He was accused of “doing magic” and suspended for one year by CAF. Ultimately, it is important to recognize that many Africans regard football and magic as complementary, not mutually exclusive. Among practitioners, physical, technical, and tactical training are generally understood as necessary for any coach and team to achieve success, but so are religious specialists.<sup>61</sup>

#### rituals of Spectatorship

Fan rituals and traditions also increasingly gave a distinctive African character to soccer games. Home teams attracted devoted fans, such as those who attended the annual matches between Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar that began in 1926. These events were imbued with a festival atmosphere.

Traveling fans took advantage of the August bank holiday and half-price fares to board steamers to accompany their teams. “Work in the town came to a virtual standstill when the ships returned,” Laura Fair was told by elderly Zanzibari men, “as ‘everyone’ converged on the port to greet the teams as they come off the boat. The streets again were filled with the sounds of revelers and *ngoma* and *beni* bands as thousands of spectators proudly escorted the teams back to their clubhouses.”<sup>62</sup> Seven hundred Zanzibaris made the trip to the mainland for the 1939 competition, when “*Ngoma* festivities went on for three days and nights, involving even Indians and Europeans. Social clubs such as the Jamil El Manzil Club and Japani Club enthusiastically supported the event, staging *masegese* and *lelemama* dances to entertain their guests. Meanwhile, the Sudanese Sports club arranged *dansi* (Western style dancing) events over two days.”<sup>63</sup> In Angola, football and music would come to be similarly intertwined in black working-class neighborhoods of 1950s Luanda.<sup>64</sup>

In the days before concrete stadiums and admission charges, anybody could go to football grounds. As the previous examples from East Africa suggest, the games were spectacles, feasts, and popular entertainment all wrapped into one. Typically, music and dance filled the air. Fans dressed in club colors chanted in support of their team and favorite players. Drums and other percussion instruments provided the soundtrack to matches. Fans cheered and chanted in support of their team, jeered the opposition, sang and danced, and some strummed ukuleles and guitars.

In South Africa, migrants carried the tradition of praising and praise names (*izibongo*)<sup>65</sup> from their homesteads to cities and towns, where the practice was then incorporated into African rituals of spectatorship. “It is the same with the Zulu warrior — a recitation,” the late Sam Shabangu, a founding member of Orlando Pirates, told Richard Maguire. ‘I know your story, you did this, you killed like this — that’s exactly what these names are for. It’s through your actions, your bravery, that you get your name. The fans are saying these players are their great warriors.’<sup>66</sup> A footballer’s physical attributes or technical abilities often inspired fans’ nicknames for him. Sometimes players could also be compelled to deliver a particular style of play in accordance with their nicknames. Peter Sitsila told me how his trademark dribbling move, the half-moon, earned him the Xhosa name “Jikeletshobeni” (he who controls the reins). This difficult but highly entertaining move entails sliding the ball past one side of the defender while sprinting around the other side, disorienting the opponent for a moment,

then regaining control of the ball and moving forward. The cue for Sitsila to perform the half-moon came from fans chanting “Jikele! Jikele!”<sup>67</sup>

Praise names also revealed interesting aspects of the everyday experiences and consciousness of urban Africans. In South Africa between the wars, Sitsila’s older brother earned the nickname “British Empire” after working on the diamond mines. In the Johannesburg area, match reports were filled with nicknames evoking colonial ties, such as “Cape to Cairo” and “Prince of Wales”; educational achievements or aspirations, such as “Junior Certificate”; and appreciation for American automobiles, such as “Buick” and “V8.” Other nicknames were more mundane, but no less telling, as with “Waqafa Waqafa” (heavy drinker, delinquent, in Zulu) and “Scotch Whiskey,” the latter name reportedly given because the player’s performance “drives the sorrows away and brings enjoyment” to the crowd. Similar naming practices were observed elsewhere in colonial Africa, often inspired by Hollywood movies and African American cultural styles. Overall, players’ nicknames demonstrated the continuities and changes of agrarian cultures in an urban milieu as well as the meritocratic possibilities of sport. As an expression of fan culture, nicknames bestowed social honor on students, manual laborers, clerks, and teachers, and in the process soldered the bonds of affection and loyalty between supporters and their sporting heroes.

The emotional dimension of the game also sparked rivalries between teams that could be fierce and lead to fan violence. Episodes of crowd disorder, often fueled by consumption of alcoholic drinks, sometimes spilled onto the pitch. In Johannesburg in 1933, ethnic gangs of migrant youths (*amalaita*) “attacked those who were playing football and a dangerous situation arose. Women and children fled before a shower of stones. Many people were injured including the referee.”<sup>68</sup> In Brazzaville in the 1940s and 1950s, commentators noted the “‘unsportsmanlike’ conduct of spectators and players” and the warlike character of certain matches.<sup>69</sup> Tragically, in Johannesburg in 1940, a referee was murdered by an angry mob. Africa was not unique in this respect, for violent crowd disorders and stadium disasters occurred in Europe and Latin America as well. And for the most part, African rituals of spectatorship were peaceful and celebratory; what people came to see was the fine football on display.

#### **distinctive playing Styles**

African players, like Latin Americans and continental Europeans, did not simply mimic British ways of playing. They developed their own playing

styles, providing an example of how “one of the pleasures of football’s internationalism was that different countries played it differently.”<sup>70</sup> This outcome frustrated colonial officers who believed that teaching Africans how to play the game was as important as getting them to accept football in the first place. As historian Terence Ranger explains, “The precise form of each European game was crucially necessary to convey, for it was the peg on which to hang ‘attitudes, rules, leadership, team-work, community feeling, self-imposed discipline and organizational and emotional associations.’”<sup>71</sup> Predictably, these paternalistic efforts generally failed.

While many contemporary international football commentators make references to an “African” style of play, history shows that many different ways of playing existed within the continent, and that these were hybrid styles that changed constantly. Beginning in the 1920s and 1930s, Africans adapted English “kick-and-rush,” the Scottish short-passing game, and other European modes of play to suit local sensibilities and conditions. Some tentative observations can be made about African football styles based on scraps of written documents, oral history interviews, and educated guesswork.

Local circumstances fundamentally shaped how Africans played the game. Streets, sandlots, and open spaces honed boys’ ball control, toughness, and improvisational skills. Street games had neither referees nor time limits and involved any number of players. They produced a grassroots aesthetic that placed a premium on “spectacular display of individual talent . . . often more memorable, more enjoyable, and ultimately, even more desirable than the final score.”<sup>72</sup> As Conrad Stuurman recalled about growing up in black Cape Town, “We played with tennis balls. When we played in the streets we maybe played three or four or five ’cause in the streets it’s very narrow, you can’t take a big team.” Like most young footballers in Africa, Stuurman had fond memories of time spent sharpening his crafty style. “When I’ve got the ball and I wanted to beat somebody, I played the ball against the pavement, on the other side I’d get the ball back again. That’s how we came to know the wall pass. I didn’t even know there was a name like wall pass! [Laughs.]”<sup>73</sup>

Material poverty, lack of equipment (only the most privileged boys could afford football cleats, for example), and inadequate facilities influenced vernacular styles of play. Yet many players overcame this inconvenience. According to a typical comment on playing barefoot in the 1930s, “We knew what the disadvantage [was] if we played barefooted and how to avoid somebody with boots . . . you don’t have to collide with him. Let him

chase the ball; before he gets close . . . I dish my ball off. That's what taught us good football!"<sup>74</sup> Salif Keita of Mali, voted "African Footballer of the Year" by *France Football* in 1970 (see chapter 5), remembered what football was like growing up in colonial Bamako:

For me, playing for fun, being together joined by the same love for the ball, for the full well-being of body and mind, was amply sufficient to make me happy. One goal, one smart dribbling move gave me sheer enchantment. Also the pleasure of juggling the ball and letting my instinct take the lead. Because in Mali especially, all over Africa actually, technical moves are spontaneous, improvised, not learned through regular training as it is the case in Europe. I must say that at the time I was madly keen on dribbling. Juggling, dribbling, faking, a successful nutmeg [putting the ball through the opponent's legs], there is nothing more natural for the African soccer player! What I achieved in those neighborhood matches my young partners were also capable of. It was only a question of daring.<sup>75</sup>

Despite such resilience and creativity, lack of formal coaching and fitness training made it painfully difficult to acquire the full range of technical and tactical fundamentals. Contemporary match reports in local newspapers rarely described goals scored from headers, combination passing, and set plays (e.g., corners and free kicks)—the kinds of plays that tend to succeed only with formal instruction and extensive practice on adequate pitches. As a result of playing on grounds that were either hard and dusty or impossibly muddy, individual ball control and dexterity trumped more systematic play. "They are ball controllers [i.e., dribblers], but that is not football," wrote a French observer in Cameroon in 1941. "However, I noticed some players who, in the hands of a good coach, would be able to improve."<sup>76</sup> Thus, contrary to racialist explanations that view sporting accomplishments as the outcome of "innate" attributes of a particular racial group, African football skills were developed through extensive training, sporting artistry, and tough urban masculinity.

Top clubs in city leagues exhibited the most refined approaches to playing. As the number of teams expanded in the late 1930s and into the 1940s, competition increased and experience and physical force alone could not guarantee success. Some players began practicing once a week, either playing on their own or organizing a late afternoon intrasquad scrimmage. Even

so, before 1940 it was almost unheard of for teams to have trained, full-time coaches. But from time to time, touring European professional and amateur teams gave players and fans tutorials on European play. In South Africa, for example, visits by the Scottish professional side Motherwell in 1931 and 1934 triggered a shift in black football away from kick-and-rush and *laissez-faire* marking toward the more intricate short-passing game and a more guarded defensive approach. "Playing a fine Motherwell" became a symbol of urban sophistication and success for Highlanders Football Club in Johannesburg.<sup>77</sup> Hybrid modes of playing drew on the pace, power, endurance, and directness of the English and the improvisational showmanship and rowdiness of street soccer.

The importance of vernacular modes of play to the growing popularity of the game in colonial Africa was reflected in many player nicknames. In Brazzaville, Martin noted how crowds "showed their appreciation for teamwork such as passing and solid defence, but their affection for individual stars was marked."<sup>78</sup> Congolese fans christened players according to technical qualities and styles, as in the case of a goalkeeper named "Elastic" and other stars named "Dancer," "Phantom," "Magician," "Steamboat," and "the Law." In Léopoldville, African players occasionally attended coaching clinics conducted by Belgian instructors who operated on the racist assumption that European "scientific knowledge" could be combined with "the natural flexibility" and "real athletic qualities" of Africans.<sup>79</sup> However, local footballers refused to play the European way. According to a European observer writing in 1938, their performance was so extraordinary that he wondered whether he was watching "a football match or an acrobatic exercise." In interwar Zanzibar, audiences also reportedly "held a definite preference for the beauty of fast, bold, and unconventional moves by individual players, an emphasis that remains a defining feature of the island style to this day."<sup>80</sup> In short, African players and fans self-consciously enjoyed the cleverness, beauty, and excitement of feinting and dribbling, delightful moves that elated fans but also captured the cultural importance of creativity, deception, and skill in getting around difficulties and dangerous situations in colonial societies.

On the eve of the Second World War, the game in Africa was organized into formal clubs and competitions and was being politically, socially, and culturally Africanized. The continent's engagement with the latest trends in international football was summed up by Egypt's participation in the 1934 World Cup in Italy, the first time an African country played in the

tournament. But football had also grown in popularity outside its strongholds of the Maghreb and South Africa. The game spilled out of the main cities and towns and was being played by young boys in rural areas. By the 1940s, “the game was universal” even in remote areas, where “herd-boys spent any spare moments kicking a tennis-ball around,” learning how to juggle, pass, and trap by “kicking a tennis-ball up against the wall of one of the typical round-huts. This was excellent practice since it demanded absolute accuracy.”<sup>81</sup> By this time, the relationship between football and politics was becoming increasingly close.

chapter two     *The Africanization of Football, 1920s–1940s*

1. Peter Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2004), 65.

2. *Ibid.*, 125–30.

3. See, for example, Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher, eds., *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003); Stephan F. Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); Robert Morrell, ed., *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press; London: Zed Press, 2001).

4. Andreas Eckert, “Cultural Commuters: African Employees in Late Colonial Tanzania,” in *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa*, ed. Benjamin N. Lawrance, Lynn Osborn, and Richard L. Roberts (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 251.

5. John Iliffe, *Honour in African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 299–300.

6. Heather Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 46–47.

7. Wiebe Boer, “A Story of Heroes, of Epics,” in *Football in Africa: Conflict, Community and Conciliation*, ed. Gary Armstrong and Richard Giulianotti (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 63.

8. Bassirou Sanogo, *La longue marche du football burkinabé* (Ougadougou: Éditions Sidwaya, 1998), 11–12. Other French firms active in Bobo included Compagnie Française de l’Afrique Occidentale and Société Commerciale de l’Ouest Africain.

9. Rémi Clignet and Maureen Stark, “Modernisation and Football in Cameroun,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 12, no. 3 (1974): 409–10; Phyllis Martin,

*Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 102–3; Adolphe Ogouyon, “Le football au pays de Vodoun: Le cas du Bénin,” *Sociétés et Réprésentations* (December 1998): 153–65.

10. Hyder Kindy, *Life and Politics in Mombasa* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1972), 94.

11. Excellent overviews of urban studies and urban historiography in Africa are

Bill Freund, *The African City: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

2007); David A. Anderson and Richard Rathbone, eds., *Africa's Urban Past* (Oxford:

James Currey, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000); Catherine Coquery-

ford, “The Process of Urbanization in Africa (from the Origins to the

Beginning of Independence),” *African Studies Review* 34, no. 1 (1991): 1–98; and

Frederick Cooper, “Urban Space, Industrial Time, and Wage Labor in Africa,” in

Frederick Cooper, *Struggle for the City: Migrant Labor, Capital, and the State in Urban Africa*, ed.

Frederick Cooper (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983), 7–50.

12. See Peter Alegi with Robert Vassen, “Moonlighters Football Club: A History,” <http://www.overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/sidebar.php?id=15> (April 15, 2009).

13. A similar process unfolded in Zanzibar, see Laura Feit, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890–1945*

(Athens: Ohio University Press, London: James Currey, 2001), chap. 5.

14. Soter Tsanga, *Le football camerounais: Des origines à l'indépendance* (Yaoundé: Centre d’Édition et de Production de Manuels, 1969), 56.

15. Charles Van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labor in Southern Rhodesia*,

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also David Goldblatt, *The Ball Is Round: A Global History of Soccer* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2008), 485.

27. Ahmed Alawad Sikainga, "City of Steel and Fire": *A Social History of Atbara, Sudan's Railway Town, 1906–1984* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 84.

28. Seth Mataba Boois, *An Illustrated History of the Game of Football in Namibia, 1900–2000* (Windhoek: Namibia Economic Development Services, 2003), 6.

29. Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 112.

30. Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, 244–45.

31. Alegi, *Laduma!* 31.

32. Ossie Stuart, "Players, Workers, and Protestors: Social Change and Soccer in Colonial Zimbabwe," in *Sport, Ethnicity and Identity*, ed. Jeremy MacClancy (Oxford: Berg, 1996), 177–78.

33. Alegi, *Laduma!* chap. 5; Tsuruta, "Simba or Yangza?" 201, 231; Marissa L'Amour, *Intonations: A Social History of Music and Nation in Luanda, Angola, from 1945 to Recent Times* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008), 71–77.

34. See Bénédicte Van Peel, "Aux Débuts du football congolais," in *Itinéraires croisés de la modernité au Congo Belge, 1920–1950*, edited by Jean-Luc Vérité (Paris: Karthala, 2001), 168; Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 100–101; Théophile Muko, *Évolution du sport au Congo* (Kinshasa: Okapi, 1970), 19–27; Alegi, "Katanga v Johannesburg."

35. As a general rule, taxes levied on Africans contributed a significant portion of funds for African sport and leisure.

36. Stephen Borouze, *The Saga of Accra Hearts of Oak Sporting Club* (Accra:

note 5 to p AG s 5 25-33 139

47. Chipande, "Competitive Football in Zambia," 51–72; see also Ridgeway Liwene, *The Zambian Soccer Scene* (Lusaka: LPPUHO, 2009).

48. Nuno Domingos, "Football and Colonialism, Domination and Appropriation: the Mozambican Case," *Soccer and Society* 8, no. 4 (2007): 478–94.

49. Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 137.

50. Christian Brumberger, *La partita di calcio: Etimologia di una passione* (Rome: Editori Eumeni, 1995), 244–45.

51. This section draws heavily on my *Baduma!* chap. 5.

52. *Bantu World*, August 23, 1941.

53. Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 122. Subsequent quotes in this paragraph are from this source.

54. Deville-Danthu, *Le sport*, 301.

55. *Gazette du Cameroun*, June 15, 1936, cited in Tsanga, *Le football camerounais*, 78.

56. Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 121.

57. Terence Ranger, "Pugilism and Pathology: African Boxing and the Black Urban Experience in Southern Rhodesia," in *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History*, ed. William J. Baker and James A. Mangan (New York: Africana, 1987), 205–6.

58. Arnold Pannenborg, "How to Win a Football Match in Cameroon" (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2008), 147.

59. Patrick Rover, "The Spirit of Competition: *Wak* in Burkina Faso," *Africa* 72,

# CHAPTER THREE:

## African Soccerscapes

how a Continent Changed the World's Game

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in association with the  
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MAP 1 Colonial Africa, 1914. Map by Claudia K. Walters. Source: <http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/images/colonialism1914.jpg>.



MAP 2 Contemporary Africa and major cities. Map by Claudia K. Walters. Source:  
<http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/images/capitals.jpg>.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Chapter three

### Making nations in late colonial Africa, 1940s–1964

ASANTI COLONIAL militancy intensified in the 1940s and 1950s, African nationalist movements forged connections with popular football teams, players, and fans. Stadiums and clubhouses became arenas in which workers, intellectuals, business owners, and the unemployed challenged colonial power and expressed a shared commitment to racial equality and self-determination. Football constructed a fragile sense of nationhood in political entities arbitrarily created by colonial powers and fueled Africa's broader quest for political liberation. Until now, however, academic historians have overlooked the role of sport in African independence movements.<sup>1</sup>

To demonstrate this, I will build around three dramatic cases. The first is Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa. I chronicle how "Zik," the nationalist politician and journalist Nnamdi Azikiwe, who was Nigeria's first president, founded black-controlled sporting clubs to counter colonial racism and foster a sense of nationhood among Nigerians. The second example is Algeria. During the war of independence against France, the National Liberation Front (FLN) formed a "national" football team in exile. Featuring top Algerian professionals based in France, this sporting symbol of the emerging nation legitimized the leadership of the FLN and raised global awareness of the Algerian cause. The final example comes from South Africa. In the aftermath of the rise of apartheid, black football leagues and organizations began to challenge racial segregation as well as the white minority's claim to represent "South Africa" in international sport. In one of the first major indictments of the Pretoria regime, the antiapartheid

South African Soccer Federation actually secured the country's suspension from FIFA in 1961.

#### football, Anticolonial Movements, and "nigerian-ness"

Football in Nigeria began under British colonial rule at the turn of the twentieth century, and by the 1950s it was the national game.<sup>2</sup> During the Second World War, the center of gravity shifted from its birthplace at the Hope Waddell Training Institution in the southeastern town of Calabar (see chapter 1) to the booming city of Lagos in the southwest, where the population increased from 126,000 in 1931 to 267,000 in 1953 to 364,000 by 1961.<sup>3</sup>

Nigeria's postwar economic expansion, the result of high commodity prices and imperial developmental policies, was a crucial factor in driving the growth of Lagos football. Between 1946 and 1960, the wage labor force increased by 80 percent while wages for manual laborers increased by 70 percent.<sup>4</sup> As a government and business center, Lagos developed an ethnically and religiously diverse population with many civil servants, railway men, merchants, artisans, elite professionals, ex-servicemen, and laborers. The city's wage-earning men wanted modern entertainment in their leisure time and had the means to pay for it.<sup>5</sup> Lagos also boasted the highest concentration of schools per resident in Nigeria, so legions of young players and fans in the city grew up loving this fun, inexpensive, and accessible game. Thousands of Lagosian men, and some women, chose to spend their limited free time and disposable income on football.

The clubs in Lagos, as in many African cities, were often based in government departments. Colonial employers aggressively recruited talented African players by offering them relatively secure and good-paying jobs while treating them like second-class citizens. The racial prejudice embedded in this widespread practice was satirized in a political cartoon in a Lagos newspaper (see figure 2).

As the game gained a predominantly Nigerian constituency, especially among Western-educated men, Nnamdi Azikiwe emerged as a key figure connecting sport and politics in the late colonial period. Like many leaders of anti-imperialist movements in colonial Africa and Asia, Zik cleverly turned the values and principles embedded in the "civilizing mission" of the West, including sport, against the colonizers. In the 1930s and 1940s, white civil servants maintained a tight grip on football administration, which maintained racially segregated leagues for Europeans and Africans. Zik's commitment to the meritocratic ideals of the British "game

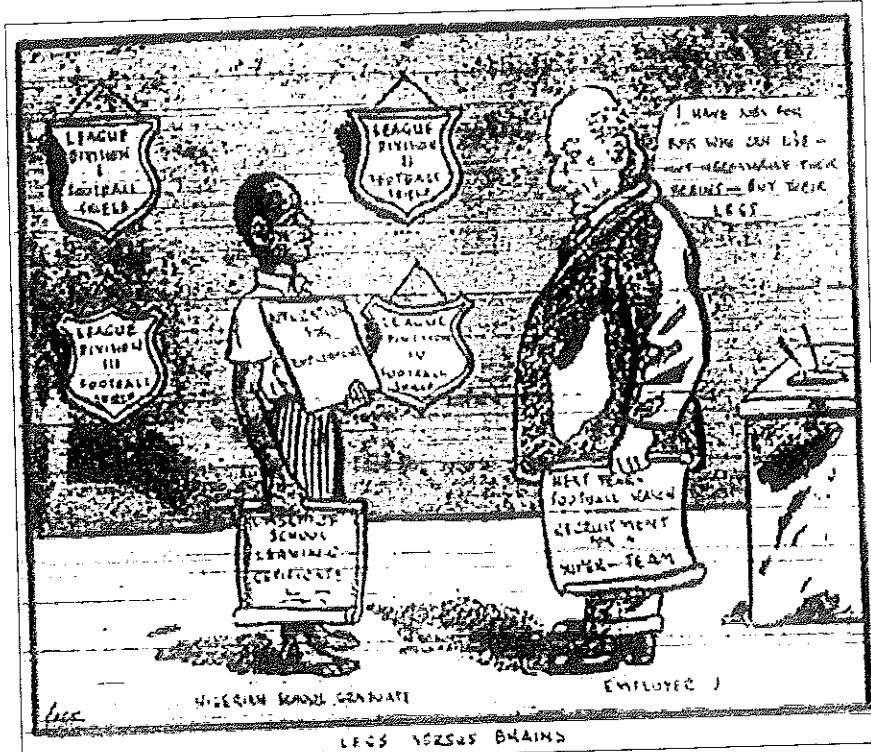


fiGURE 2 Cartoon from *West African Pilot*, July 23, 1949

ethic"—fair play, courage, physical strength, and self-reliance—inspired his belief in football as a populist medium for the promotion of racial equality and self-determination.<sup>6</sup>

Azikwe had himself been a gifted athlete. Like most African boys of his age, he had learned football in the streets of Lagos. Zik then played for Wesleyan Boys' High School and then Hope Waddell Training Institution in Calabar, the birthplace of football in Nigeria. In Lagos, he joined the Diamond Football Club, winning the city championship in 1923. Two years later, he transported his passion for sport to the United States, where he participated in numerous sports and captained the 1929–30 Lincoln University (Pennsylvania) soccer team. His sporting experience at Lincoln enriches our understanding of how historically black colleges and universities in the United States opened new vistas on the black diaspora and exposed early African nationalist leaders to the international dimensions of race and anticolonialism. Once back in West Africa Zik was spurred to action by the persistence of racial segregation and racism in sports.

Two specific incidents of discrimination assaulted his dignity and spurred him to action. While working in Accra as editor of the *African Morning Post*, he was denied the opportunity to compete in a track-and-field event at the 1934 Empire Games (now Commonwealth Games) because Nigeria was not allowed to participate. Then the Yoruba Tennis Club in Lagos rejected his application for membership due to his Igbo background. “I decided to establish an athletic club,” he wrote in his autobiography, “which would open the doors of its membership to sportsmen and women of all races, nationalities, tribes and classes residing in Nigeria.”<sup>7</sup> Zik’s Athletic Club (ZAC) was inaugurated in Lagos in April 1938.

On the eve of the Second World War, ZAC was the only major African-controlled sports club, as opposed to the white clubs for administrators and other Europeans and the teams controlled by colonial officials and British men employed in the private sector in Nigeria. The club symbolized African self-organization and modernity. Its ethnic diversity and urban cosmopolitanism embodied its founder’s brand of pan-ethnic African nationalism. Thanks to funds from Azikiwe’s press empire, which provided income as well as publicity, ZAC had facilities for football, athletics, swimming, boxing, tennis, and cricket. In 1940, the club built a small stadium in the Lagos suburb of Yaba, and then in 1942 it went on to win both the Lagos League and the War Memorial Cup. This remarkable success inspired Azikiwe to open ZAC branches throughout Nigeria, from Abekouta in the west and Port Harcourt in the south to Kano in the north.

The rise of ZAC in Nigeria mirrored trends elsewhere in British Africa. Football teams on the East African island of Zanzibar enabled Swahili-speaking Muslim men to sharpen their nationalist consciousness and challenge colonial authority.<sup>8</sup> In Sudan’s railway town of Atbara in the 1940s and 1950s, football clubs and the sociability they encouraged enabled trade unionists, nationalists, communists, intellectuals, and other men to challenge colonialism.<sup>9</sup> Dr. Abdel Halim Mohamed, a former president of the Confederation of African Football, put it this way:

We had our social clubs and we were talking about independence. The British had accused us of being *afendeya* (elitist and bourgeois)—that we were not with the masses of the people, that we do not represent them. As a counter to this we started football clubs as social clubs where we would talk the principles of civics to the masses—that this is their country and that they

have the right to independence. This helped to show that while it was we, the intelligentsia, who were the architects of the independence movement, we were backed by the people.<sup>10</sup>

During the war years Azikiwe took the Lagos ZAC football club on “goodwill tours” throughout Nigeria. These tours permitted Azikiwe and other educated nationalists to openly challenge colonial authority at the same time that they were supporting the Allied effort in the war, though this was done through “thinly veiled anti-colonial rhetoric in the guise of pro-war support.”<sup>11</sup> The 1941–42 tour drew record crowds in every town. The touring team usually followed the same pattern: it played (and usually won) against a local ZAC side in front of two thousand to five thousand spectators. The match was followed by a speech criticizing colonial rule, in which Azikiwe regularly pointed out the hypocrisy of Britain in waging a war for “freedom and democracy” while oppressing Africans and denying them the right to self-determination enshrined in the Atlantic Charter. In this way, the tour showed how a “framework of sporting values that stressed playing the game for the game’s sake . . . had been formulated, propagated and held up as a symbol of cultural superiority by the colonialists was now used by Zik and his press as a gauge of imperial decadence and unfitness to rule.”<sup>12</sup>

Each stop on the tour closed with an evening fund-raising dance where local grievances were also aired. The 1941–42 football tour helped popularize the game nationwide and strengthened the national political networks of Azikiwe and the educated elite. While this kind of anticolonial rhetoric was already part of Nigerian politics, what was new about Azikiwe’s approach was the extension of the geographical reach of these ideas (through the spread of football) and his creation of a political machine.

The second goodwill tour of 1942–43 aimed to raise money for the Nigerian Prisoners of War Fund. Wartime construction of new roads and communication infrastructure enabled the team to travel longer distances in a shorter time. After traveling to Ibadan in the west, the ZAC tourists journeyed to the northern cities of Kaduna, Kano, Zaria, Jos, and Makurdi, before heading south into the Niger Delta. As in the previous year, huge crowds gathered in every town, eager to take in a match between ZAC Lagos, rechristened “Bombers” (and a second team named “Spitfires”—both commemorating the aircraft of the Battle of Britain), and the local ZAC branch team. The improving standard of play in Nigeria made the tour more competitive and entertaining. On rare occasions, antagonism on the pitch degenerated into

chaos. Toward the end of the tour, ZAC actually had to abandon a match in Port Harcourt because of a hotly disputed refereeing decision. Despite this unpleasant incident, the two tours of 1941–43 soldered the connections between distant places and diverse people through an increasingly popular leisure activity. In doing so, football fueled the construction of a frail sense of nationhood, one that was resisted in Northern Nigeria and eventually reduced Zik's support to a largely regional base in the southeast.

The launch of the Governor's Cup in 1945 bolstered this emerging idea of nationhood. The competition followed the format of the Football Association (FA) Cup in England. Initially, it fell under the control of the Lagos and District Amateur Football Association. But in 1948 the Nigerian Football Association (NFA) took over responsibility, boosting the game far beyond the old strongholds of Lagos and Calabar. The number of teams entering the Cup grew from thirteen in 1945 to eighty-seven in 1959. As the competition expanded, the size of the crowds swelled. For example, forty thousand spectators attended the 1951 Cup semifinal between Plateau and Benin.<sup>12</sup> In 1955, the NFA renamed the trophy the Nigeria Challenge Cup (a name it retains to this day), signaling the impending demise of British rule and the emergence of an independent nation-state. While every major region supplied at least one Challenge Cup champion by 1960, the dominant side of this era was the Lagos-based Railway club. Backed by a powerful government department and a seemingly endless supply of talent, such as Titus Okere and Tesilimi "Thunder" Balogun, Railway won six Governor's Cup titles between 1946 and 1957 and nine Lagos league championships between 1943 and 1956.<sup>13</sup>

The process of constructing "Nigerian-ness" in football gathered pace thanks to an enterprising black press. The race-conscious and internationalist *West African Pilot* newspaper introduced popular journalism to Nigeria. It was Azikiwe's flagship daily, with an estimated circulation of about twenty-five thousand (and many more readers). The *Pilot* made football discourse an integral part of indigenous print media. The cumulative effect of the *Pilot*'s diligent coverage of Cup and league competitions asserted the humanity of black workers in a colonial political economy and, in the process, afforded African men new opportunities to acquire social honor. The *Pilot*'s open contempt for the myth of the separation of politics and sport absorbed football into the Nigerian anticolonial struggle. The game became part of the vernacular language of nationalism and provided a venue for the representation of a "Nigerian" identity.

The June 16, 1953, issue of the *Pilot* showed how football was used as a political metaphor with an article entitled “Nigeria Wins Freedom Cup in Thrilling Political Soccer.” It recounted a fictional match in which “Britain and Reactionaries United lost considerable ground when Nigeria beat them by a score of 10 goals to nil,” thanks to Azikiwe’s goalscoring feats. The story went on to describe how this “woeful defeat of imperialism” sparked a raucous stadium celebration with six million [sic] spectators singing freedom songs! Clearly, Azikiwe’s newspapers contained much that was self-serving and self-important. Yet the *Pilot* also demonstrated some of the ways in which football and the media in Nigeria “created the possibility of a new form of imagined community . . . [and] set the stage for the modern nation.”<sup>14</sup>

A football tour of England in 1949 brought the definition of a “Nigerian nation” into sharper focus.<sup>15</sup> Colonial authorities organized the tour to showcase British political, economic, and cultural power at a time of growing anticolonial and labor protests in Nigeria and in Africa as a whole. The selection committee included Zik but was supervised by Captain D. H. Holley, the white chairman of the Nigerian Football Association, demonstrating how the British were trying to extend African representation while retaining ultimate power and authority. While the captain was from the Marine club, Railway and ZAC contributed seven and five players, respectively, to a team of eighteen. The men were mainly civil servants and colonial government employees. Nine of them had attended the Hope Waddell Training Institution. The group disembarked on August 29 in the port of Liverpool. These “ambassadors of friendship,” as Holley dubbed the team, played nine matches against amateur and lower-tier professional clubs. Playing barefoot in all but one match, the Nigerians won two, drew two, and lost five.

The African side impressed many English observers. “[Titus] Okere is worth £15,000 and a row of houses. Their artistry is superb, their deportment and their behaviour exemplary,” noted a *Daily Graphic* reporter.<sup>16</sup> Astonishing performances by Railway’s Okere and “Thunder” Balogun made them the first Nigerians to sign professional contracts in Europe. Okere went to Swindon Town in 1952, while Balogun signed with Queen’s Park Rangers in 1956, part of a trend examined in chapter 5.<sup>17</sup> The team also made an impact on Nigerian fans in the stands. “I was very proud to see them play,” Raphael Shonekan recalled. “People were thrilled. They couldn’t believe it you know, it was the first team to come and play in England from Africa.”<sup>18</sup> The pride in a Nigerian-ness that extended beyond

territorial and political boundaries—an imagined community imbued with pan-African sentiments—was evident.

On the way back from England, the tourists stopped in Freetown, Sierra Leone, where Nigeria defeated the locals by two goals to nil. More than a decade before independence, this match marked the birth of Nigeria's national team. On an administrative level, the game became more "national" in the 1950s thanks to a "northernization" program that brought significant numbers of Northern Nigerian (especially Hausa) functionaries into the Nigerian FA, which had been perceived by some as overly represented by southerners and especially Igbo people originally from the southeast. In 1959, the last British official left the NFA, and on August 22, 1960, a few weeks prior to its formal independence, Nigeria joined the world football body FIFA.

Nigeria's international experience was not unique. Representative teams from Accra had played against Lagos several times before the creation in 1951 of the Jalco Cup (named after a local auto dealer). This new intercolonial trophy crystallized national identities in the 1950s by pitting Gold Coast (now Ghana) against Nigeria in Accra and Lagos. Nigeria won the Jalco Cup four times and the Gold Coast three, including a 7–0 victory in 1955. In 1957, the teams drew 2–2 in Accra, the only time the home side failed to win. The similarities between Gold Coast and Nigeria did not end here. In 1951, a Gold Coast team also toured England.<sup>19</sup> Kwame Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party used football and popular culture in 1950s to increase their popularity among urban constituencies and young men in particular.

Intercolonial contests, as the previous chapter noted, had their origins in French Africa. The Coupe d'Afrique Occidentale Française (French West Africa Cup), inaugurated in 1947, was a new competition that featured popular clubs like Union Sportive Indigène, Jeanne d'Arc, and Union Sportive Gorée from Dakar; Jeanne d'Arc and Foyer de Soudan from Bamako; Racing Club from Conakry; Jeunesse Club and ASEC from Abidjan; and Étoile Filante from Lomé.<sup>20</sup> As in Nigeria, the media popularized the game, but in French West Africa radio played a key role. The Senegalese radio announcer "Allou" merged traditional oral performance with modern technology to become a kind of football griot (bard). He is remembered for memorable broadcasts like a 1951 match in which Diop Iba Mar scored a last-minute game-winning penalty only to collapse and die of a heart attack on the pitch moments later.<sup>21</sup> By listening to Allou on the radio, new fans were drawn into football.

The French West Africa Cup expanded from 16 clubs participating in 1947 to 302 in 1958–59. In order to accommodate this enormous pool of teams, regional qualifiers were introduced in the early 1950s. In Dakar, Cotonou, Abidjan, Lome, and Bamako, thousands of spectators filled the local stadiums for marquee matches.

If French officials had imagined that the French West Africa Cup would distract Africans from political engagement and provide an example of the supposed “benefits” of membership in the French Empire, they must have been disappointed with the result.<sup>22</sup> On the pitch, competition encouraged the creation of embryonic national identities in the different territories of the federation: Senegal, Mauritania, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Benin, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Antagonism sparked rivalries that occasionally degenerated into violence and tended to undermine pan-African unity. The French “territorialization” policy of 1956, which granted each entity within the colonial federations control over domestic affairs while leaving foreign policy and defense matters under French control, further encouraged the emergence of distinct territorial, and therefore “national,” identities.<sup>23</sup> In the end, the French attempt to use sport as an example of more benevolent postwar colonial policies failed to pacify African politicians and their supporters.

Football and identity formation were also closely linked in the French and Belgian Congo. In Brazzaville and Léopoldville, the game “allowed fans to forget their differences and to forge a broader sense of identity when regional or international matches were staged. When a Brazzaville select team played against a Léopoldville team, Baongo and Poto-Poto fans buried their differences and became Brazzavillois.”<sup>24</sup> Beating European teams at their own game sparked widespread street celebrations. “And as independence approached, Brazzaville players joined their national team to play matches against other colonies in AEF [French Equatorial Africa]. Sport contributed to a growing sense of nationalism, as it has done all over the world.”<sup>25</sup> In the city of Élisabethville in the southern Katanga-Shaba region, the Belgians staged a sub-Saharan African championship in 1950. Much to the delight of the local population, Katanga defeated Northern Rhodesian and South African teams to take the title.<sup>26</sup> In many ways, then, intercolonial matches, national competitions, and domestic and international tours after 1945 were avenues of African cultural resistance that fuelled anticolonial nationalism. Everywhere on the continent, football teams and spectators contributed to the emerging consciousness of national identity and popular resistance to colonial rule.

### footballers of the revolution: the Algerian FLN team

One of the most dramatic examples of the linkage of African football to anticolonial resistance was the formation of the Algerian National Liberation Front's "national" team during the war of independence against France.<sup>27</sup> On April 13, 1958, ten Algerian professional players based in France surreptitiously left the country through Switzerland and Italy and made their way to Tunis, home of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Algeria (GPRA). The only setback was the arrest at the Franco-Swiss border of Mohamed Maouche of Stade Reims.<sup>28</sup> In a communiqué issued on April 15, the FLN explained the team's objectives: (1) to deny France the service of key players; (2) to heighten international awareness of the Algerian fight for independence; and (3) to demonstrate that the FLN's war enjoyed the broad support of Algerians, at home and abroad.<sup>29</sup>

The departure of the Algerian footballers from France made news all around the world. Even in the United States, the mainstream media covered the event. "Soccer got into French-Algerian politics," reported the *New York Times* in an article about a group of "Algerian Moslems" based in French professional teams who left "to join the nationalist cause against France."<sup>30</sup> *Time* magazine dubbed it "The Disappearing Act." Contextualizing the significance of the players' flight for an American audience, *Time* explained: "It was as if, overnight, the best Latin American baseball players in the major leagues—men like Chico Carrasquel, Bobby Avila, Minnie Minoso, Ruben Gomez—had fled the U.S. and challenged the Yankees and Braves for the world championship."<sup>31</sup> The American press reluctantly acknowledged the FLN's success: "The flight may not have been pure patriotism, but was far from kidnapping," noted *Time*. "The exodus, with its complicated movements of wives and children, luggage and refrigerators and washing machines, was elaborately planned over a long period of time to avert suspicion, and not a single player appealed to the police." At a press conference in Tunis, the Algerian players declined making grandiose political statements. Instead, the athletes relied on familiar sporting clichés, saying simply that "they were glad to be here."<sup>32</sup>

Algeria was France's oldest colony in Africa, beginning with the conquest of the capital city of Algiers in 1830. Football developed rather early, initially among the numerous European settlers but soon among the indigenous population, particularly students and urban elites. The idea for a national team in exile had its origins in the politicization of football before the Second

World War. As early as 1926, the sporting club of the Étoile Nord-Africaine was already a center of anticolonial sentiment. Occasional matches between Europeans (French settlers or *colons*, as well as Italians, Spaniards, and others) and Arab and Berber Muslims had political overtones, “characterized by their hard physical confrontations, not only between players on the pitch but also between spectators on the terraces, and, afterwards, outside the stadium.”<sup>33</sup> Violence peaked during the war of independence. In 1955, a riot broke out in Algiers during a match between Moulodia, an Algerian club, and AS Saint-Eugène, a white team. The FLN immediately ordered the withdrawal of all Muslim teams from the local league. The FLN’s turn to urban terrorism in 1956–57 led to a series of guerrilla attacks in stadiums, none more spectacular than the assassination of an Algerian collaborator at the French Cup Final in Paris in May 1957.<sup>34</sup>

That year the politicization of football deepened. An Algerian amateur team participated in a tournament held at the World Youth Festival in Moscow. In a public display of emerging nationhood, the Algerian delegation marched in front of Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev during the opening ceremony waving a new national flag.

The manager of the Algerian team in Moscow was Mohamed Boumezrag (1912–1969), soon to become the FLN team’s mastermind and technical director. Like many African footballers, Boumezrag had played professionally in France (1936–46). After the Second World War, he had embarked on a twelve-year coaching career and then joined the FLN underground in France. Boumezrag’s political consciousness was unusual in sporting circles. It was inspired by the experience of his grandfather, a prominent imam in the inland city of El-Asnam, who had spent thirty-three years in a colonial prison (1871–1904) for participating in local anticolonial resistance activities.<sup>35</sup> Soon after Boumezrag’s return from Moscow, the National Liberation Army (ALN) sent an amateur football team on a four-month fundraising tour through Libya, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Palestine (Jerusalem). This team of guerrillas enjoyed the full backing of the Comité de coordination et d’exécution, the executive cabinet of Algeria’s first sovereign parliament, the Conseil national de la révolution algérienne.<sup>36</sup>

Key leaders of the Algerian struggle appreciated football’s value as a symbol of national identity and as a legitimizing tool for the FLN itself. Ferhat Abbas, the moderate chief of the provisional government in the late 1950s, played the game in his youth. He had served as president of the Union Sportive Musulmane de Sétif (founded in 1933, now USFMS), a

leading Algerian club that supplied a steady stream of professional players to France.<sup>37</sup> For Abbas, the game was a vehicle for the assertion of Algerians' self-reliance and equality vis-à-vis their French colonial masters. As he put it, "On a man to man basis, on the field of football, we can show them who is really superior."<sup>38</sup> Ben Bella, Algeria's first president, shared Abbas's understanding of the interconnected nature of football and politics. Describing the racism and segregation that characterized high school sport in colonial Algeria, Bella recalled that Muslim students were permitted to play against the whites only once a year. "When I maneuvered at speed against the enemy [sic]," Bella pointed out, "nobody asked me whether I was European or Algerian—I either scored a goal or I didn't, and that was that. I was responsible only to myself for success and failure alike."<sup>39</sup> The metaphor of sport as an arena of meritocracy and fair play was taken seriously in the colonies, and it came to express African people's desire for equality and freedom. Like other anticolonial movements in Africa and Asia, Algerian nationalists interpreted Western sport as "a phenomenon of appropriation. That which was not freely offered by the colonizer was seized from him."<sup>40</sup> The FLN shrewdly concluded that football's capacity to symbolize Algerian national identity could make a unique contribution to the diplomatic and political struggle that defined the second phase of Algeria's war of independence.

It was Mohamed Boumezrag who set in motion the stunning strategy of 1958. The experience of Algerian amateur teams in Moscow and the Middle East in 1957 inspired the FLN leadership in exile to give Boumezrag the task of forming an Algerian "national" team in exile. Boumezrag immediately accepted. He set about meeting with Algerians in the French First and Second divisions. Avignon manager Mokhtar Arribi agreed to serve as manager/coach. The consensus among the Algerians seemed to be that if AS Monaco centerback Moustapha Zitouni agreed to join the FLN team, then so would the others.<sup>41</sup> A member of the French national team, Zitouni walked away from his dream of playing in the 1958 World Cup finals. "When I was contacted by the FLN in France, and by Boumezrag, I thought that I was being mobilized for my country's revolution," he recalled. "I felt it my duty to be part of the Algerian football team."<sup>42</sup> Three of Zitouni's teammates also left for Tunis: Abdelaziz Ben Tifour (who played for France in the 1954 World Cup), goalkeeper Abderrahmane Boubekeur, and defender Kaddour Bekhloufi. The rest of the group included winger Said Brahimi and midfielder Abdelhamid Bouchouk, both of Toulouse; forward

Amar Rouai of Angers; and the St. Etienne striker Rachid Mekhloufi. Like Zitouni, Mekhloufi “abandoned the French national team preparing for the World Cup Finals in Sweden and instantly became an Algerian national symbol.”<sup>43</sup> By late summer several more France-based Algerians joined the original group in Tunis.

Between April 1958 and December 1961 the FLN team toured North Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and East Asia. Facing teams of varying quality, the Algerians won sixty-five matches, drew thirteen, and lost thirteen.<sup>44</sup> Putting patriotism ahead of financial self-interest, these professional athletes left behind remunerative careers for a modest monthly salary of 50,000 francs (811 euros in 2008 value).

The anticolonial press and French sport newspapers and magazines pointed out the entertaining style of play of the Algerians. Thanks to Boumezrag’s careful management and the professionals’ abundant skills, the FLN side developed an approach based on finesse and fluid passing. This approach stood in stark contrast to the mechanistic “scientific football” of Eastern Europeans and the basic, direct game of East Asian sides. “In China and in Vietnam I learned something too,” Mekhloufi added: “their joy in playing, their simplicity in approach, qualities we tend to neglect.”<sup>45</sup> Tactically, the FLN usually adopted a 4-2-4 system, an attacking, physically taxing approach popularized by the championship Brazilian team led by Pelé. Zitouni anchored the defense. Mekhloufi spearheaded the attack. Boumezrag and Arribi gave players plenty of freedom of movement and tactical flexibility. As a result, the FLN team crafted a spectacular and effective style of play. Years later, Mekhloufi would reflect on the glaring difference between the romantic playing style of the FLN team and the risk-averting defensive approaches that became the norm in the 1970s: “In our day we tried to put on a show, to honor offensive play,” he said. “The difference with elite players today is enormous. On the pitch, we had fun. Young guys [today] seem to be performing work routines.”<sup>46</sup>

When the Algerians toured Jordan and Iraq, the imagined nation of Algeria was made real for ninety minutes by a team “in national uniform, standing under a national flag, singing an anthem and competing as a recognized nation.”<sup>47</sup> The FLN team’s anthem, “Kassaman” (We Pledge), written in prison by Moufdi Zakaria in the 1950s, would become independent Algeria’s national anthem. The team won all ten matches played in Jordan and Iraq.

At the same time, the FLN, like the antiapartheid South African Soccer Federation (discussed in the next section), applied for membership

in FIFA, claiming to represent the majority of the population in Algeria. But the world body, controlled at the time by mostly conservative Western Europeans, angrily rejected the application. So the FLN looked behind the Iron Curtain for support. While the Soviet bloc withheld weapons and other aid from the provisional government of the FLN due to cold war geopolitics, Eastern European countries diplomatically welcomed the Algerian footballers.<sup>48</sup> Because of FIFA's threats of severe penalties for any member nation that played against the FLN team, Western European nations refused to host the Algerians, thereby diluting the political impact of the FLN team.

But the Algerians persevered. In 1959, they organized two major international tours. The first took them to Eastern Europe, where the Algerians played a grueling schedule of twenty-one matches in ten weeks (from May to July) in Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Poland, the USSR, and Czechoslovakia. After suffering a first defeat in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, Boumezrag imposed a night curfew to instill tighter discipline in the squad. The highlights of the tour included a pair of 2-2 draws: with Petroleum Bucharest in front of ninety thousand people at the National Stadium, and with a strong Leningrad representative side at the Zenit Stadium. Overall, the Algerians won twelve, drew four, and lost five matches in Eastern Europe.

The second tour of 1959 took the FLN team to China and North Vietnam. In about six weeks in October and November, the team won eight matches, drew one, and lost two. This kind of sport diplomacy lubricated the already positive international relations between the Algerian government in exile, China, and North Vietnam. The FLN delegation was received at the highest level in both Beijing and Hanoi. They met with Zhou Enlai, and with Ho Chi Minh and General Vo Nguyen Giap (of Diem Bien Phu fame). After an easy win (5-0) over the Vietnamese, the Algerians listened to Prime Minister Phan Van Dong's powerful endorsement of sport's role in the quest for national liberation: "We defeated France and you have defeated us, therefore . . . you will defeat France."<sup>49</sup>

Even though the FLN team declined rapidly after this tour, it stood out in the late 1950s (a critical point in the war of independence) as an example of how a political movement, an organizer, and talented athletes came together to form part of a new country and state in the making—Algeria—and had a considerable impact on their country's fight for independence.

The Algerian team could never again match this level of political and national significance. As a result of the tectonic shifts in French policy towards

Algeria under Charles de Gaulle's Fifth Republic,<sup>50</sup> the FLN team essentially stopped playing. Between January 1960 and December 1961 the team embarked on only one overseas tour, to Eastern Europe in the spring of 1961. This final eight-week series saw the Algerians, fielding several new players recruited in France, win nine matches, draw six, and lose six in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. As the final round of political negotiations between France and the FLN got underway in Evian, the team bided its time on Tunisian beaches. Some players coached Tunisian clubs, while others resumed training in order to prepare themselves for a return to elite football in France. In the wake of the failed OAS coup in Paris, the FLN team traveled to Libya in December 1961 for its final matches. On June 6, 1962, the FLN "national" team was disbanded, and on July 5 Algeria gained its independence.

Many of the older team members stayed on to assist with growth and development of football in Algeria. Others, like Mekhloufi, returned to play in France. Mekhloufi later offered a sober assessment of his experience with political football. "For four years I became an absent, anonymous footballer, playing matches that were too easy and following a training regime that was not tough enough. I had lost the taste for effort, the necessary fight."<sup>51</sup> Even so, he and Zitouni starred in Algeria's stunning 2–0 victory over West Germany in Algiers on January 1, 1964, another symbol of the footballers' contributions to Algerian nationhood.<sup>52</sup>

#### South Africa: football against Apartheid

While Algerian football seemed poised for a future full of possibilities, apartheid South Africa was under attack, at home and abroad.<sup>53</sup> The rise of apartheid in 1948 had opened another front in the struggle against racism and segregation in colonial sport. South Africa was suspended from FIFA in 1961 and remained isolated from world football until 1992 (except for a one-year reprieve in 1963).

Football in South Africa was the leviathan of black sport,<sup>54</sup> while rugby and cricket were the main sports of the white minority. The term "black" refers to people classified as African, Coloured, and Indian (or Asian) by apartheid legislation. The popularity of football in black communities arose from conditions present throughout colonial Africa: economic expansion, massive urban growth, and access to Western education, albeit for a small minority. The antiapartheid South African Soccer Federation (SASF) was founded in Durban in September 1951. Building on the work of the

Transvaal and Natal Inter-Race Soccer Boards, established in 1935 and 1946, respectively, the SASF became the largest football body in the country. It brought together more than forty-six thousand African, Coloured, and Indian players in opposition to apartheid in sport. The emergence of the racially mixed SASF resembled the formation of the antiapartheid Congress Alliance, formed in 1955.

During the 1950s, black athletes, organizers, and nationalists fought a long struggle with the entrenched white interests reinforced by apartheid. The first were organized in the SASF, while the second were represented by the South African Football Association (SAFA). Internationally, the Federation fought a bitter struggle for recognition within FIFA.<sup>55</sup> Led by George Singh, a progressive Indian lawyer from Durban, in June 1954 the group applied for FIFA membership. It claimed to be the legitimate representative of South Africa, with more than three-quarters of its registered players. In November 1954, the Federation rejected the whites' condescending offer of affiliate membership without voting rights. Then, in May 1955, the Federation scored a significant victory when FIFA's Emergency Committee concluded that the white association "does not comprise and control all the clubs and the players in South Africa and therefore it has not the standing of a real national association that can govern and develop football in accordance with provision of article 3 of the Statutes of FIFA." However, FIFA did not accept the Federation's membership application because it did not include whites.

The struggle over the right to represent South Africa in world football was far from over. The first international delegation to visit South Africa for the purpose of addressing apartheid-related disputes was a FIFA commission of inquiry. In January 1956, the Lotsy commission confirmed earlier findings that SAFA represented a minority group and did not properly constitute a national association. However, FIFA agreed with SAFA that segregated football was a South African "tradition and custom." The world body recommended further negotiations in an attempt to defuse the situation.

Meanwhile, in March 1956, the white association deleted the offending racially exclusionary clause from its constitution. In an attempt to create confusion while remaining indifferent to apartheid, SAFA in 1957 renamed itself the Football Association of Southern Africa (FASA), essentially to create the perception of substantive change while maintaining the status quo. In response to this subterfuge, the SASF reiterated its demands for complete racial integration. Pretoria fought back by denying passports to

the SASF delegates traveling to the Lisbon FIFA Congress in June 1956. While no sanctions were imposed in Lisbon, the whites were back on the defensive at the FIFA Congress in Stockholm in 1958. Again, the world body advised that SASF and FASA find a compromise.

While this was a setback for the SASF, it allowed the antiapartheid organization to address internal tensions. Some black members were reluctant to desegregate. Notably, the South African Indian Football Association, for example, excluded non-Indians from its competitions well into the late 1950s. Forming a small minority vis-à-vis Coloureds and Africans, some Indian officials feared that opening their football competitions to athletes of all races would weaken a proud tradition of ethnic football established decades earlier. And in Cape Town, the Cape District Football Association, a Coloured organization founded in 1929, explicitly barred Muslims from joining its ranks. As the SASF began to grapple with these thorny issues, Dennis Brutus and a group of weightlifters initiated the formation of the South African Sports Association (SASA) in October 1958. Football provided SASA with most of its membership, roughly fifty thousand of the organization's seventy thousand members. Supported by the ANC and prominent white liberals, including author Alan Paton, the SASA "promoted nonracial sport and lobbied international sports federations to withdraw recognition of whites-only South African affiliates."<sup>56</sup>

Cooperation between SASA and the SASF injected new life into the antiapartheid struggle at FIFA. An example of this relationship was a well-organized campaign that forced the cancellation of a football match in Cape Town in 1959 between a local white team and Portuguesa Santista, a professional Brazilian club en route to Mozambique. The Brazilian club had reportedly agreed to drop several black players and field an all-white side against the South Africans. SASA caught wind of this acceptance of racism and immediately fired off an official protest to the Brazilian consul in Cape Town. The consul, apparently after communicating with Brazilian president Juscelino Kubitschek, prohibited Portuguesa Santista from playing the game—the first official protest against apartheid by the Brazilian government.

Soon the SASF abandoned its attempts to join FIFA and focused its attention instead on isolating white South Africa. This shift in strategy led to two major victories. In August 1960, the FIFA Congress in Rome adopted an antiracism resolution and also demanded that FASA end apartheid in football within twelve months or face expulsion from FIFA. At a separate meeting in Rome, the Confédération africaine de football (described

in chapter 4) expelled South Africa. Then came the FIFA suspension of September 1961, which dealt a major blow to the apartheid regime. It was the first time that a major international organization had sanctioned Pretoria. This raised awareness of the injustices of apartheid among sports fans around the world and instilled hope among South African liberation movements at a time of brutal government repression.

Meanwhile, inside South Africa, something remarkable was taking place: a racially integrated and semiprofessional South African Soccer League was underway. Fans of Avalon Athletic, Durban Aces, Cape Ramblers, Orlando Pirates, Moroka Swallows, and other clubs became political actors by virtue of their presence at the grounds. Attendance at SASL matches meant taking a stance against state-enforced racial discrimination and segregation. And people voted with their feet. SASL matches regularly drew crowds of ten thousand people, while marquee matches attracted up to forty thousand crammed into ramshackle grounds. Boosted by the extensive daily coverage of the black popular press, the SASL became immensely popular. It survived for five seasons. Eventually Pretoria came to view this integrated league as an intolerable affront to apartheid orthodoxy. The government conspired with white football organizations and municipal authorities to deny racially mixed teams access to playing facilities, and thus forced the SASL to shut down in 1966. The lesson of the incompatibility of sport and apartheid was not lost on South Africans and the world community, as demonstrated by the sport boycott in the 1970s and 1980s.

In South Africa, as in Nigeria and Algeria, football after 1940 reverberated with political implications, locally and internationally. In all three cases, urban growth, access to Western education, mass media coverage, and passion for the game among cosmopolitan African nationalists strengthened the connections between football and mass politics. Football helped to propel and legitimize the activities of anticolonial movements. As the next chapter shows, independent African states drew on this powerful experience to forge a sense of nationhood, foster African unity, and democratize the world's game.

75. Igor Foliot and Gérard Dreyfus, *Sali Kéita: Mes quatre vérités* (Paris: Chiron, 1977), 15.
76. Tsanga, *Le football camerounais*, 103.
77. "Highlanders Football Club Copies Motherwell Style of Play," *Baritu World*.
- May 14, 1932. Nicknames are also from this source.
78. Martin, *Leisure and Society*, 119.
79. Van Peel, "Aix depuis du football congolais," 55-57.
80. Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, 237.
81. Alegi, *Laduma!* 62.

### chapter three Making Nations in Late Colonial Africa, 1940s-1964

1. By way of example, see Frosser Gifford and William Roger Louis, *Decolonization and African Independence: The Transfer of Power, 1950-1980* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Robert L. Tignor, *Capitalism and Nationalism at the End of Empire: State and Business in Decolonizing Egypt, Nigeria, and Kenya, 1945-1963* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); and Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

2. This section is based on Wiebe Boer, "Nation-Building Exercise: Sporting Culture and the Rise of Football in Colonial Nigeria" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2003); and Wiebe Boer, "A Story of Heroes, of Epics: The Rise of Football in Nigeria," in *Football in Africa: Conflict, Conciliation and Community*, ed. Gary Ainsworth and Richard Giulianotti (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 59-79.

3. Nigerian census data cited in Lisa A. Lindsay, *Working with Gender: Wage Labor and Social Change in Southwestern Nigeria* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 64.

4. Ibid., 134-36.

5. Karin Barber, *The Generation of Plays: Yoruba Popular Life in Theater* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 23.

6. James A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (New York: Viking, 1986). For a terrific synthesis, see Allen Guttmann, *Games and Empires: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

7. Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey: An Autobiography* (New York: Praeger, 1970), 406-7.

8. Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001), 261-62.

9. Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, "City of Steel and Fire": *A Social History of Atbara, Sudan's Railway Town, 1906-1984* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 82-88, 105.

10. John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson, *FIFA and the Contest for World Football: Who Rules the People's Game?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 129.

11. Boer, "Nation-Building Exercise," 308. Boer points out how after the war Azikiwe became more radical and, following in the footsteps of the goodwill tours, he toured Nigeria to build support for the new NCNC party, which he

had just founded with Herbert Macaulay, the elder statesman of Nigerian nationalist politics.

12. Phil Vasili, "Colonialism and Football: The First Nigerian Tour of Britain," *Race and Class* 36, no. 4 (1995): 60.

13. Railway won in 1946, 1948, 1949, 1951, 1953 and 1957; see Boer, "Nation-Building Exercise," 347; and "A Story of Heroes, of Epics," 67; and also Vasili, "Colonialism and Football," 58–59.

14. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 44. On Africa's journalistic ventures, see Louise M. Bourgault, *Mass Media in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 155–56.

15. See Vasili, "Colonialism and Football."

16. Ibid., 64.

17. Okere is believed to have been Swindon Town's first black player, though he failed to make the first team. Balogun played thirteen League matches (three goals), and two FA Cup matches (two goals) for QPR in 1956–57; cited in Phil Vasili, *Colouring over the White Line: The History of Black Footballers in Britain* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2000), 113. For more details on African players' migration to Europe, see chapter 5.

18. Boer, "Nation-Building Exercise," 358–59.

19. Vasili, *Colouring over the White Line*, 86–90. Uganda also toured England in 1956.

20. Information on the French West Africa Cup is from Bocar Ly, *Foot-ball, histoire de la Coupe d'A.O.F.* (Dakar: Nouvelles Éditions Africaines du Sénégal, 1990). After the independence of Mali in 1960, the fusion of Jeanne D'Arc with Espérance formed Stade Malien and the fusion of Foyer de Soudan with Africa Sports created Djoliba.

21. Ibid., 89.

22. On the history of sport and imperialism in French West Africa, see Bernadette Deville-Danthu, *Le sport en noir et blanc: Du sport colonial au sport africain dans les anciens territoires français d'Afrique occidentale, 1920–1965* (Paris: Harmattan, 1997).

23. Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 77–78.

24. Phyllis Martin, *Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 125.

25. Ibid.

26. Peter Alegi, "Katanga v Johannesburg: A History of the First Sub-Saharan African Football Championship, 1949–50," *African Historical Review* 31 (1999): 55–74.

27. The main source for this section is Rabah Saadallah and Djamel Benfars, *La glorieuse équipe du FLN* (Algiers: ENAL, Brussels; GAM, 1985). For a useful overview, see Youssef Fates, "Football in Algeria: Between Violence and Politics," in Armstrong and Giulianotti, *Football in Africa*, 41–58. For English-language works on Algeria's political and diplomatic history, see, for example, John Ruedy, *Modern*

*Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); and Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

28. Maouche served several months in prison before resuming his career at Paris and then transferring to Red Star Paris. He joined the FLN team in 1960.

29. Saadallah and Benfars, *La glorieuse équipe*, 136.

30. *New York Times*, April 16, 1958. Interestingly, the Times identified the men as "French athletes" in the headline and as "Algerian Moslems" in the body of the article.

31. *Time*, April 28, 1958.

32. *New York Times*, April 16, 1958.

33. Fates, "Football in Algeria," 49.

34. Curiously, Toulouse FC won the Cup with important contributions from Abdelhamid Bouchouik and Said Brahimi, both of whom joined the FLN side in spring 1958. It should also be noted that the French policy of assimilation resulted in Maghrebi teams being allowed to participate in the French Cup beginning in 1956.

35. El-Aznam is located 120 miles southwest of Algiers. In 1954 and 1980, two catastrophic earthquakes devastated the city.

36. Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 166.

37. Hocine Seddiki, *Rachid Mekhloufi: L'imagination au bout de pied* (Algiers: SNED, 1982), 14. Ferhat Abbas founded the Popular Union of Algeria in 1938 and expanded it into the AML in 1945, which Ruedy describes as "the second and last effort before the Revolution to create a broadly based national movement" (*Modern Algeria*, 150). In 1946, Abbas created the Union démocratique du manifeste algérien (UDMA), calling for an Algerian Republic within the French Union. Abbas joined the FLN in 1956.

38. Paul Darby, *Africa, Football, and FIFA: Politics, Colonialism, and Resistance* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 29.

39. Philip Dine, "France, Algeria, and Sport: From Colonisation to Globalisation," *Modern and Contemporary France* 10, no. 4 (2002): 498.

40. Youssef Fates, "Sport en Algérie," in *Geschichte der Leibesübungen*, ed. Horst Überhorst, vol. 6, *Perspektiven des Weltsports* (Berlin: Bartels and Wernitz, 1989), 301, quoted in Gutmann, *Games and Empires*, 69.

41. Saadallah and Benfars, *La glorieuse équipe*, 69.

42. Ibid., 366.

43. Pierre Lanfranchi and Alfred Wahl, "The Immigrant as Hero: Kopa, Mekhloufi and French Football," in *European Heroes: Myth, Identity, Sport*, ed. Richard Holt, J. A. Mangan, and Pierre Lanfranchi (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 119.

44. Saadallah and Benfars, *La glorieuse équipe*, 391–93. Overall, the FLN team scored 385 goals and conceded 127.

45. Lanfranchi and Wahl, "Immigrant as Hero," 123.

46. Faouzi Mahjoub, *Le football africain* (Paris: ABC, 1977), 10. For detailed analyses of changes in tactics and styles in world football, see Richard Giulianotti,

*Football: A Sociology of the Global Game* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), 127–45; Pierre Lanfranchi, Christiane Eisenberg, Tony Mason, and Alfred Wahl, *100 Years of Football* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2004), 152–53; Jonathan Wilson, *Inverting the Pyramid: A History of Football Tactics* (London: Orion, 2008).

47. Mike Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic Games, Soccer and Irish Identity since 1884* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), 55.

48. See Connolly, *Diplomatic Revolution*, 226.

49. Saadaliat and Benfica, *La glorieuse équipe*, 241.

50. Connolly, *Diplomatic Revolution*, 232.

51. Lanfranchi and Wahl, "Immigrant as Hero," 122.

52. In 1982 in Spain, Melhioui was the manager of the Algerian side that earned its first World Cup finals victory against West Germany.

53. This section summarizes material from several chapters of my *Laduma! Soccer, Politics, and Society in South Africa* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2004).

54. "Race" is a historical and social construction bound up with apartheid history, but racial identities were (and continue to be) crucial in South African life. Use of such racial terms does not imply an endorsement. On racial classification in South Africa, see Deborah Posel, "Race as Common Sense: Racial Classification in Twentieth-Century South Africa," *African Studies Review* 44, no. 2 (2001): 87–113.

55. For further analysis, see Alegi, *Laduma!* chaps. 6–8; and Paul Darby, "Stanley Rous's 'Own Goal': Football Politics, South Africa and the Contest for the FIFA Presidency in 1974," *Soccer and Society* 9, no. 2 (2008): 259–72.

56. Douglas Booth, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 75–76.

#### chapter four Nationhood, Pan-Africanism, and Football after Independence

1. "Soccerhene" photo in *Daily Graphic*, May 23, 1957; and Stephen Borquaye, *The Saga of Accra Hearts of Oak Sporting Club* (Accra: New Times Press, 1968), 50.

2. *West African Pilot*, April 28, 1960. Two days after the Togo-Nigeria match, Cameroon played Nigeria, but the game ended prematurely (with the score tied 0–0) when the Cameroonian stormed off the pitch in the second half in protest over a penalty awarded to Nigeria.

3. Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 143.

4. Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 25–40.

5. Christopher T. Gaffney, *Temples of the Earthbound Gods: Stadiums in the Cultural Landscapes of Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 26. For a recent history of stadiums in the United States, see Ronald Trumppour, *The New Cathedrals: Politics and Media in the History of Stadium Construction* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007).