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FOOTBALL SINCE THE WAR:
Study in Social Change & Popular Culture

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by

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INTRODUCTION

Much of the debate about the extent and kind of social and cultural change in English society since the war has centred around questions of shifting cultural values, particularly as symbolically expressed in everyday activities. The debate amongst sociologists, for example, as to how far the working-class has become more middle-class (or 'embourgeoised'), has pivoted, and more often than not overbalanced, on the point of interpreting apparent changes in the contours of traditional working-class life-style. Patterns of behaviour at work, in family situations, and neighbourhoods have been noted by participant observers; attitude questionnaires and interviews conducted; individual biographies scrutinised. The results, far short of being comprehensive, have been challenged on theoretical, methodological and more rarely, ideological grounds. One of the largest failings has been felt to be any satisfactory way of tracing the vital relationships between the relatively discrete individual and the total society of which he or she is part. One reason for this deficiency is the lack of any proper understanding of popular culture's role in this process. The present essay seeks to begin to remedy this situation, by offering an analysis of changes on professional football since the war as one index to the extent form and control of changing cultural values in contemporary society.

It seems appropriate, then to set the scene by offering a necessarily simplified model of football's situation as an element of popular culture in pre-war English society. It was and still is a predominantly working-class activity, the majority of both players and spectators being recruited from what was not only a distinctive social grouping, but a specific cultural tradition. Pre-war football was an integral part of a working-class culture which, whatever its regional variations and inconsistencies, had maintained broadly similar contours across the country for over half a century. The core values of the game as a professional sport[1] - masculinity, aggression, physical emphasis, victory and regional identity - meshed firmly with this relatively homogeneous (and male-dominated) working-class culture with its network of small-scale organisations and supportive mechanisms : working men's clubs, mutual insurance schemes, cooperatives, public houses, trade unions, and a myriad of smaller leisure-time groupings: pigeon fanciers, whippet trainers, amateur footballers, and the rest[2]. It was, in the words of one historian, "neither a very good nor a very rich life, but it was probably the first kind of life... which provided a firm lodging for the British working-class within industrial society."[3]

Football's integral position in working-class culture gave it a peculiar strength. It meant that the particular values of the game were based in, and circumscribed by, a larger set of values generated by the class culture as a whole. Thus two basic elements of the game which were to become increasingly problematic after the war (as we shall see later) - the role of violence and the status of the footballing hero - were controlled and situated as long as the game had such a firm cultural base. Without ever formulating rules of prescribing formal regulations, the larger class culture prescribed models of masculinity and community status which could hold such potential problems in check. There were of course tensions in the values of the game, not least between the prescriptions of the 'respectable' working-class tradition and a more subterranean and anarchic presence, but in general the game appeared to maintain with remarkable consistency the social significance accorded to it by Arthur Hopcraft:

"By the 1920s football was an established employer in a community where jobs were scarce. The clubs had grown up out of pride in athleticism, in local importance, in corporate endeavour. The stadiums were planted where the supporters lived, in among the industrial mazes of factories and hunched workers houses. The Saturday match became more than mere diversion from the daily grind, because there was often no work to be relieved. To go to the match was to escape from the dark of despondency into the light of combat. Here, by association with the home team, positive identity could be claimed by muscle and in goals. To win was personal success, to lose another clout from life. Football was not so much an opiate of the people as a flag run up against the gaffer bolting his gates and the landlord armed with his bailiffs."(4)

All this is not to say that professional football before the war was without change or innovation. Indeed it may be as well at this stage to challenge some commonly made assumptions about the uniqueness of some of the features - especially problems - of post-war football. It is sometimes thought that in the fifties and sixties football was chiefly characterised by a decline in attendances, a drop in the number of goals scored, an unprecedented use of the transfer market, and the consequent domination of a small number of clubs. Though these statements are broadly true as they stand, they must be qualified to be of any use in tracing the roots and course of change in football. Thus, even by the late sixties the number of goals scored, though declining, had not reached the all-time low of the early twenties which had forced a change in the offside rule. Attendances did drop from the late fifties onwards but this was exaggerated by the exceptionally high attendances in the ten years after the war. The transfer market was already being extensively used by the late twenties: the forward line of the legendary Arsenal team which dominated that period were all bought from other league clubs. If club domination can be measured by performance in league and cup competitions, then the pre-war period was dominated by Arsenal and Huddersfield with a thoroughness only matched by Manchester United in the post-war situation. The tendencies and developments are still there : but they are more complex than the picture so often thrown up by popular mythology.

One other myth, sustained by a highly selective use of evidence, was that of the superiority of British football at an international level. It rested largely on England's unbeaten record at home in international matches. (To sustain the myth it was necessary to ignore Scotland, forget continental tours and discount the World Cup - even when humiliated by the U.S.A. in 1950.) The emphatic defeat of England by Hungary at Wembley in 1953 (6-3, and that flattering England) was thus a severe cultural shock. In the years that followed, journalists, administrators and managers participated in a massive inquest. At an international level selection tactics and team preparation were criticised for being haphazard or virtually non-existent. Much the same strictures were applied to the clubs, especially the ignorance of coaching and training with the ball. The League received a hammering for ignoring the needs of international teams, and there was even criticism of the heavy playing equipment still used by English players. The sense of crisis induced by that defeat and those which were to follow at both club and international level should not be underestimated. The response unfortunately was rarely more than superficial. Those in authority tended to cling desperately to the old ways, which meant that change was forced and uncontrolled. Nowhere was this clearer than in the status of the professional footballer.

THE PLAYER

From 1945 to 1963, professional footballers were engaged in a continuous collective struggle to improve their economic situation. The details of that struggle have been adequately recounted elsewhere[5]: the annual bargaining over the minimum wage ceiling, the obdurate behaviour of the Football League, the strike threats, the players' final victory with the abolition of the minimum wage in 1960; then the struggle over contracts, culminating in a High Court judgement against Newcastle United in an action brought by George Eastham in 1963. Here it may suffice to note three main implications of these events. The first is the clear roots of the struggle in working-class activity outside the game. This was neatly noted in a Times editorial at the moment of abolition: "They ask for two freedoms: freedom for a player to negotiate his own contract of employment, and freedom to negotiate his own wage with his employer. These are freedoms which are basic, unarguable, and the right of every working man in Britain."[6]

The second feature is the characteristic attitudes adopted by the League, seeing their absolute control over players as the only bulwark against the rampant greed of the players and the tyranny of the transfer market. In the event some of their worst fears were proved justified, in so far as higher wages did contribute to the ever widening gap between rich and poor clubs. But this was due at least as much to a spiralling transfer market, about which the League have done precisely nothing. In any case the massive wage differentials opened up by abolition were in part attributable to the form and intensity of league opposition, which ruled out the possibility of negotiating some alternative form of wage control which would have benefited the average as well as the exceptional professional footballer.

Thirdly, and less often noted, are the implications of economic developments for the cultural situation of the player. The professional footballer was traditionally a kind of working-class folk hero, and knew himself to be such. He came from, and only moved marginally out of, the same economic and cultural background as those who paid to watch him. In such a context, a dramatic change in the economic situation of the player was bound to have severe repercussions on the cultural significance of his role as hero. Put simply, the effect of these changes was that "for some of the star performers in football the 'new deal' has meant an everyday life transformed from the kind led by the previous generation."[7]

The emphasis here must be on 'everyday life'. It was not just a question of footballers having gained the right to more money and more bargaining power in relation to their employing club. What became gradually clear was that the 'New Deal' had fractured the set of social and cultural relationships by which the player's identity had previously been structured. His relationships with management were strained by the constant demands for performance returns on the investment in him; his attitudes towards fellow players became more neurotically competitive and the search for a common footballing code found only an uneasy justification of cynicism in the ethos of 'professionalism'; his relationship with the spectators, increasingly mediated by heightened expectations of the successful and the spectacular, came more and more to resemble that of the highly acclaimed entertainer required to produce the 'goods' for public consumption.

These developments were gradual and uneven, to be sure, yet the basic problem of cultural identity - both on and off the field - began to show itself long before it found clear expression in the aberrant behaviour of top-class footballers in the late sixties and early seventies. Between the two men who seem to personify the football of their time, Stanley Matthews and George Best, there is not just a difference in personality, but two decades of transformation in the cultural identity of the professional footballer.

Perhaps such assertions need further substantiation. At the general level, one commentator on American society has suggested that popular culture as a whole has been characterised by the displacement of the hero by the celebrity:

"The hero was distinguished by his achievement; the celebrity by his image or trade-mark. The hero created himself; the celebrity is created by the media. The hero was a big man; the celebrity is a big name.....No longer external sources which fill us with purpose, these new model 'heroes' are receptacles into which we pour our own purposelessness. They are nothing but ourselves seen in a magnifying mirror."(8)

Though useful in some respects, this is too loose an account for our purposes. In particular it fails to take account of the minimal authenticity of the footballer: nobody (fortunately) can manufacture footballing talent and it is on that, and that alone, that his public recognition must ultimately rest. There is however clearly a relationship between the footballer's behaviour on the field and his bearing off it, for together they form his public presence. Press or public relations men, with a typical inference of manipulation, would probably call this his image. A more accurate and appropriate word in the case of the footballer, is style. As Arthur Hopcraft puts it, "we are not dealing solely with the style of play, but also with the style and substance of the man, as affected by the game."(9)

I wish to offer a model of four stages or types of style which can be used to trace the essential post-war developments in the cultural identity of the player. There are two qualifications to be made before exploring this typology in detail. The first is that the typology is intended mainly to apply to players of English nationality (with the important exception of George Best). It is a simple fact that much of what has been and is the best in English League football comes from the influence of non-English players. All the dominant teams of the sixties - Tottenham, Burnley, Manchester United, Liverpool, Arsenal and Leeds - had non-Englishmen in crucial positions. It is more than coincidence that by 1970 the most effective midfield combination in the country was composed of a red-headed Scotsman and a bandy-legged Irishman. Such players are excluded from the typology because they have always seemed by their very non-Englishness to be once removed from the cultural situation of their supporters. They are outsiders, often, in the case of Scots particularly, learning their football in an indigenous cultural tradition very different from that of England. McIlroy, Blanchflower, Law, Bremner - these men seemed to come from elsewhere, to be essentially non-English. Indeed their explosiveness and inventiveness are precisely attributable to a different cultural tradition, and without their continuous presence in the English league the true poverty of the English footballing imagination would have been evident long before that poverty was institutionalised in the defensive tactics of the late sixties.

The second qualification is that those footballers who come to be publicly acknowledged as heroes are those who provide exciting and positive models of achievement. Not only does this rule out for the large part those who are defenders; it suppresses a whole 'subterranean' tradition, very different from the 'idealist' one. This contrast has been noted, rather chauvinistically, in the differences between the Charlton brothers, especially in the 1966 World Cup matches:

"Bobby and Jack played in all of England's cup matches; the two Charltons could be observed by the whole nation as brothers of vivid footballing character and self-portraiture - so disimilar, yet each, in his own way, expressing Englishness, Bobby graceful, cultured, creative, conveying some strange sort of artistic instinct: and in the English tradition, a sense of restrained emotion, a faint air of diffidence overlying his talents and his endeavour. And Jack the honest artisan, straight as a gun barrel, stiff as a sentry, solid, stout-hearted, dependable."(10)

This tradition, though surely present from the origins of the game, has no readily available history to compare with that of the idealists. The recognition accorded them is different in kind and less durable, their presence less marked by memorable moments. Defenders are rarely expressive of ideals: in so far as they destroy them, they may be regarded as cynics. It is that which makes the figure of Bobby Moore so exceptional - he managed to combine defensive duties with culture. The mainstream of the subterranean tradition thrives by comparison on destruction.

The following typology is offered with these qualifications in mind. It is based on two related indices, the first referring to the overall style of the player, the second to his cultural placement. (These terms, necessarily abstract here, will become clearer as the analysis proceeds). The types are not meant to infer a simple chronological development, as at different times they may all be present to varying degrees. They are meant to indicate new and potentially dominant developments, which are definitely related to historical movements within the game. Thus the first type - traditional/located - represents and draws on the values of a traditional respectable working class culture in a way which becomes increasingly difficult, though not impossible after the 'New Deal'. Those benefitting from and reacting to greater economic reward may be described as transitional/mobile, exploring the possibilities of their new freedom. As even more money becomes available to the chosen few, and the game as a whole becomes more 'respectable', players seek and find acceptance into more overtly middle-class life-styles - incorporated/embourgeoised, they become small businessmen, and are clearly a world away from their predecessors and many of their contemporary supporters. Finally the mechanics of publicity nominate some as 'superstars' raised to new levels of public adulation, mass-media attention and economic reward. The net result is a loss for them of any secure reference points: they become superstars/dislocated from any social or cultural grouping which can inform their efforts to maintain a controlled and authentic style.

The traditional/located style is relatively easy to identify, and has been caught in Arthur Hopcraft's perceptive analysis of Stanley Matthews :

"we were always afraid for Matthews, the non-athlete; the sadly impassive face, with its high cheekbones, pale lips and hooded eyes, had a lot of pain in it, the deep hurt that came from prolonged effort and the certainty of more blows. It was a worker's face, like a miner's, never really young, tight against a brutal world even in repose.....The anxiety showed in Matthews too: again like the frail miner's fear of the job which

must always be done, not joyfully but in deeper satisfaction, for self-respect. ...In communicating this frailty and this effort Matthews went to men's hearts, essentially to inconspicuous, mild, working men's. He was the opposite of glamorous: a non-drinker, non-smoker, careful with his money. He had an habitual little cough. He was a representative of his age and class, brought up among thrift and the ever-looming threat of dole and debt. For as long as he could remember world's fleetest movers he never had exuberance. He came from that England which had no reason to know that the twenties were Naughty and the thirties had Style."(11)

If Matthews was the apotheosis of the traditional/located, he was by no means its only representative. Others of his generation - Loafthouse, Finney, Lawton - continued to dominate the football of the immediate post-war years. And the new generation were not so very different. Hopcraft again, on Derek Dooley:

"Dooley was a local favourite, born in the working-class Sheffield of outside lavatories in communal yards and low wages for tough work, and he was playing for the team he admired devotedly as a boy. He was Thunderboots, propelled from obscurity in grimed streets to national fame by his ability to force his way past other big men in a penalty area and lash a football past a goalkeeper. He was a Saturday hero by and of the people, his identity contained and gladly expressed in his football.

Dooley...epitomizes the footballer of the forties and fifties. It is difficult to picture this honest industrial yeoman in the clever-headed lissom setting of the football of this decade."(12)

Duncan Edwards was another player with distinct affinities with the traditional despite his youth:

"As a schoolboy of the forties and a teenager of the fifties he was part of the generation which linked the hard, sombre days of the war and rationing with the more dashing mobile times which followed to such animated reaction..... Edwards represented the kind of self-respecting modesty which is not nurtured in the ferocity of the modern game. It has not been deliberately forced out of football; it is just not natural to the age.....He did not look important in the celebrated sense; he looked as if he mattered, and belonged, to his family and friends. The anonymity of style was true to his generation and his kind."(13)

Edwards' symbolic significance has been frequently noted, as in the following extract:

"Psychologists and sociologists could have seen in Duncan Edwards, more vividly than in any other of his generation at the time, the early portents of that surging irrepressible determination for self-expression and self-reliance of the post-war teenager which - for better or worse - has set the modern youth apart from the generations that have gone before."(14)

Yet youth as a sociological category is overridden by more powerful stratification: Edwards was respectable working-class youth personified, as alien to the contemporary world of the Teddy Boys as he would have been to those of the Beatles or the Rolling Stones. Elements of transition present in Edwards' style were more fully worked out by his contemporaries who outlived him. Though highly paid and widely adulated, they maintained some parts of the traditional style. They lived well, yet were recognised to be representative of something more than individual success. Johnny Haynes made one kind of breakthrough to become the first £100 a week player,

but for various reasons - an unglamorous club, restricted media access, a reluctance to score goals - Haynes never fitted properly into the heroic mould. The central figure of the transitional style is Bobby Charlton - a working-class gentleman who could live like one:

"He gets the star footballer's profusion of flattery. His name is chanted to raise the spirits of ticket queues in the rain; vivid coarse girls have to be held off by policemen when he gets into and out of the Manchester United coach; small boys write him letters of charming clumsiness and kick footballs with his autograph on them; he has been European footballer of the year and a poll of referees voted him model player. His wife is pretty, so are his two daughters, and he lives in a rich man's house in a rich man's neighbourhood. He is the classic working-class hero who has made it to glamour and Nob Hill."(15)

Charlton's long career, like that of Matthews, tends to disguise real changes. The dominance of the transitional style was over long before his World and European cup triumphs of 1966 and 1968. It flourished in the early sixties when the England team contained Charlton, Haynes and Jimmy Greaves, who was to bear witness to the changes in style by living through all four stages.

By the late sixties the style of incorporation was becoming dominant, as star footballers became self-conscious participants in the process of their own embourgeoisement. It was this rather than the transitional style that was truly anonymous. This was partly the impression of conformity which the description 'incorporated' is meant to convey : the image of the small business man is hardly laden with heroic qualities. The development of tactics, too, had made playing styles more rigid: over-collective, remorseless, and functional, the new demands were for the runner, the 'worker', who could fit into a pre-conceived pattern. Alan Ball is a symptomatic player here: his total style is defined by the new tactics:

"When the old-timer players and spectators say the game is not what it was they are right. The application of new, elaborate and technical training programmes, and above all the tactical thought preceding every season, every game, have pushed the emphasis further and further away from individual improvisation towards collective, integrated team work. This shift has inevitably promoted a new type of player, and this type is personified in Alan Ball, the dynamic little inside-forward of Everton and England.

All the adjectives, the superlatives as well as the cliches which surround the modern game apply to Ball - the 90-minute man, genius clothed in sweat, perpetual motion, the essential team-man, hating to lose, living and breathing the game, awesome opponent and valued colleague, selfless yet still essentially a star..these are the terms in which one talks of Ball."(16)

A whole generation of such men played for England in the middle and late sixties: who will remember them? Those who stand out are hybrids. Bobby Moore, for example, maintained a detachment more typical of the transitional style, and was accorded as a result, as much envy as admiration. It is perhaps because of the real anonymity of the incorporated style, that the search for the unusual, on and off the field, became so desperate. If those interested in footballing skills looked in vain for some variation from the stereotyped football of such teams as Leeds, Arsenal, and England, then those with a vested interest in glamour sought celebrities to populate their portrayal of life at the Top. Their separate desires were fulfilled by the emergence of the superstar.

The superstar belongs most properly to the late sixties and early seventies, and the central figure has to be George Best. But there had been earlier attempts to collude in the cultural dislocation of footballing heroes. Jimmy Greaves and others who followed the lure of gold to Italy in the early sixties helped to dislocate themselves: a process further dislocated by the press exploitation of their subsequent discontent. The Times made this comment on the Greaves affair as early as 1961, when Greaves was finally transferred back to Spurs:

"There it stands, and may the man and the game be spared any more. Seldom in the history of British football can any man have commanded so much attention in so short a time. Not even the deeds of men like G.O. Smith, Bloomer, Meredith, Gallacher, Morton, Jackson, Matthews, Dean, Lawton and Wright across the years caught the same fierce glare of concentrated publicity.

Much of it has been unwelcome. Greaves indeed, by his actions in Italy, lost much of the public sympathy that went with him from that moment he played his last league match for Chelsea last April.....

.....Prone to listen too much to ill-advised opinion, he found himself transplanted in a foreign land unsuited to a nervous nature which has with it a certain native stubbornness. Yet the suspicion is that latterly Greaves has been as much sinned against as sinning. His every daily action caught the spotlight and much of it was magnified unduly. The whole affair has become tedious beyond words."(17)

In the same year as the Greaves affair a fifteen-year-old boy from a Belfast housing estate came as an apprentice to Manchester United. Within 48 hours he and his travelling companion were back in Belfast. Three years later he was a regular member of Manchester United's championship side at the age of eighteen; in 1968 he was instrumental in United's European Cup victory and was voted footballer of the Year. In 1971 he was sent off the field during an international match for throwing mud at the referee, and amidst increasing controversy over his private life and business associates, he quit the game in 1972. Returning briefly in 1973, he finally left the game, apparently for good in 1974.

That is a bare outline of the career of George Best. But much more was involved in the 'superstar' treatment he received. For seven years his every move was plotted by journalists and photographers; he was alternately told - in newspaper columns and to his face - that he was the greatest footballer in the world and a spoilt brat; on the field he was kicked, held, punched, and admonished when he retaliated. All these were forces acting on Best, who in response lived it up with fast cars and beautiful women, while securing his future in a chain of boutiques. He lived out, part by personal choice, part by cultural compulsion, the newspapers' dream version of the superstar's life. As crisis succeeded crisis, he eventually exerted his own will in the only way left open to him, and left the game altogether.

Of course it is possible to interpret this odyssey as the biography of a not-very bright and immature lad, who let success go to his head and listened to the wrong people. Or as the due reward for a headstrong conceited man who wanted fame and reward on his own terms and was not prepared to work for it. The suggestion here is that the saga of George Best should be read in wider cultural terms, as the biography of a dislocated footballing hero, whose talent, personality and background were

insufficient to withstand the pressures, both on and off the field, to which the new type of superstar was to be subjected. He had not even that minimal sense of a cultural background which may help to protect some of the new superstars, such as Kevin Keegan and Trevor Francis, from the worst excesses of public adulation. Uprooted early from his Irish origins, he could find no alternative means of support.

Arthur Hopcraft's tracing of the various stages of Best's response, from nervous teenager to mature cynicism(18), would seem to bear this analysis out. The most common reaction to Best was, and still is, one of moral disgust, occasionally tinged with sadness. This is to credit Best with too much autonomy. His behaviour seems much better understood as the defensive reflexes of a man who was the first to feel the full brunt of the most extreme development of tendencies present right through the typology of footballing heroes presented here. If it be held that this is insufficient explanation for Best's petulance on the field, then the reply must be that such behaviour was only a particular form of a more general trend in the attitudes of professional footballers - a cynical approach to tactics and violence.

It may seem too glib to suggest that changes for the worse in players behaviour from the mid-fifties were in part attributable to the process of cultural dislocation and consequent crisis of identity to which top-level footballers were subjected. Yet that is surely a more adequate account than the dominant explanations amongst pressmen and administrators, that the economic rewards for winning lead to a more cynical attitude towards the laws and the referee. For one thing, this explanation does not explain what may best be described as petulance : those actions and attitudes in which the player seeks immediate and often petty revenge for some real or imagined wrong done to him. This is hardly economically motivated, and there have been occasions when such petulance has worked against the success of the team. In any case the attempt to blame all the ills of modern football on to the 'New Deal' must look dubious if the origins of the problems can be traced back to before the early sixties. This seems to be the case with players' attitudes to referees. Here, for instance is part of a Times editorial from as early as March 1954:

"Looking back with scholarly detachment, the yet unborn historian of sport may see, as a brief unnatural interlude, the era in which men were conditioned from their youth upwards to accept in stoic unquestioning silence the referee's decision as final."

That 'stoic' attitude must not be confused with a self-conscious sporting morality fostered on school playing fields. It was rather a complex of responses which came naturally from the larger cultural context in which the game was situated. Elsewhere I have suggested that football "offered a formalisation of the informal attitudes to violence so long held by working men, that it is a normal part of life in which any individual may periodically become involved, but it is never expected to get out of hand or become a pervasive frame of mind."(19)

Only some version of cultural connections can adequately comprehend the traditional attitude towards violence in a game which, it must be remembered, was stylistically and tactically much more physical. How many modern centre forwards could claim such a record as Tommy Lawton:

"Lawton probably took more punishment in the way of tripping, unscrupulous tackling, hammering and bumping than any man of his period. The specialist centre forward was the natural target for it. No-one ever saw Lawton retaliate, or deliberately foul anyone. That he should lose his temper or be sent off was unthinkable. In over twenty years, he never did and never was."(20)

The changing cultural location of the player may thus be said to be a major influence on the escalating problem of 'indiscipline' in professional football over the last twenty years. There were other factors. One was the management's encouragement of foul play as a tactic. Perhaps since this was known to be against the spirit of the game this ploy did not emerge into the open until the late sixties when the climate had changed sufficiently for the 'professional foul' to be openly advocated as the solution to difficult tactical problems. The Leeds United team of the middle sixties did seem to set a precedent, despite their manager's protestations of innocence. A league match at Everton in November 1964 got so out of hand that the referee took both teams off the field for a cooling off period. In an Inter-Cities Fairs Cup match between Leeds and Valencia in 1966, the police had to intervene to restore order on the pitch, symbolically marking the game's increasing failure to generate its own sense of order.

The continental influence did not help. Different cultural traditions produced particular, and arguably less reputable attitudes towards violence and foul play. Tony Pawson has remarked of Italian football:

"Physical contact took second place to positional play, to screening the ball with the body, to winning it by clever interception. There was less direct challenge, more obstruction and jostling; less manly confrontation, more sly sophistication and childish outbursts."(21)

English teams in European competition found themselves up against tactics they had never met before, while their own more robust methods were severely penalised. Small wonder they responded in kind. So some of the worst elements of the continental game (more specifically the Latin game) were grafted on to the already diseased body of English football. In vain did the Football Association list and condemn the new patterns of behaviour: time-wasting, failing to retreat ten yards for free kicks, the deliberate cultivation of sharp studs, extreme and continual dissent. By 1964 the tone of the circulars was becoming more desperately strident; as in this passage:

"Foul play, abusive language, gamesmanship, dissent and petulance will be taken note of or punished - dependent on the severity of the offence. Players must learn to discipline themselves. If not, they will be disciplined. Until the present wave of disorder ceases they can expect severe penalties for misconduct."(22)

By the late sixties there was a deep sense of crisis in English professional football. Not only did the players and management seem short of imagination, but the essence and flow of the game were disrupted by deliberate fouls, perpetual dissent, feigned injuries and other forms of gamesmanship. Add to that the controversial behaviour of some players off the field, and it is not a pretty picture. But this was not all. In the same period there emerged problems amongst those who for too long had been taken for granted as the economic and cultural base of the game. The spectator, one way and another, seemed to be in revolt.

THE SUPPORTER

The revolt of the spectator took three main forms: a disinclination to continue supporting the local team regardless of its achievements; a predisposition to violence, mainly but not wholly amongst younger supporters; a preference for armchair viewing of weekly televised excerpts and the occasional live big game. These forms do not all happen at the same time, but rather follow each other, until by the late sixties they form together the composite crisis of the spectator.

The first signal of the spectators' disaffection was the fall in total annual attendances at league matches. By 1955 it was clear that the great post-war boom in attendances was over. The peak had been reached on the all-time record total of forty one and a quarter million in the 1948-9 season, after which the figure decreased steadily to 34 million in 1954-5. The Times noted that this was only a return to the pre-war average: it was the boom which had created an artificial slump. Yet were there not signs of disillusion? "For too long they have been fobbed off - with certain exceptions - with something that was a masquerade. If they are dissatisfied, let them depart. That will be the final sanction upon the British game, floodlights or no floodlights."(23) Figures continued to decline, and in 1960-1 a new low of 28.5 million was recorded. The attraction of football was being challenged by the changing pattern of leisure activities. The Times extended its analysis:

"The hard core of genuine support remains. Yet even this section is now having its undivided loyalty taxed by counter attractions. It is this group that the Football League must safeguard.

What is the solution? In a world of changing social habit - increased activities, wider distribution of prosperity. H.P., the weekend family car, bingo and the rest - the man on the terrace has become more selective. Mediocrity is harder to sell now..

Once football was the opium of the masses. No longer. There is a greater awareness of standards and comfort now. So perhaps the real answer at last is for a complete spring clean."(24)

This is a fairly typical analysis. With elements of truth in its examples, it opts too easily for the solution that football, in order to compete, must become more like the counter-attractions. The opinion poll commissioned by the Football League in 1962 came to similar conculsions. Noting the main factors for staying away as changed attitudes towards family and home, the lack of comfort at grounds, and - interestingly enough, defensive football and players' lack of discipline, the report's recommendations, summarised in the Times, were that "the arrest of the fall in gates can be achieved only by making football matches and their surroundings more attractive than other competitive leisure interests."(25) The Chester report of 1968 took a similar line: "This financial deterioration has taken place during a period when the general standard of play has reached a very high level. The explanation therefore lies not there but probably in the radical changes which have taken place in the social pattern and in people's attitudes and leisure activities."(26)

The generalised image of affluence such analyses drew upon has received transparent expression in a more recent book on the game by a public relations consultant:

"A lot of soccer writers and commentators get emotional about the so-called football fan. This conjures up the picture of the dedicated team

supporter, done up in a striped scarf and woolly hat, and waving a rattle. This image is about ten years out of date.....greater overall affluence, the earning power of the young and the resultant greater mobility has produced a new type of football spectator: someone who can take his choice of the games he will go and see out of a variety of entertainment on any Saturday afternoon. London has a choice of a dozen clubs, and the same is true in parts of Lancashire and the West Midlands. You can either choose the best First Division soccer or opt for a quiet backwater in the Second or lower divisions.

Apart from isolated centres and the odd ten or a dozen clubs with huge working class followings, the day of the dedicated fan has passed..."(27)

There are many potential objections to such comments which are only the logical extension of the remarks previously quoted. (The last passage could, for example, have been written only by someone whose knowledge of any where North of Enfield has come from looking out of the window of a first class railway carriage.) The main point to note here is that the major response to real changes in spectators attitudes to football has not been to examine the cultural changes in the game and its immediate context in order to control and channel change. It has rather been to import into discussion of the spectator an image which comes not out of a cultural concern but from the heart of commercial activity: the image of the consumer. Raymond Williams(28) has noted the historical development of three kinds of cultural relationship between an individual or social group and social institutions: member, customer and consumer. The first, however illusorily, thinks of himself as a member, and may recognise an informal set of reciprocal duties and obligations between himself and the institution. The customer, more detached, is seeking satisfaction for specific wants: if they are not met over a certain period of time, he may, somewhat reluctantly, take his patronage elsewhere. But the consumer has no loyalty or habit. He is informed of the choices open to him, and when he wants something will make a rational choice about where he will get the best bargain. Such choices are continually made, and the logic of the market is that those who wish to sell their products will compete with each other for his attention.

If this model is applied to the supporter, we may see how his relationship to the main social institution of football, the club, has been changing. Ian Taylor has convincingly suggested(29) that the traditional supporter was able to think positively about his relationship to the club. He could feel that the club and its players belonged to him and his fellow supporters. The players were 'available subcultural representatives' conscious of their closeness, cultural and economic to their supporters, who in turn fulfilled that role and provided him with cultural and economic support. Thus "the rank and file supporter could (however wrongly) see himself as being a member of a collective and democratically structured enterprise."

With the fall in attendances, it became apparent that this illusion was no longer enough to maintain supporters loyalty. It had to compete with other more powerful illusions. The response of those who dominated the public discussion and practical administration of football was not to look for a model of membership more culturally relevant and more firmly founded than the traditional illusion. It was rather to assume that the only possible relationship was that dominant in other more commercially minded leisure activities. If there was still much talk of the romance of being a supporter, if managers still claimed theirs were the best supporters in the country, if there was a campaign to improve the poverty

of the ground facilities, these were more than counterbalanced by the image, explicit or implicit, of the supporter on which major policy decisions were based. The effects, Taylor has argued were devastating - football was subject to a process of professionalisation:

"Professionalisation does not consist simply of entry into the transfer market and the beginnings of large transfer fees. It is also the process whereby clubs began to accommodate themselves to their changing role in a declining entertainments industry. Developmental processes in the wider society were increasing the leisure opportunities of an increasingly differentiated working-class. Football was competing for customers over and above the football subculture. In one sense, this was a technical question involving the provision of covered accommodation, increasing the number of seats, and most obviously the fitting of floodlights to enable evening matches to be played. In another sense, however, the process involved a transformation of the stereotype of the football supporter. Where once the stereotypical supporter was a working-class man, living for Saturday and inextricably involved - in his own perception - with the fortunes of the club, now he was of undefined class membership, enjoying an escape from responsibilities, the provision of a spectacle from time to time, and expecting fulfilment of these needs from a team of professional entertainers..... From the participatory and masculine values of the working-class supporter, and from an exclusive concern with victory, football turned its attention to the provision of spectacle, skill and efficient performance - values understood to be important to the stereotypical i.e. middle-class supporter."(30)

If this is a little overdrawn and smacks too much of conspiracy theory, it is nevertheless more convincing in general terms than any of the other responses we have examined. It offers in particular an understanding rooted in the game itself of the second form of the supporters' revolt: the decline into habitual violence.

The pattern of crowd violence emergent from the mid-fifties onwards is not hard to trace. Early skirmishes are apparent from 1956 onwards with Liverpool and Everton fans taking out their frustration for important defeats on the special trains which took them home. By 1961, the Football Association complained that the new trend was towards pitch invasions, and Manchester United fans were earning themselves an unenviable reputation. Fights with opposing supporters and random damage to property had spread outside the ground, and at its peak in 1968 football hooliganism had been put alongside the behaviour of students as one of the clearest threats to the social order. The terms in which this problematic behaviour was discussed were important. The central thrust was to insist that anyone behaving in such a manner could not really be a football supporter at all. That process of 'defining out' the violent fans had a complex dynamic of its own, with important implications for the public discussion of deviant behaviour. Here it need only be noted that the presentation of violence in and around football grounds as totally extraneous to the game as a cultural activity was widespread. The Times provides a sophisticated example in an editorial:

"There ought not to be a hazard to safety in going to a football match. Yet it would be understandable if more and more supporters were coming to the conclusion that it is just a bit too dangerous for their taste. The early weeks of another season have produced further reports of violence before during and after matches.....

Rowdyism is a ...greater worry to supporters because it has become so widespread. In a survey conducted by the British Market Research Bureau at the end of last season very nearly half of those who had ceased to

be regular attenders gave crowd disturbances as the reason. What is so alarming about the trend is that it is often one of mindless thuggery. There is always the possibility that with a game of such swift movement and high excitement some of the tension on the field will from time to time be reflected in temper on the terraces. Various techniques of crowd control are being employed to help counter this danger. But the trouble is not limited to excesses of enthusiasm during a match: many of the disorders on the way to the ground and afterwards suggest a pleasure in violence for violence's sake.

This is much more difficult to deal with, and really needs to be considered as a social problem irrespective of its connexion with sport."(31)

This is a measured and sophisticated version compared with the outbursts of the then Home Secretary, James Callaghan: "I agree that wanton destruction is perpetrated by a relatively small number of people who call themselves football fans. They are nothing of the sort and the clubs would be well rid of them. The authorities trying to stamp this out have the full support not only of myself but of the overwhelming majority of the public."(32) The persistence of the behaviour increased bafflement and anger. Even the more sophisticated sports writers refused to believe it could have anything to do with the game itself:

"It may be accepted from one who has now twice had to defend himself against their mindless violence, that a mob of drunken fifteen or sixteen year-olds is frighteningly illogical, unpredictable, and potentially violent....They are not an age-group, but a social phenomenon. They have taken football merely as a convenient - indeed inviting environment. In other circumstances they might have chosen Rugby League, dirt-track racing, boxing or all-in wrestling as their stamping ground."(33)

Even Arthur Hopcraft is prey to this dominant view. There is not seen to be any real link between the evident predisposition to violence amongst large sections of a traditional football crowd and the activities of those definable as 'louts with pimples and knives.' The logic of such analysis is, to recommend a policy of systematic harassment of potential trouble-makers which Hopcraft recognises to have 'fascist overtones.'(34)

Some time has been spent demonstrating the tone and scope of such invective, because its implications go far beyond the activities of a small number of violent teenagers. At stake in this debate is the definition of the 'true' supporter and the limits of acceptable behaviour. To recognise their behaviour as a problem is one thing; to deny any connection with the game is another. Not only does it run counter to their commitment to something more than violence, but disclaims responsibility for them.

An alternative thesis has been outlined by Ian Taylor(35). Extending arguments we have already touched upon, he sees football 'hooliganism' as a distorted attempt to restore some meaning and commitment to the role of the supporter. All the developments we have seen to be characteristic of the fifties and sixties - spiralling transfer fees, the economic and cultural dislocation of the top-line players, European competition. The attempts to make the game 'respectable' for a new 'model' spectator - have contributed to the undermining of the traditional role and image of the supporter. Thus those who look to the game for the assertion of traditional values are left behind; they are a 'subcultural rump'. With no formal channels available to them to express their loyalty, and informal access to

club and players closed, they draw on what few resources they have left. They involve their own songs and chants, institutionalising long-established individual obscenity and defiance at a collective level. They try to 'help' their team by booing and jeering the opposition, and extend the violent conflict of the field to the terraces and beyond.

But more than that. In symbolically displaced ways they reassert the traditional values which are being discredited in the organisation and ideology of the game. They are not selective consumers but totally committed supporters of their team alone; not individual spectators, but part of a collectively-responding crowd; not politely passive in their appreciation but actively interventionist. They are thus the 'real supporters' in the traditional definition. Their general life-experience is reproduced inside football - that of 'cultural alienation', divorced from those communal activities which previously gave those in their situation some possibilities for identification and commitment. They look to football, not as an excuse for a punch up, but for a regeneration of football's role in working-class culture:

"the centrality of soccer as a form of consciousness in sections of the working-class leads these sections to locate their alienation and isolation in the soccer club itself (their club). That is, violent resistance at the point of soccer consciousness is not an arbitrary reflection of some vague frustration. Rather, the violence around soccer may be seen as a specific (if inarticulate) choice produced by the hold the game has had over generations of Working-class experience."(36)

The argument is by no means completed. Taylor tends if anything to go too far in one direction. If the mainstream attitude to 'football hooliganism' has been to deny its connections with the game, it may be over-reacting to locate it wholly within the game. Rather we need to understand more fully the relationship between the game and more general cultural pressures to which some sections of the working-class are being subjected. The fusion of the 'skinhead' phenomenon and 'football hooliganism' may have provided a moment when some of those relationships became clear: how football appeared as an element alongside other cultural experiences: housing redevelopment and the break-up of the traditional neighbourhood, frustrated expectations in education and employment, the commercialisation of leisure, the 'threat' posed by immigration. Some starts have been made to such analyses(37). Here it may serve to state the general proposition that football hooliganism may in part be understood as a confused response to the ambiguous status of the supporter created by the major developments in the modern game. Once stated, such responses were interpreted by the powerful in terms which reinforced the trends to which the violence was a symbolic reaction. Crucial to the dual process of creating that ambiguity, and 'defining out' the violent response to it, were the activities of the mass media.

The concern here is not with the general 'standard' of sports reporting, or with its inability to avoid cliche or bias. The crucial effects of the mass media on the game as here defined are those which seek to alter or influence the nature of public response. The argument will be that the main emphasis of the press is on the exploitation of the footballer as celebrity, while television has more far-reaching and less generally appreciated effects on the presentation of the game. The press has long brought its own demands for controversy and sensationalism to bear heavily upon its presentation of football. There are the usual arguments about what is 'newsworthy' and the excuse trotted out that 'it's what the public are interested in'. As long as this was confined to the context

of a local team, then its effects were likely to be counter-balanced by the supporters access to primary knowledge e.g. about how certain players or the team as a whole were shaping up. But wherever the press is more or less the only source of information, then its own particular interests work against those of the game in general. The false opinion of 'ghosted' articles, the deliberate provocation of trivial controversy, the exaggeration of enmity within or between teams - all these are attempts to transform the genuine drama of the match into the artificially sensational image of society which the press too often conveys.

The press comes increasingly to stand as the main intermediary between the supporter and the game in those areas he can have no knowledge of. His perception of a player's performance on the field may be coloured by the image of his life off it as portrayed by the press. The transfer request, night-club incident or family tragedy in which any player may become involved are delivered to us in a press package. We may receive it with that partial cynicism we always have towards newspaper stories, but we read it nonetheless and it comes to constitute part of our subcultural knowledge. The effects on the player can be disastrous, not only because of the strain of trying to live in the constant glare of publicity, but because his game and the attitude of crowds towards him may suffer as a result. The 'success' of the media in the case of George Best was to infuse - with no little help from Best himself - the controversial nature of his behaviour off the field into his actual playing performance, finally destroying the base of real talent onto which they had parasitically grafted their own image of the superstar. And the public, with no alternative source of information colluded in this process.

Both the individual player and the club - its financial crises, power struggles, entries onto the transfer market - are filtered through the press. The effect is to further distance the supporter from any sense of participation and membership. At least, it may be thought, he still has his own evidence of the matches he sees to form his own attachments and ideas. This remains true for those who regularly attend matches, and football supporters do in general display a remarkable capacity to defend the authenticity of their own perceptions. But those 'missing millions' who have ceased to attend matches, and for an altogether new public, access to football only exists through the medium of television.

There can be no doubt that television has radically altered the nature of the immediate footballing subculture, extending and diluting its meaning for a 'mass' audience. Too many people are getting too much football too easily and too cheaply. The general justification that so much T.V. exposure makes more people become interested in football may be true. But what is the cultural status of an interest in <u>televised</u> football? It is surely much less like an active participation in the creation and transmission of meaning and more like the consumption of a media-packaged commodity.

Neither is the packaging of the commodity a neutral process. Television never presents to us the game as we might have seen it had we been there ourselves. Commentary camerawork and retrospective analysis by experts all contribute to a very particular structuring of the match. We do not for example require a running commentary at a live match; why then do we have one on television? Beyond the communication of some basic information, about for example team selection, his role is really superfluous. We have two eyes, we can see what is happening. In fact the commentator is the first stage of interpretation. He comes between us and the event: he represents it to us. His comments go well beyond the descriptive into the

interpretive. In order to take the game at all we have to encounter his continuous interpretation of it. The history of television football commentating demonstrates the increasingly interpretative conception of his role. The descriptive style (Kenneth Wolstenhome) is superseded by that of the instant analyst (David Coleman): the shift is from describing what is happening to explaining it. We see what is happening we are told why: our own interpretation, if it still exists, must grapple with that of the commentator.

Camerawork is also highly selective. What passes as increased efficiency - shot from different angles, better close-ups, immediate action replays - is in fact a more sophisticated restructuring of the footballing event. Focussing on a very small part of the pitch where the ball is prevents us seeing what is happening off the ball. (When forwards are described as 'coming from nowhere', what is really meant is that they were not originally in the camera shot.) Editing of 90 minutes down to 30 represents the game as a series of detailed moments rather than a more general flow of action. Action replays may be shown while the game is still going on so that when we return live we must guess what has gone on before. Close-ups of players in moments of joy and anguish intensify the dramatic self-exposure required of a superstar.

As if all this wasn't enough, we are subjected to expert analysis afterwards. If kept at the level of simple opinion, this may be no more harmful than the cavortings of a few particularly extrovert players and managers. And there is no reason why some comments should be made after a game has been shown. But things have got out of hand when film of a game is curtailed to get the 'experts' in; the game itself is playing second fiddle to television's idea of a show.

What is at stake here is the effect of television and the press on the footballing subculture: on the large-scale perception of a popular cultural activity. It has not been anything but debilitative. They have brought to the game their own definitions of newsworthiness (the sensational, the dramatic), their own ways of personalising events ('great men under strain'), and their own self interpretation as experts ('it is my job to tell you what all this means'). Far from understanding or defending the traditional role of the 'supporter', they have sought to educate him out of it into the world of technical sophistication and managed melodrama which they fondly believe to be an accurate and desirable presentation of the game.

The situation of the post-war football supporter has been largely not of his own making. It has been determined by developments in the game and the society as a whole over which he has had no control. The fact of falling attendances, the wide use of a consumer model of the new supporter, the problems thrown up by crowd violence, together brought into question that traditional version of the supporter's role so long taken for granted by himself, his team and his club. In the shrinking presence of that wider class culture which had informed the supporter's role, he could only with great difficulty maintain a consistent attitude towards the game. As football moves into the seventies, it seems to have changed its core values in such a way as to leave the supporter with less and less room to manoeuvre. Taylor's account does not seem too exaggerated:

"No longer is the playing of soccer at League and national level defined significantly in terms of subcultural participation and local values.

The watching of soccer has become a 'spectacle' to be appreciated passively for its high degree of professional precision (Leeds United's defence) or its flamboyant individualism (Manchester United's attack).

Masculinity is no longer so pronounced a feature of the game, and the spectacle of soccer is now thought appropriate for male and female customer alike. If a value continues to be placed on victory, this only secondarily a version of long-standing subcultural rivalries (rivalries which will not easily be forgotten by the older supporter) and is primarily a victory that is commercially instrumental (as leading to lucrative gates and European and international competition."(38)

The change in these values we have seen to adversely affect two crucial elements in the game: the spectator and the player. It remains to examine other elements which have dominated in the metamorphosis of football from the role of a working-class activity rooted in tradition to that of a spectacle suitable for the consumption of the new leisured classless. These elements are the club, international competition, and tactics.

THE CLUB

The post-war development of the administrative structure and club organisation of football is much more opaque than those of the player or spectator. The overall trend is towards what will be called here the institutionalisation of a footballing oligopoly. By this is meant the increasing stranglehold by a few clubs over resources - players, gate money, capital, competitive success as measured by league performance, and policy-making exhibited in the workings of the Football League. It will be argued that this institutionalisation is by no means as inevitable as it is normally portrayed, and needs to be understood as in part attributable to that fatal combination of cultural ignorance and economic vulnerability we have already seen to be characteristic of vital debates and decisions in the game.

A brief account of some of the main dimensions of this oligopolistic development is necessary. These are held to be the relative openness of top-level competition, the pattern of regional decline, an ever-widening gap between rich and poor clubs, and the adoption by the end of the sixties of the methods and attitudes of corporate business among several of the most prominent clubs.

The numbers of different clubs registering successes in major domestic football competitions in the twenty years after the war show no significant variation from those of the inter-war years:

Number of clubs	Period:	1919-39	1946-66
League champions		10	10
Runners up		13	10
Appearing in Cup Final		19	22
Playing in Division 1		38	40

These figures are quite surprising, running counter as they do to the widely held assumption that a few clubs have come to dominate the game in a new and historically unique way. Certainly they do not tell the whole picture, and it is possible to apply different tests, for example whether smaller clubs have less chance of survival in the top draw than previously. Equally the apparent openness of the later period may simply reflect the displacement of an old elite by a new one which will in time rigidify its

hold over the major competitions. Only time will tell. It has already told on some of the traditional strongholds of English League football.

The decline of traditional small-town football, especially in Lancashire and further North shows a clear pattern since the war. The decline of such previous giants as Bolton Wanderers, Preston North End, Blackpool, Sunderland, Portsmouth and Cardiff is often read as the result of the economic decline of the regions involved, reflected in the poor attendances and financial support suffered by the club. Yet this again is too simple an explanation. It is rather a reflection of cultural decay, sometimes but by no means always following on economic depression. Thus in contrast to Lancashire, the North East, epitome of traditional working-class community and economic retardation, has maintained its enthusiasm for football, and not only because of goverment attempts to rejuvenate the economy. If Middlesborough, Sunderland and Newcastle have not enjoyed their inter-war success, that is more a product of poor management than of the evolving supremacy of Southern and Midlands football. Indeed these last two areas have - ironically in view of the affluence thesis - had a hard time in football recently. If any areas can be said to have dominated post-war football, then these surely have been the cities of Liverpool and Manchester - meeting places of the new geographical pattern of urban conurbation and the old cultural roots of working-class community.

Both the nature of football competition and the forms of longstanding regional cultures have ensured some kind of resistance to the overall trend towards oligopolisation. But it is a depressing fact that these traditional elements on which the game previously rested are under increasing and continuing pressure from a new form of cultural prescription: the rationale of the cheque book. All the major economic trends of the post-war situation - spiralling transfer fees, higher and unlimited wages, uncertain attendances, even the cost of travel - have militated against the small and medium sized clubs. By 1960 it was estimated that only 19 clubs could show an annual surplus, 28 just made ends meet, and 45 had to look for loans and other forms of fund-raising to stave off bankruptcy.(39) Percy Young has summarised the implications for the game:

"The result of this, as foreseen in 1953, has been to tend to concentrate the best talent in a few wealthy clubs, and to make life much more difficult for the small clubs. Although this situation is not entirely new (the Arsenal led the way in buying up rare skills a generation ago, while power in Scotland has always reposed in a few hands) it brings a new set of factors into the English game. Thus, the law of diminishing returns makes the prospects of clubs that have fallen on evil times distinctly gloomy... the demands not only for quality but also comfortable amenities for spectators make it seem likely that in the not too distant future some towns with two first-class (by courtesy, at least) teams, will have to make do with one. The fight for the survival of the club of average repute is really on. There are many whose hopes are centred on a minnow's follow-through in the F.A. Cup, on one or two profitable encounters in the Football League Cup, or on the providential arrival of a soon-to-be-sold boy prodigy; but whose finances are precariously guaranteed by bingo-sessions, private football pools, and the social activities of the Supporters Club. About the Third and Fourth Divisions, the Scottish Second Division, and the Irish League, there is a certain charm. But - as the passing of the once famous Accrington Stanley showed, in 1962 - pathos and charm, in the temper of the present age, are expendable."(40)

The big clubs have not been totally immune from these pressures, but have had the resources to cope with them. The private capital on which the game has generally depended has been attracted to a few top-line clubs, where places on the board carry increasing prestige and power. The coalitions of wealthy men who run clubs are no longer identifiably local in their origins, business successes and loyalties, but members of a national business elite, who will settle wherever the opportunity arises. They may even ignore longstanding rivalries in their search for influence, as did Doug Ellis when he moved from the board of Birmingham City to that of Aston Villa. They are above all, apostles of big business, not only as a method of organisation but as an all-embracing ethos. They seek to diversify the club's interests, or conversely as in the case of Crystal Palace, to use the club as part of a diversification of interests, business interests. They sell boxes to firms for entertainment purposes, regard players as no more or less than investments, and use profit as their main yardstick of success. Rare and anachronistic are the boards like that at West Ham who seem to have some interest in, and commitment to, football as an expressive activity.

The movement towards oligopoly, then, is distinct if partial and uneven. It is openly identifiable in the everyday statements of chairmen, managers and pundits: they talk of football less and less as a sport and a game, more and more as a business or a branch of the entertainment industry. At the moment of Emlyn Hughes triumph, lifting the Cup after Liverpool's victory in the 1974 F.A. competition, a B.B.C. commentator could only manage the comment: "He's one of the best professionals in the business". He could have been talking about an advertising copy writer.

All this may appear inevitable. It merely shows that football is no more immune than any other sphere of social life from the dictates of economic necessity and public demand. This essentially passive approach in which nothing can ever be done about anything dogs discussion of all forms of contemporary popular culture, and needs to be resisted. It is simply not true that football in the England of the seventies has to be seen and run as a business. One suspects, for example, that few supporters see it like that. Neither are the various economic trends we have been examining impervious to being controlled or contained. The problem in football is the same as in all sports: that those in charge of its administration have no understanding of the game outside of nineteenth century authoritarian moralism and twentieth century professional cynicism. This contradiction is nicely caught in the title - "The Art and Business of Football" - and the conclusion of a Times article at the moment of crisis in 1954: "If football's place in the national culture is lost, the game will lose as a business and an entertainment as surely as it will lose as a sport and a game."

As a result of this failure of definition, the Football League has consistently failed to provide any long-term policy for the development of professional football. Rightly conservative about league structure, wrongly authoritarian towards players, it remains, in the sphere of matters clearly within its jurisdiction such as transfer fees, verbally aggressive and administratively important. To be fair, a distinction should be made between the management committee and the general meeting of club chairmen. What faltering steps the former have tried to make have been abruptly terminated by the latter - more correctly a proportion of the latter since the Third and Fourth Divisions are only associate members, granted four votes between them as against the 44 of the top two divisions.

This innate conservatism has some non-achievements to its credit, such as the refusal to introduce a 'Super-League' structure, but overall little real thought or action has taken place to restrain the trend towards the partial institutionalisation of a footballing oligopoly. Transfer fees have not been checked or abolished, redistribution of money to the less well off has been minimal, the pools - and until recently television have been allowed to make parasitical profits out of the game. It is a record analogous to that of a poor Labour Government.

Even the best available public discussion of the game in the Chester report of 1968 makes no attempt to control any of the main developments in club football. Indeed it declares its interests to kill football at the roots:

"If the changes we envisage are made they will not close the gap which has opened up in recent years between a small number of clubs, mainly in the big centres of population, which are rich and carry off most of the honours, and the clubs in the lower levels of the league. There is no need to create a super league, it already exists in the top clubs of the First Division....We see no harm in this growing gap - indeed it is good for Britain's international role in the game that we can produce ten or a dozen teams that can match the best in the world."(41)

There is much in the same vein. It is an almost wholly economist approach, mixing some sound sense - a pools levy, control of transfers, liaison with local authorities - with aid to the oligopolists - tax concessions, higher permissable dividends, the leasing of seats and boxes. It is a culturally barren document. Listen for example to the arguments against subsidising lower clubs:

"League football dependent on non-operating income would not be healthy or desirable. Spectators are not just one of several sources of income to clubs. They are the essential and integral ingredient of a great spectator sport. League football which was financed adequately from Bingo, the pools, television, government grants but which was played in deserted stadia, would be a graveyard sport."

Several arguments are collapsed here. It would take too long to unravel them all. The main point is that the report fails to consider whether the financial crisis is simply caused by falling public support, or by unrealistic costs. The report itself notes that the transfer market actually works in favour of the bigger clubs, and that the abolition of regional competition at a lower level has made travelling costs the main financial burden for small clubs. It also fails to consider whether a small football crowd may actually be evidence of a public interest other sports would welcome. A typical Second Division crowd is larger than that for many cricket test matches; a Third Division crowd bigger than that before which professional tennis players compete for inordinately large cash prizes. Of course the costs involved are different, but that is not the point. The Chester arguments are based on the hidden premise we have met before: that the forty percent of the total weekly attendance at football matches who attend matches outside the first division do so because they are old-fashioned or have no alternative. Compared with success in foul-ridden international competition, the significance of their needs and aspirations is minimal.

Such a perspective derives from a very specific reading of the relationship between economic necessity and cultural desirability. If the

public cannot generate sufficient gate money to meet increasing costs attributable to policy failures by the game's administrators, then the activity must be left to die an unnatural death. On no account must there be subsidy. (Haven't we heard this argument somewhere before?) The road is paved for the triumphal march of oligopoly - live on television, of course.

Perhaps this is too harsh. But it is depressing to read the Chester report's account of its objectives:

"in promoting and improving the game as a whole:

(i) as a sport - to be played for healthy exercise and enjoyment and with a team spirit

(ii) as a major public entertainment - to be watched in good conditions and paid for by the spectators

(iii) as a form of voluntary service and an outlet for constructive energies."

Leaving aside the questionable relevance of (i) to Sunday morning football, and the naive model of social control in (iii), it is obvious that (ii) is a weak formulation - that weakness characteristic of sportsmen and sports administrators when asked for a cultural justification of explanation of their own obsessive activity.

We must defer to the conclusion consideration of the implications for policy-making of an alternative model of the cultural significance of football. The Chester report comes close to defining the central problem to which this section has been addressed - the nature of the professional football club as a social institution. It concludes there are basically two possibilities for "a change in the nature of the football club which is under consideration - either towards great entertainment centres or towards smaller community centres." Certainly the response to financial crisis by some of the smaller clubs has contained elements of cultural democratisation, with supporters asked to buy shares, support the tote or social club, and to become generally more involved in the club's affairs. But at the top, where the resources go and the tone is set, the move is towards large-scale sports centres where membership is really a misnomer for consumption, and the financial future of the club may be secured symbolically in the new middle-class sport of squash, a more acceptable and profitable subsidy than that provided by bingo.

In a justifiably much-abused book on English football by a German Marxist, there occurs the following bald description of a football club:

"Professional clubs are profit-making businesses in the service sector, selling football performances as a commodity to the consuming public. They are organised as limited companies, with their shares generally held by a few wealthy industrialists. The annual turnover of a first division club is in the region of £300,000."(42)

On first reading, that seems an absurdly reductionist definition. But the central thrust in the development of the English football club since the war appear to have ensured that such a description may soon be an accurate and adequate one.

THE INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE

The immediate impact of the resounding defeat of the English international side by that of Hungary in 1953 at Wembley, repeated in Belgrade the following year, has already been noted. The specific kinds of response to the crisis those matches revealed will be examined in the following section on tactics. Those responses took place within an entirely new perspective provided by the necessity to compete seriously at international level. There was to be a new objective, and incontovertible way of testing the health of English football: the performance of the English national side in international competition, especially the World Cup. The overall implication was that the central concern should be to re-establish the English national in its rightful position of pre-eminence. The effects of this concentration were to radically reform the game: its administration, coaching and tactical thinking. The results of international matches were also taking on a new form of symbolic national expression. Formerly expressive of an unquestioned supremacy - a confident cultural imperialism - the fortunes of England's football team now seemed symptomatic of a sense of cultural crisis extending beyond a mere game. As the Times noted in a leading article in 1955, "the ordinary man finds the form of our professional footballers a more convenient indication of the state of the nation than all the economist's soundings." Percy Young has noted the increasing importance of football as a barometer of the nation's self-confidence:

"During its last phase.. British football has increasingly reflected the detailed pattern of social political and economic forces at work within the body politic. On the grand scale there may be observed in its development the rise and fall of an imperial philosophy, an hostility to newer ideals promulgated from abroad, a retreat into isolationism, and a final attempt to readjust to new circumstances. After the Second World War the overriding problem has been to accommodate internal ideas to external standards. Underlying the problem there has been a traumatic experience - more often felt subconsciously than consciously, and born of the realisation that Britain does not stand where she did."(43)

There was little in the form of the English side in the fifties and early sixties to reawaken confidence. Only two of the next nine internationals after Hungary were won. England performed indifferently in the 1958 World Cup, and were beaten 1-0 by Russia in a group play-off. A disastrous tour of South America in 1959, included a 1-2 defeat by Mexico and was followed by a second Wembley defeat, this time Sweden being the 3-2 victors. Despite the concession of some power and status to team manager Walter Winterbottom, the string of poor results continued, and the 1962 World Cup was an action replay of 1958, the only consolation being that England's quarter final conquerors, Brazil, went on to win the competition. Winterbottom resigned, his assistant Jimmy Adamson declined to replace him, and Alf Ramsey was appointed manager, with at last complete responsibility for team selection and preparation. A new phase had begun.

If the Football Association were slow to grasp the absolute need for efficient administration, serious preparation, and extensive experience to have any success at all in international competition, one or two League clubs were more open to experimentation. Manchester United led the way with a series of friendlies against major European club sides. Thus when the Football League was finally prevailed upon to discontinue its embargo on English clubs participating in European competitions, United were more prepared than most. The first English side to enter the European Cup in season 1956-7, they reached the semi-finals, before going down to the

all-conquering Real Madrid. In the next year, they again qualified for the semi-finals but the tragedy of the Munich air disaster cut short the progress of a young team, whose members might have introduced a whole new style to English football at both international and club level. They were succeeded in the next two seasons competitions by Wolverhampton Wanderers, then by Burnley, neither of whom were able to cope with the sophistication of continental sides. It was left to another exceptional team, Tottenham Hotspurs, to emulate United in the 1961-2 season, going down by the odd goal in seven to Benfica in a two-legged semi-final. But again, mediocrity was the successor: Ipswich, then Everton.

By 1964, however, the lessons were being more generally learnt. England managed to go eight games without defeat, only to suffer their third ever Wembley defeat by Austria. At the club level it looked like more frustration, as Liverpool and Manchester United went out at the semi-final stages of the European and Inter-Cities Fairs Cups respectively. It was left to West Ham, capitalising on a home advantage (the final was held at Wembley), to raise the spirits by winning the European Cup Winners Cup. This had been won once before by Spurs in 1963. That was, and probably still is, the finest ever European performance by an English club in terms of style (they beat Athletico Madrid 5-0 in the alien atmosphere of Rotterdam), but as an isolated achievement amidst so much failure, their victory lacked symbolic power. West Ham were more representative of the best and generally unrewarded tradition in English football and their victory seemed to reconvert Wembley into England's own territory again. More consistent achievement in Europe followed. In 1965-6 Liverpool lost narrowly in the semi-final of the Champions Cup to the Hungarian side Partizan, while Liverpool went down 1-2 to Borussia Dortmund in the Cup Winners Cup Final at Hampden Park. At club level at least, English football was reasserting itself.

The years 1966 to 1968 can be regarded as the peak of the international and European club performances of British sides, not only because of the famous victories in the World and European Cups, but because also of the general ability of English teams to compete at the highest level: Leeds United, for example, reached the semi-final then the final, and eventually won the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup in this period, and were succeeded as winners by Newcastle United in 1968-9, this last again a victory on foreign soil.

If English football would never again be in its pre-war situation of unchallenged supremacy, it seemed as if we were at least back up again among the big boys. The nation, and the game were the better for it. But as English sides found answers to the questions posed by foreign sides, so the questions became harder. English football had reached a plateau from which it seemed impossible to climb. Only perhaps in the humiliation of Liverpool by Red Star in the European Cup in 1973-4 and England's failure to overcome Poland to qualify for the 1974 World Cup, was it realised that English football had become imprisoned in a tactical straight-jacket.

TACTICS

In the simplest and most unavoidable form, the Hungarian victories of 1953-4 demonstrated that the basic English conception of, and approach to, the game of football was no longer sufficient. Remedy, then, had to be wholesale, as the Times noted in 1954: "British footballers have a four-point programme to master if they are to survive. They must be athletes, 100 per cent fit; they must become gymnasts; they must make the

ball a slave, answering every command, and they must start thinking intelligently ahead of the pass". And this was not all - "We must reshape our whole outlook. The W/M formation against a team such as these Hungarians, with its new ideas, is as outdated as a horsedrawn bus...The basic trouble of course, quite apart from the difference in fundamental skills, was our tactical inefficiency".

There was a sense in which the English national side had had no tactics at all. The best available players were picked and expected to get on with it. At a club level there were tactics, though hardly of a sophisticated kind. The problem then became whether any of these could form the basis of the necessary reforms. It was noticed by the Times that there were four kinds of game currently enjoying success in the English League. There was all-round bustle, as exemplified by the Portsmouth side, a more sophisticated version of which was being used by the emergent Wolves side. This involved continuous pressurising of the opposition, never conceding time or space with forwards expected to tackle opposing defenders as often as they were tackled by them, with extensive use of the long pass out to the wingers, who were chosen for their speed and their ability to shoot - a new requirement for these men, whose effectiveness was traditionally judged by the amount of touchline white which had accumulated on their boots. By contrast, an innovatory style had been adopted by Tottenham and lesser emulaters such as Preston - 'push and run'. This was simplicity itself, involving first time passing and much running off the ball, summarised in the slogan "make it simple, make it quick." Manchester United and Arsenal stood alone as apostles of a more mixed and improvised style, changing according to circumstances.

Yet these apparent differences masked the fact that they were all really variations on the same theme: the W/M formation. This had evolved historically after the change in the offside rule in 1925. It involved three at the back - two full-backs and a defensive centre-half - two wing halves, who were primarily fetchers and carriers, and five forwards, all of whom were expected to attack, but the two inside forwards had special distributive responsibilities. This formation dominated English football from its institution by Herbert Chapman in the 1920s to the innovations of Alf Ramsey in the early sixties. It was the basic style of even the two teams who had been most outstanding in the post-war periods - Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur. It was finally this basic conception which had to go.

There are those who insist that this was real football - the ball moved quickly to the wings, the cross to the far post, the big centre forward charging in, the tackles instantaneous, the clearances rude. It is pointless to lament its passing, for it was in the event proven to be short on skill and thought: speed and directness were too often substituted for control. The new tactics which were to come, however, involved a development of the strengths of the English game - toughness, hard running, tenacity - with some of the less desirable elements of the foreign game - caution, defensiveness and deliberate fouling.

It was not long before it before it became obvious that in addition to differences of tactics and skill, English and foreign football also differed in their attitudes to violence. This was perhaps hardly surprising when the game was being appropriated by so many different cultural traditions. Even so, the gap between British teams and the rest seemed greater than any between other countries. By 1960, the times defined attitudes towards violence as one of the major problems the game faced:

"There are now two types of football in the world - the British style and the Continental, Latin-American counterpart. When brought face to face - as in Milan recently - they tend on occasions to provide an unhappy marriage. The foreigner, nourished on a game of infiltration and sly intervention, with the minimum of physical contact, regards the British attitude of hard tackling as quite brutal.

However fair and within the laws, this is considered overseas as ugly, coarse and ruthless. The foreigner, for his part, employs subtle body-checking, shielding of the ball and other tricks that rile the Briton. So the bonfire is ready for burning, unhindered by crowds and referees who penalize the British method because it is against their natures and upbringing."

Thus it was that for many years, and to a lesser but significant extent still, international matches were demonstrations of incompatible cultural attitudes to violence, too deep-rooted one suspects to be eradicated by attempts to standardise referees' interpretation of the game. The laws indeed are only a bare framework on which the fabrics of very different cultures may be hung.

As English football had to face up to the international unacceptability of its essential roughness, so it tacitly agreed to drop some of the more extreme features, especially shoulder-barging and challenges on the goalkeeper. But the essential toughness remained, and the best that could be achieved was an uneasy form of truce which is still in force. In conjunction with the players' removal from the context of traditional working-class attitudes towards violence, the continental influence encouraged the development of premeditated forms of violence. The worst elements of the traditional English game and the new continental game were merged into a pattern of violence which was at once deliberate and uncontrolled.

A similar movement - incorporating the worst of both possible worlds - was observable in tactical developments, as the English game moved through 4-2-3 to 4-3-3 and on to the ultra-defensiveness of 4-4-2. Alf Ramsey has to be the key figure here, although the tendency was much wider than the trend set by one man. Others - Revie at Leeds, Shankly at Liverpool, Mee at Arsenal - were no less instrumental in this development. Continental methods were adopted without the flair and flexibility necessary to make them exciting as well as effective. Compensations were made through the development of exceptional work-rate and team understanding, with a special emphasis on defensive impenetrability. The method was never popular with the public or the press, but it worked in the crucial World Cup competition of 1966. Arthur Hopcraft has argued that Ramsey's achievement should be judged by the English team's performance in the 1970 World Cup, particularly the match with Brazil which demonstrated how the new method had taken England to be one of the best teams in the world.

Ramsey has always been a controversial figure, as much for his enigmatic personality as for his ideas on football. His ultimate significance is that he institutionalised into an inflexible system tendencies already present in the game. Without that successful institutionalisation, they might not have become quite so rigid, or been so slavishly reproduced in club football. Those tendencies were the attitudes that (in Arthur Hopcraft's words) "success was overridingly important, that positive method was indispensable, that attractiveness was accidental".

Too often the objection to Ramsey is an objection to method per se. Clearly tactical innovation was necessary if English football was to survive at all at international level. The real questions are whether there were and are other possible methods than those adopted, and whether the adopted method has to stifle further innovation, and become a new orthodoxy as inflexible as the old.

The basic determinant of the choice of tactics was fear : the need to sacrifice long-term considerations of the game itself, to the prospects of immediate success. Clubs could literally ill afford to ignore such proven tactics. But it was also a failure of the imagination - the inability of popular culture to generate new ideas over and above the demands of nationalism and business. It is finally in the area of tactics that all the major developments in the post-war game come home to roost. The functionalism of post-Ramsey tactics is part of the cultural production of a society in which all activities are subjected to the same laws of financial security, immediate productivity, and cultural conservatism. The Times has caught this neatly in a comment on an English 2-0 victory over Northern Ireland a few months after the World Cup triumph: "In this age of the computer, of time and motion study, this England team has come to resemble a company of business efficiency experts. It is largely faceless and anonymous - but highly efficient". The exploration of new tactics has become the rigidification of a system, which precedes the availability of players. This spreads throughout the game, so that schoolboys come to think of themselves as all mid-field players, and nobody anywhere dare mention the word winger.

Of course the new orthodoxy will be replaced in time, as the old is no longer sufficient. The sacking of Ramsey and the apparently liberating effect this had on England players demonstrates this. But the next trend in tactics will again be a response to foreign influence, and this time, since what was left of the traditional virtue has been used up, there will be no British solution, except the effort to learn the continental game. If the 1974 World Cup is anything to go by, the next tactical move will be towards a universal adoption of what Conrad Lozdiak has described as the Slow/Fast continental style:

"This style of play has two phases: the first includes the slow build up of attacks by ball-holding, square passing and reverse passing, in mid-field; the second phase is one of fast movement and dash in and around the penalty area. Mid-field superiority is essential for the build up of attacks in this style; thus any team attempting to play this type of game must have at least two, preferably three or four, players in mid-field who are highly talented in ball control and short-passing.....the team aims to retain possession. The team makes slow progress towards the opponents' goal; when in the region of the opponents' penalty area the forwards forget the number they are wearing on their shirt, and move in all directions at speed; meanwhile the ball is still being held and passed by the mid-field players, until a gap is found in the opposing defence: then the ball is passed quickly to the player in that gap or into the gap for a player to run on to."(44)

It is thus likely that the whole pace and movement of the game are to be changed. This will probably be accompanied by a continued reduction in the number of goals. Totals for the English League have fallen overall since the war, and although tactical innovation may arrest the fall as some teams exploit new ideas before others, the trend is almost bound to continue. The use of substitutes may well increase to the level used in the World Cup where up to three players are used as tactical changes. In sum, though the

rules and simple objectives of the game may have remained the same, the game of professional football has undergone a quite profound cultural transformation. The same pressures which have served to change the cultural situation of player and spectator, altered the club as a social institution, and undermined the financial basis of many smaller clubs, have penetrated to the very core of the game. It remains to indicate the wider implications of these changes for the game as a part of popular culture.

CONCLUSION

The portrait presented here of the development of English professional football since the war is primarily one of decay. It has been demonstrated that in its major facets - player, supporter, club, national side and tactics, the game has been dislocated from that traditional working-class cultural context which had produced shaped and contained it. To some, this will appear as a natural and inevitable development: the long-overdue adjustment of football to changed social and economic circumstances. Like other elements in traditional working-class culture, it has to accommodate the shifts in leisure patterns which have accompanied a more mobile and affluent way of life. To protest or criticise is pointless and even reactionary, an apparent wish to perpetuate the poverty-ridden and static way of life which produced the culture.

Yet the argument about football, like that about the whole of working-class culture is not about change in itself, but about the process and results of change. The desire is not to continue popular cultural activities in their traditional forms, but to question their wholesale rejection, and the substitution of new assumptions about people's leisure needs, which are based upon an effort to control or provide, but rarely to involve. These assumptions are at work in very different areas of popular culture. The pub is an interesting example. Some excellent recent research(45) has demonstrated how big brewers, using changing cultural patterns to justify wholesale closures and conversions, have in fact redefined the pub as a cultural institution, with little regard for those who may wish to continue traditional pub activities in some form.

The brewers' work is easy to identify, their primary motive - of profit maximisation - undenied. The problem of football is rather different in form, though ultimately similar in kind. The vested commercial interests are not immediately apparent, and the success sought is that in football competition rather than that of the annual statement of profits. The net effect, however is the same, as in the absence of any counter-definition the game is coming to be shaped by the dictates of finance. Major decisions are based on criteria which are wholly financial; the talk is of investment in a player and the returns expected from him, even in the disguised form of 'work-rate', of productivity.

Sponsorship is welcomed with little thought for the financial consequences. From fairly innocuous pre-season warm-up competitions, sponsorship is now moving on to giving financial backing for matches, in return for advertising rights. Birmingham City even made an attempt to insert unit trust commercials into one home match in the 1973-4 season. Roundly booed by the crowd, the experiment was abruptly terminated. The whole incident did not rate a mention, never mind a protest in the local press. It may not be long before whole clubs are taken over in this way, and not only their financial organisation, but their whole existence as cultural institutions, may come to be run by those whose only commitment to the game is to what material advantage they can get from it.

Finance is not the only decadent influence. Television we have seen to bring to the game definitions of entertainment derived from its wider role as a means of cultural production and transmission. Public relations experts, again deriving their ideologies from outside the game, strive to 'sell' the club or team, and are not averse to cheap gimmicks, like the gymnastic warm-ups and distribution of tie-ups tried by Leeds United two years ago. Such definitions of football as another item of entertainment or a special sort of public spectacle seem to pass unnoticed and unchallenged. In such a context, the failure of the Chester report to offer a definition of the game based on anything more than banality, is particularly depressing.

The prospects of definitions of the game based on cultural concerns emerging from the football subculture are remote indeed. It is thus likely that by the 1980s football will have developed in even more grotesque forms the characteristics here defined as emergent in the sixties: the player as superstar, the supporter as consumer, the few oligopolist clubs as corporate business concerns, the match as tactically more reserved and engineered. Above all it will become more cynically violent. It is this violence, by players and spectators, which is the most useful index of decay. It has no limits, is based on no common definition of acceptability, and yet is unresisted. Those who may feel the game is at least kept alive in the parks and on the playing fields should have no illusions. In this matter of violence, the young are good learners, and schoolboys do not hesitate to ape their idols.

If these processes are allowed to continue unchecked, then football, in any definition derived from its traditional cultural role, will be dead. It will be dead, not because it is no longer watched as a fast and brutal game by ranks of the oppressed in tin shack stadiums, but because it will no longer have any cultural roots. It will be defined not from within a vibrant popular subculture but from without, by the ideas of mass consumption spectacle dominant amongst the controllers of late twentieth century culture.

In more structured terms, what will have happened will be that football will have lost its partial autonomy as a form of popular culture from the economic and cultural forces dominant in the rest of society. Historically football has always been a game of the people, played in spite of, and often in opposition to their masters. At the end of the nineteenth century, a combination ruling-class tolerance and working-class assertion allowed some space for the emergence of activities which had a genuinely popular cultural base. That is not to say those activities were in any political or conflictual sense revolutionary. But they were symbolic activities, produced, transmitted and recognised by working-class men as expressive of their situation. That situation changed, to a certain extent, and traditional forms of expression lost much of their original power. In one sense, if football is dying it is because working-class men have withdraw their support, but that withdrawal was relatively insignificant compared with economic and cultural forces of a new and powerful interest which have been allowed to dominate the game's development.

There may be some measures which could preserve what little still exists of value in modern football. A change in the points system, to encourage attacking play; severer penalties, including reductions in points, for clubs guilty of persistent foul play; an abolition of the transfer system to restore some sanity to the game's finances; nationalisation of the pools, and a subsidy to smaller clubs. But in the prevailing climate, such proposals are likely to seem too much of a radical break for those in charge of the game's fortunes, whose sense of tradition is actually a habit of authority. The game will stagger on from one crisis to another, like a Leeds Arsenal cup-tie, with all concerned hoping for the end to be put out of their misery. But for football as a genuinely popular cultural activity, the final whistle may already have gone. And extra time is not available.

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