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From Battlefields to Football Fields: Turkish Sports Diplomacy in the Post-Second World War Period

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Introduction

The 1945–60 period constitutes a unique era of sports history in which sports encounters were imbued with a diplomatic mission to establish cultural relations between both allies and conflicting countries. After 1945, sports were employed as a ‘soft power’, and, as Beck accurately observes, perceived as a projection of national values, strengths, and weaknesses.¹ The bold initiative of the British diplomat (who was himself a medal-winning athlete) Philip Noel-Baker to invite the Soviet football team Dinamo Moscow to Britain to ‘break down their [Soviet] isolation’ is considered to have been the starting point for postwar sports diplomacy.² The success of this tour also set the tone for diplomatic encounters through sports competitions during the Cold War era.

The ‘people’s diplomacy’ most of the time regulated the social tension that was generated by the Cold War. Sport competitions sustained the non-violent nature of the conflict, such as in the most famous example of ‘ping-pong diplomacy’, which helped ease Sino–Japanese and Sino–American relations during the World Table Tennis Championships of 1971 in Japan. Sports were presented as a symbol of discordant co-existence, a context in which the two blocs could challenge one another without lethal consequences. This perception of the world also helped both blocs to avoid political extremes that might have caused another global war.

Sports Diplomacy in Turkey

The Cold War indeed shaped the ‘rules’ of sports diplomacy that took place mainly between the East and the West. However, the sporting

'battle' had several different meanings for the peripheral actors of the Cold War, such as Turkey. For these actors, being involved in the sports diplomacy of the era meant more than crucial encouragement for their engagement in global politics. Sports came to function like a 'membership ID card' to the bloc with which they were engaged. Sports diplomacy gave them the opportunity to manifest their national prestige and the importance of their existence in world politics. For Turkey, for example, this happened through having sports contact with other countries in the same bloc, rather than being engaged in contests with countries from the opposite bloc.

The early republican period in Turkish history, in the sports domain, represents an imported and unfinished project. Because Turkey came very close to adopting the totalitarian policies of Germany and Italy, most of the plans involving sports had to be changed after Turkey shifted its alliance at the end of the war.³ However, this period also created a heritage according to which the diplomatic significance of popular sports was understood. This significance was instantly employed in the aftermath of the war, with a mutual interest from both Turkey and its prospective allies.

It is possible to claim that Turkey might have been willing to use sports, especially football, in the international area, as it overlapped with the republic's primary objective from its very beginning. Modern Turkey's nationalism, which dates back to the 1910s (before the republic, to the days of the Second Constitution) was based on a *double-jeu* of admiring and challenging the West.⁴ With the development of Sun Language Theory and the Turkish History Thesis in the 1930s, official Turkish ideology tried to construct a national pride depending on the claim that Western culture derived from an ancient, transcendent culture that essentially had been Turkish.⁵ Hence, Turks were not just far from being inferior to the West, they were superior to them. Whereas the invented pseudo-scientific theories claiming Turkish people's superiority had obvious flaws, any considerable success in the sports domain would appear to present popular and visible evidence for that claim.

Sports, especially football, offered the strongest ways to claim equivalence with and challenge the West since the emergence of modern Turkey with the Second Constitution in 1908. The opponent on the pitch was the 'enemy' as well as the partner. The General Harrington Cup, played just before the signing of the Lausanne Treaty in 1923 between Fenerbahçe and occupational armies' teams is a striking example of these fixtures. By the end of the Second World War, this changed slightly. The matches with foreign teams eventually were considered to

be 'friendly' games. Along with admiration and challenge, being allies was now a part of the game. Indeed, this psychological shift in the perception of these games was vastly dependent on the political domain.

The friendly games had additional importance as these encounters remained the sole fixtures (except for the Olympic Games) where Turkish sports teams could meet their international counterparts. For example, in football Turkey failed to qualify for the World Cup until 1954, and the European club competitions did not start until 1955. Therefore, between 1945 and 1960, the period in which sports contacts are analyzed here, friendly tournaments represented Turkey's only sports ties with the world. Also, in domestic Turkish sports, where professionalization was not introduced until 1959, these contacts also represented valuable income in the form of gate receipts and sometimes state aid.

We also should note that the Turkish sports literature widely ignores the political value of this period in sports history, except for Gökaçtı's *Bizim İçin Oyna (Play for Us)*, which remains the only political history piece in the football domain.⁶ Therefore, it is necessary to rely on the period's newspapers (especially *Milliyet*, *Cumhuriyet*, and *Vatan*, which gave extensive sports coverage in the era) for the sports facts and analyze them in the context of the international politics of the period.

Sports Diplomacy in the Late Single-Party Period (1945–50)

Turkey's first sports-related guest after the Second World War provided reliable proof of the increased importance of friendly games. The British naval cruiser HMS *Ajax*, which had participated in the D-Day landings, docked in Istanbul on 15 September 1945, bringing Abd al-Ilah, the regent of King Faisal II of Iraq, as a guest. The regent had been awarded the Legion of Merit by the United States in June and he later acted as a key figure in Iraq's diplomatic relations with the Western alliance. While Abd al-Ilah made diplomatic contacts in Turkey, the *Ajax* crew participated in sports events. The crew's football team played with Fenerbahçe and the Turkish Army's football team,⁷ while some marines participated in swimming races against the crew of the Turkish Navy cruiser *Yavuz*. The games were followed by a feast at Istanbul's luxury Lido pool, decorated with British flags.⁸ Meanwhile, the *Ajax* was opened for public visit.⁹

The *Ajax*'s visit, which took place just after the victory of the Allied Powers and even before the official end of the Second World War, presented a whole new way of international diplomacy. The victorious British soldiers appeared in public, playing games and attending cocktails. Sports proved to be an effective way to promote the Western

alliance. Just two weeks after this first visit, a track and field team from the United States visited Turkey and participated in international athletics events.¹⁰ Their visit was followed by that of another track and field squad from Greece.¹¹

Greece, standing just between the two newly constructed global camps, quickly became a new source of attraction for Turkish sports. Turkish officials selected Greece as Turkey's first opponent in international football soon after the end of the Second World War, in October 1945, and Greek football clubs started to visit Turkey. The first team to visit Turkey for friendly games was AEK (the Athletic Union of Constantinople). AEK had been founded by Greeks who had fled Istanbul after the Turkish War of Independence. The team had its origins in the Pera Club, one of the oldest clubs in the Ottoman capital.¹² Likewise, members of the Apollon Club, founded in İzmir, visited the club's native city in March 1948.¹³ Apollon's visit also shows that these visits from Greece to Turkey continued even during the Greek Civil War (1946–49). However, the main increase in Turkish–Greek sports contacts was realized in the 1950s, when both countries were affiliated openly with the Western bloc through their NATO membership.

Another striking example of diplomatic sports contacts in which Turkey was involved in the postwar period was with Egypt. The Kingdom of Egypt had been a strategic base for Great Britain during the war. In May 1946, Turkey sent a large sports team to Egypt, presided by Zeki Rıza Sporel, former captain of the Turkish national football team. This trip, which included track and field athletes, was unprecedented in Turkish sports history.¹⁴ Just two weeks after this trip, Egypt's biggest football club, Al-Ahly, was invited to Istanbul for the occasion of Fenerbahçe's 40th anniversary.¹⁵ However, as the state of the relationship between Egypt and Britain gradually changed after British troops in Egypt were reduced in the late 1940s, this kind of athletic meeting was never repeated again between Egypt and Turkey. Moreover, in October 1951, just months before the Nasser Revolution, Turkey decided to freeze cultural and athletic contacts with Egypt, due to some anti-Turkish articles that had been published in the Egyptian press.¹⁶

Despite the obvious diplomatic nature of some athletic contacts during 1945–50, it would not be accurate to say that the Republican People Party's (RPP) governments of the multiparty period employed all of the international sports contacts for diplomatic reasons. For instance, many Austrian teams visited Turkey, despite the ideological differences between the two countries.¹⁷ While some contacts, like the *Ajax* visit, were fully diplomatic, during the RPP governments' reign, the athletic

value of the events was still the priority. International football and track and field events also were encouraged because Turkey would participate in the 1948 Olympics in these branches. However, the Turkish General Directorate of Physical Education banned the visits of foreign football teams in February 1949, until the end of the local football league matches.¹⁸ This certainly was a sports-related decision.¹⁹ When the Democrat Party (DP) took power, however, such decisions were seldom taken. Compared to the diplomatic value of the international games, the local competitions seemed disposable.

Sports Diplomacy during Early Democrat Party Rule (1950–55)

The Democrat Party greatly accelerated pro-Western foreign policy, the initial signals of which had been visible during the postwar RPP governments. The weakening relationship between the Soviet Union and Turkey in the late 1940s resulted in a complete break in the 1950s and Turkey became completely engaged with the Western bloc. Turkey enthusiastically tried to prove its commitment to this new alliance through its attempts to become a NATO member and its involvement in the Korean War. In other matters, such as Third World issues or the case of Palestine, Turkey chose to stay close to the Western bloc.

In this period, sports diplomacy, especially football diplomacy, started to be used more frequently and strongly than ever before. Whereas many sports contacts had been organized according to the foreign policy objectives of the RPP period, the DP arranged almost all international sports meetings to conform to the new stance Turkey had taken.

Sports relations with Greece constituted a significant part of this sports policy. Turkey's western neighbor had just come out of a Civil War between the Western-supported government and the Soviet-backed Democratic Army, which had had a significant role in the survival of the country during the Nazi occupation in the Second World War. As the right-wing pro-Western government emerged victorious from this three-years-long civil war, Greece gradually became a loyal ally of the Western bloc. This meant that Turkey, which had made efforts to improve its relationship with its former enemy in the 1930s, now had to iron out their remaining differences. However, while the Truman Doctrine had forced the two countries side by side, by the end of the 1950s the Cyprus issue swept this alliance off the table.

The geographical proximity of the two countries and the fact that both countries were at the same level in most sports branches helped in

the use of sports diplomacy, especially involving football, as a powerful tool in normalizing the public side of international relations. Starting from 1950, the frequency of sport events increased. Before analyzing these meetings thoroughly, we should first note an incident that happened in May 1949, just a year before the DP took power, in order to emphasize the negative public feeling vis-à-vis the positive political approach about the sports contacts with Greece.

On 15 May 1949, the Turkish national football team played a friendly Mediterranean Cup game with Greece in Athens. According to reports of Turkey's official Anatolian Agency, Greek newspapers were decorated with Turkish and Greek flags and there was a very friendly atmosphere.²⁰ Also, a cocktail party was arranged for the two teams at the Egyptian Embassy in Athens, as the referee was Egyptian, and there was also an Egyptian team in the tournament.²¹ The next day, a number of Turkish newspapers complained about the Greek team's foul play and the Egyptian referee's incompetent officiating,²² even though the Turkish team had won the game 2–1. However, no other incidents were reported.

Yet, on 23 May, almost a week after the game, the Turkish press started publishing articles about the bad treatment the national team had received in Greece. The same day, the Pan-Turkist and Islamist National Turkish Students' Union (Milli Türk Talebe Birliği) staged a demonstration carrying banners that read, 'We don't want sports contacts with Greeks'²³ in Istanbul as well as in protests in Ankara and İzmir. The Turkish national team players also attended the meeting, and the team captain Gündüz Kılıç delivered a speech:

I wanted to understand the reason for the Greeks' obvious hostility. When I asked one of their officials, he said: 'You're the strongest team in the tournament. The Egyptians sent us aid recently. Also the communists, whose numbers are increasing in Greece, may have staged a conspiracy against you.' I personally believe that the Red communists created this hostility. However, it is certain that the Greeks developed hatred for us because of their consecutive defeats against us.²⁴

This speech, even though it carried a highly political tone, did not accuse all Greeks, but only the 'Red communists'. The press and politicians in both countries refrained from provoking a conflict. Greek government officials also attempted to calm the tension. A counter-meeting organized by some Greek students in Athens was banned and the Second Vice Minister, also the son of former President Eleftherios Venizelos,

Sophocles Venizelos, delivered a statement: 'It would be a disaster if the friendship my father had restored between Turkey and Greece collapsed twenty years later because of an unimportant sports event.'²⁵

Both countries' officials continued this attitude until the protests died down. On 26 May, the Greek Vice Minister Tsaldaris met with Turkish Ambassador Ruşen Eşref Ünaydın and other Turkish diplomats at a reception in Athens.²⁶ The Turkish officials responded positively to these reconciliation attempts. Meanwhile, to prevent further tension, the trip to Athens by the Vefa Football Club²⁷ and the Greek wrestlers' trip to Turkey were canceled by the governments of the two countries.²⁸ The protests finally faded out after Turkish Foreign Minister Necmettin Sadak's response to a parliamentary question in the National Assembly: 'The reaction was strong in Turkey as a very high level of hospitality was expected from such a close friend, and the Greek-Turkish friendship is essential.'²⁹

This incident, which happened a year before the major change of power in Turkish politics, reveals many important points about Turkish-Greek relations. First of all, it can be said that despite the strong attempts at reconciliation by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Eleftherios Venizelos in the 1920s and the ongoing friendly political relations, relations between the two countries remained fragile at the public level. Also, this incident marked the rise of the Pan-Turkist and Islamist National Turkish Students' Union, an organization that would be very active in anti-communist right-wing politics during the Cold War and the Cyprus issue by the mid-1950s. Equally, even if the negative reactions were silenced by the strong initiative of both governments, this incident was an early portent of the atmosphere that would dominate the second half of the decade during the climax of the Cyprus question. Indeed, in the sports domain, this incident proved the effectiveness and importance of state initiatives in keeping Turkish-Greek sports relations alive. The 1949 Turkey-Greece game in Athens was an early example of the rise and fall of Turkish-Greek relations during DP rule.

The Democrat Party government reinstated athletic contacts between the two countries in July 1951, two years after the incident in Athens. Greek football and track and field teams visited Istanbul during the Islamic Ramadan holiday and a large group of Fenerbahçe and national team athletes made a trip to the Greek capital to participate in an international competition. One of the best-known sports pundits of the era, Adil Giray, interpreted the reinstatement of the contacts as follows:

Incidents like the one in Athens can happen in any other part of world. However, in those places, mature officials resolve the disputes

in sports terms. We did the opposite during the Athens incident. Unfortunately, the Greeks followed the same path ... The football and athletics encounters between the Greek boys and ours sold out the city stadium three days in a row. The attention paid by the public despite the incredibly hot weather shows that everyone agrees on the continuation of the Turkish–Hellenic sports contact. It is the officials' responsibility to ensure this. In two weeks, a dozen Turkish athletes will go to Athens. We are sure that our youth will be greeted with lively and sincere interest over there.³⁰

After this first contact, the sports meetings between the two countries continued at full speed. In 15 July 1951, the Ethnikos Alexandroupolis track and field team traveled to Turkey to compete against Beyoğluspor, the Greek minority team of Istanbul.³¹ In August, Turkish national referee Sulhi Garan was invited to Athens to officiate a game.³² In September, the Galatasaray football team organized a trip to Thessaloniki, while AEK visited Istanbul to play against Turkish teams.³³ In October, the Galatasaray athletics team visited Athens.³⁴

The contacts continued at the same frequency in 1952. In March, Turkey and Greece played a football match in Athens.³⁵ The same month Apollon visited Istanbul to play Beşiktaş, Beyoğluspor, and Fenerbahçe.³⁶ In October, Panathinaikos came to Turkey.³⁷ Even smaller teams made trips to Greece. In March 1952, the regional division's Aydınspor visited Chios Island and Athens.³⁸ Beykozspor went to Thessaloniki in June.³⁹ In 1953, Edirne Karagücü, the army team of Edirne (the city located near the Turkish–Greek border), virtually unknown elsewhere, played the football team from Komotini.⁴⁰ In September 1953, another regional division team, Sökespor, visited Samos Island, while AEK revisited Istanbul.⁴¹

One very interesting thing about these trips of smaller teams is that the regional teams Aydınspor and Sökespor were from Aydın, the home region of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes. Also, Edirne's sole MP in the era was Rüknettin Nasuhioğlu, who was initially the Minister of Interior, and then the Minister of Justice of the DP governments. Some teams that normally could not have afforded a trip to Greece traveled there during that period.

The large number of athletic contacts with Greece in the first half of the 1950s completely overlapped with the political conjuncture. During the mutual visits of sports teams, Adnan Menderes also visited Athens with messages of further cooperation.⁴² Meanwhile, in 1952, the Pan-Turkist and Islamist National Turkish Students' Union requested

permission from the Governorship of Istanbul to be allowed to stage a counter-demonstration against Greek youth, who had just organized a protest about Cyprus.⁴³ The request was denied and the governor asked the organization to give up protesting 'because there is an improved friendship between Turkey–Greece'.⁴⁴ It was also just before the signing in 1953 of the NATO-backed Balkan Pact among Turkey, Greece, and Yugoslavia.

The athletic contacts with Greece continued until the Cyprus issue entered the Turkish agenda. The Turkish–Greek track and field festival in June 1954⁴⁵ and the trip to Athens by Galatasaray athletes one month later⁴⁶ were the last contacts of Turkish sportsmen with their neighbors. At this time, protests about Cyprus remained suspended.⁴⁷ In 1955 the Cyprus issue became impossible to avoid and international talks began to discuss the future of the island subsequent to British withdrawal. The Turkish government let nationalist groups such as the Pan-Turkist and Islamist National Turkish Students' Union and the Cyprus is Turkish Association (Kıbrıs Türktür Derneği) promote widespread patriotic awareness, which resulted in the 6–7 September 1955 pogrom in Istanbul and İzmir, forcing many non-Muslim Turkish citizens to leave the country. After this incident, the sports contacts with Greece were suspended for more than two decades, until relations were relatively normalized. However, even after diplomatic relations were restored, there has never been another period of extensive sports diplomacy between the two countries. Therefore, the early 1950s mark an exceptional period in both the common history of sports and bilateral diplomacy.

The Cyprus issue affected Turkey's sports diplomacy in another way. The intense and nationalistic atmosphere of 1955 also created an interest in Cypriot Turkish football. In June 1955, Cypriot Turkish team Çetinkaya's coach Naci Özkaya visited Turkey to ask for help on some issues, such as the lack of sports facilities.⁴⁸ Çetinkaya also invited the Istanbul University football team to Cyprus via the Pan-Turkist and Islamist National Turkish Students' Union, which had taken on a prominent position in Turkish political life.⁴⁹ Also Basri Dirimlili, former Fenerbahçe and national team player, went to Cyprus to coach a football team in the mid-1960s.⁵⁰

Another important example of sports diplomacy after the Second World War is the sports relations between Turkey and Israel. Diplomatic relations between these two countries had begun during the final days of the RPP government in 1949, when the foreign policy shift had become visible in Turkey. On 28 March 1949, Turkey officially recognized the Israeli state despite protests from the Arab nations. This was a

bold statement as Turkey was designated to be one of the West's major actors in the Middle East, via important projects like the Baghdad Pact. Seven months later, still during the RPP government, Fenerbahçe was invited officially to Israel to play against local teams.⁵¹ Fenerbahçe made this trip in mid-March. The team was greeted by officials from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the airport, and the governor, Petach Tikva, made a speech in honor of the Turkish team, wishing relations between the two countries to grow stronger.⁵² Following this trip, after the DP takeover, the Hapoel football team visited Istanbul in June 1950,⁵³ and the national football team went to Tel Aviv in November. This was followed by the visit of Maccabi Tel Aviv to Turkey in April 1951.⁵⁴

Sports diplomacy with Israel also affected sports contacts with Lebanon. We should note that sports relations with Lebanon were established after the Israeli–Lebanese armistice in March 1949. Before this date, there had been no sports contact with Lebanon.⁵⁵ In May 1950, the Istanbul team of selected athletes and Istanbulspor football team visited Lebanon,⁵⁶ followed by the visit of Lebanese football champions Racing in June.⁵⁷

During these athletic meetings, the Turkish press started questioning the choice of opponents. After the visits of the teams Hapoel and Racing, columnist Adil Giray published an article criticizing the excessive number of games and the weakness of the opponents.⁵⁸ However, as Giray suggested professionalization as the cure for the increasing number of friendly games in order to create other sources of revenue, it can be claimed that the diplomatic objective behind those games was largely overlooked at the time and it was thought that the games with Israeli and Lebanese teams had been organized by the clubs to raise money. It is true that the clubs arranged games with foreign teams in order to raise funds for their teams. During that period, professionalization existed in Turkey only in its incipient form (players were promised small bonuses or well-paying jobs as transfer fees), and the league games were not sufficient for the clubs to raise enough funds to succeed at football. Therefore, the clubs invited touring teams from Argentina or Brazil to achieve higher gate receipts. However, games with low-profile Israeli or Lebanese teams certainly cannot be considered in the same category. While South American, Swedish, English, or Austrian teams received attention from the football enthusiasts, these countries had no such reputations. When we assess these games within their historical context, it is clear that the real motivation behind these encounters was diplomatic/political.

Sports diplomacy with the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia also mushroomed in the 1950s. Tito's Yugoslavia applied an interpretation of socialism different from Stalinism, hence it was expelled from Stalin's Cominform in June 1948. After this, the country remained relatively open to influence from the Western bloc, and therefore attracted NATO's attention. During this time, when Turkey and Greece took the initiative to affiliate Yugoslavia with NATO through projects like the Balkan Pact, sports contacts with this country started. In December 1950, the Sarajevo football team visited Istanbul and played friendlies.⁵⁹ In May 1951, the team Hajduk traveled to Istanbul.⁶⁰ The team Beogradski also came to Istanbul in September 1952,⁶¹ just three days before Anthony Eden, Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, met Josip Broz Tito to discuss the Balkan Pact between Turkey, Greece, and Yugoslavia. The Pact was agreed in February 1953. The same year, a Belgrade selection visited Istanbul⁶² while the football team Vefa went to Yugoslavia in June.⁶³ The visits continued in 1955 with the travel of the Radnicki football team and the Yugoslavian youth basketball national team to Istanbul.⁶⁴

Sports relations between Turkey and Yugoslavia took a different turn after 1955, when Turkey's ties with Greece were broken off completely. As European football as well as Turkish football was undergoing institutionalization in the same period, the number of friendly games decreased and they were replaced by European-wide official club competitions like the European Champion Clubs' Cup. However, Turkish-Yugoslavian sports relations continued as many players and coaches from Yugoslavia started to work in Turkey.⁶⁵ This contact was sustained until the fall of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

In the early 1980s, the Turkish government went so far as to declare Yugoslavian Muslim players to be of Turkish descent,⁶⁶ thus sidestepping the ban on foreign players.⁶⁷ Therefore, in the early 1980s, all of the foreigners in Turkish football were Yugoslavian. This can be attributed to two factors. First, Yugoslavia had historical ties with Turkey through the Ottoman Empire and had a large Muslim population. Second, Yugoslavia's independent foreign policy did not bother Turkey's alliance with the West. Compared to Bulgaria and Romania, which practically were satellite states of Stalinism, Yugoslavia was a logical choice.

The core of Turkey's political alignment after the Second World War was the United States of America. While American influence immensely shaped Turkish policies, it is hard to find examples of sports diplomacy between the United States and Turkey. The reason for that is mostly because different sports branches were popular in these two countries, and also because of the geographical distance. Even so, there are a couple

of instances when sports-based diplomacy or propaganda can be seen in Turkish–American relations. For example, in September 1945, right after visit of Ajax, a group of American track and field athletes visited Istanbul after having competed in Egypt.⁶⁸ Also, the basketball team of the SS *Missouri* cargo ship, which visited Istanbul in May 1947, played against Turkish teams. After the SS *Missouri*, some other American military ships visited Turkey. On one of these occasions, on 2 February 1949, a team of American navy officials and one Air Force official competed in an American football game in Istanbul's İnönü Stadium. This was an interesting experience as it was the first ever gridiron football game played in Turkey, and the only one for decades. The honorary kick-off for the game was arranged by the governor of Istanbul, Dr Lütfü Kırdar. High-ranking American military officials watched the game.⁶⁹

Among these examples, the most extensive and interesting contact was surely the trip of the Beşiktaş football team to New York in May 1950. The visit created great excitement in Istanbul prior to its departure: the team members visited the governor, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and also created a cocktail in honor of the occasion.⁷⁰ In New York, the Turkish Ambassador and the Military Attaché followed the Beşiktaş games⁷¹ and, on its return to Turkey, the team was received at the presidential palace in Ankara to meet President Celal Bayar.⁷² The trip was featured in the *New York Times* and *Herald Tribune*. The team's chairman, Hakkı Yeten, also gave an interview to the Voice of America radio station. As sports columnist of the era Şazi Tezcan said, 'the trip was successful in terms of Turkey's propaganda in the United States'.⁷³ The close attention of the Turkish state officials before, during, and after this one-month visit shows that this trip was perceived to be more than an athletic contact by Turkey.

Conclusion

In order to summarize the characteristics of postwar Turkish sports diplomacy, we should first emphasize that between 1945 and 1955, the policy regarding international sports contacts showed consistency despite the change of power in Turkish politics. As discussed above, whereas the Democrat Party visibly accelerated the rate of international sports contacts that had pro-Western overtones, the initial step had been taken during the last days of the RPP government. Therefore, we can claim that the pro-Western foreign policy trend did not start with the handover of power from the RPP to the DP, but before that. Another important point about sports diplomacy between 1945 and 1955 is that it was one of the two factors that defined the international contact of Turkish sports

clubs. The only other factor that was effective in the choice of foreign opponents was the extent of rivals' popularity as the clubs needed to raise money to run their daily affairs. Most clubs invited the best teams they could afford; however, they also inevitably played with teams from countries with which Turkey tried to bond diplomatically. Whereas some of these teams were indeed below Turkish sports standards, the international experience gained by encounters with bigger teams actually helped the Turkish national football team as Turkey took part in the 1948 Olympic Games and the 1954 FIFA World Cup. The Turkish national football team waited 48 years to see another World Cup, and has not been able to qualify for the Olympics again since 1960; therefore, these were important achievements for Turkish football.

As a last remark, it should be noted that the decline of sports diplomacy after 1955 depended on the international sports conjuncture as well as the national one. It is true that Turkey became more isolated because of the series of *coups d'états* and the Cyprus issue after the 1960s; however, international sports encounters also changed in nature during these years. After the foundation of European sports governing bodies such as UEFA, regular and official European fixtures were arranged, so most teams no longer had the time or felt the need to organize friendly tours. Also, with the introduction of full professionalization in Turkey and in many other European countries, the training schedules of the clubs became more crowded and the number of games were reduced and regulated. The 1945–55 period marked a transition between the World War period and the institutionalization of European sports. The void of international sports encounters was filled by friendlies and international diplomacy benefited from them. Hence, this ten-year period represents a unique picture in terms of sports diplomacy, both in Turkey and in the global sports scene.

Notes

1. P. Beck (2005), 'Britain and the Cold War's "Cultural Olympics": Responding to the Political Drive of Soviet Sport 1945–58', *Contemporary British History*, 19, no. 2, p. 170.
2. P. Beck (2003), 'Confronting George Orwell: Philip Noel-Baker on International Sport, Particularly the Olympic Movement, as Peacemaker', *The European Sports History Review*, 5, pp. 199–201.
3. Nazi Germany's International Olympic Committee member and future sports minister Carl Diem, also known as the mastermind of the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, was invited to Turkey in September 1933 to prepare a plan to reshape Turkey's sport- and youth-related activities. Diem proposed a

youth organization closely modeled on the *Jugend* of the Nazi regime; however, this scheme never came to fruition. For a very fruitful work on early republican Turkish sports history, see Y. Akın, *Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar (Robust and Brave Sons)* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004).

4. E.J. Zürcher (2004) *Turkey: A Modern History*, 3rd edn (New York: I.B. Tauris), p. 191.
5. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, pp. 189–90.
6. M.A. Gökaçtı (2008) *Bizim için Oyna (Play for Us)* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları).
7. *Cumhuriyet*, 17 September 1945.
8. *Cumhuriyet*, 18 September 1945.
9. *Cumhuriyet*, 19 September 1945.
10. *Cumhuriyet*, 28 September 1945.
11. *Cumhuriyet*, 30 September 1945.
12. 'The speech of Patriarch Vartholomaios', AEK FC official website, available at www.aekfc.gr/index.asp?a_id=3031.
13. *Akşam*, 27 March 1948.
14. *Akşam*, 4 May 1946.
15. *Akşam*, 18 May 1946.
16. *Akşam*, 25 October 1951.
17. *Akşam*, 20–31 January 1949, 18–21 March 1949.
18. *Akşam*, 27 February 1949.
19. As the games with foreign teams earned more gate receipts for Turkish teams than those with regular league games, most clubs gave priority to these games and sometimes opted out of domestic competitions. This sometimes jeopardized the local league's organization, so the national sports body had to take such a decision.
20. *Akşam*, 15 May 1949.
21. *Akşam*, 15 May 1949.
22. *Akşam*, 16 May 1949.
23. *Akşam*, 24 May 1949.
24. *Akşam*, 24 May 1949.
25. *Akşam*, 26 May 1949.
26. *Akşam*, 27 May 1949.
27. *Akşam*, 24 May 1949.
28. *Akşam*, 29 May 1949.
29. *Akşam*, 31 May 1949.
30. *Akşam*, 15 July 1951.
31. *Akşam*, 16 July 1951.
32. *Akşam*, 11 August 1951.
33. *Akşam*, 15–17 September 1951.
34. *Akşam*, 24 October 1951.
35. *Akşam*, 3 March 1952.
36. *Akşam*, 22–26 March 1952.
37. *Akşam*, 25 October 1952.
38. *Akşam*, 3 March 1952.
39. *Akşam*, 6 June 1952.
40. *Akşam*, 31 May 1953.
41. *Akşam*, 14–27 September 1953.

42. *Akşam*, 4 May 1952.
43. *Akşam*, 13 May 1952.
44. *Akşam*, 14 May 1952.
45. *Akşam*, 10 June 1954.
46. *Akşam*, 21 July 1954.
47. *Akşam*, 3 September 1954.
48. *Milliyet*, 14 June 1955.
49. *Milliyet*, 22 June 1955.
50. *Milliyet*, 6 September 1963.
51. *Akşam*, 16 January 1950.
52. *Akşam*, 15 March 1950.
53. *Akşam*, 2 June 1950.
54. *Akşam*, 11 April 1951.
55. D. Irak, 'The Transformation of Football since the 1970s' (Master's thesis, Boğaziçi University), pp. 57–8.
56. *Akşam*, 20 May 1950.
57. *Akşam*, 19 June 1950.
58. *Akşam*, 25 June 1950.
59. *Akşam*, 27 December 1950.
60. *Akşam*, 9 May 1951.
61. *Akşam*, 15–22 September 1952.
62. *Akşam*, 8 June 1953.
63. *Akşam*, 20 June 1953.
64. *Akşam*, 8 December 1955.
65. Between the beginning of the professional football league in 1959 and the fall of Yugoslavia in 1991, Yugoslavian coaches won ten championship titles in Turkey, the most number of titles for international coaches in Turkey (www.turkfutbolu.net/turkiyekupalari/samteknik.htm).
66. Law no. 2527 on Facilitating Foreigners of Turkish Ancestry to Perform Their Occupations and Crafts Freely in Turkey and Their Employment in Public and Private Establishments or Businesses, accepted in 1981, allows the Cabinet of Ministers to give foreigners of 'Turkish ancestry' the same working privileges as Turkish citizens.
67. The ban was forced due to the lack of foreign currency in Turkey after the global oil crisis.
68. *Akşam*, 4 May 1946.
69. *Akşam*, 3 February 1949.
70. *Akşam*, 13 May 1950.
71. *Akşam*, 24 May 1950.
72. *Akşam*, 24 June 1950.
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