

FIFA's Darkest Hour



1) Discussion

- a) Have politics and football ever crossed paths in your country?
 - b) What are your thoughts on FIFA as an organisation?
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2) Vocabulary

a) Match the vocabulary to the definition.

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| 1) Marxist (noun/adjective) | a) In the middle of or surrounded by something, often used to describe being in a particular situation or environment. |
| 2) To oust (verb) | b) Involvement in a wrongdoing or illegal activity, especially by helping or encouraging it. |
| 3) Dissident (noun/adjective) | c) To force someone or something out of a position of power or authority, usually through competition or conflict. |
| 4) Complicity (noun) | d) Evoking strong feelings of sadness, sympathy, or emotion, often due to being deeply moving or significant. |
| 5) Amidst (preposition) | e) A person who disagrees with or opposes the official policies or actions of a government, organization, or dominant group. |
| 6) Poignant (adjective) | f) Someone who believes in or follows the ideas of Karl Marx, especially about how societies should be organized. |



b) Complete the sentences with the vocabulary from exercise 2a.

Marxist

To oust

Dissident

Complicity

Amidst

Poignant

- 1) The French police's treatment of Liverpool fans was a _____ reminder that authorities need to treat football fans as humans, not catel.
- 2) The underperforming coach was eventually _____ from his position, replaced by a more experienced candidate.
- 3) Many _____ believe in the redistribution of wealth and resources within world football, advocating for fairer treatment of smaller clubs.
- 4) _____ the controversies, the World Cup proceeded as planned, showcasing the world's best football talent.
- 5)
- 6) The outspoken player was labelled a _____ by the club's management for his public criticism of their transfer policies.
- 7) FIFA's _____ in human rights scandals has led to widespread calls for reform within the organisation.



3) Quick Read - Read the article quickly and answer the question.

- a) What was the social background surrounding the game between Chile vs USSR in 1973?

FIFA's Darkest Hour

A World Cup qualifier between Chile and the USSR in 1973 stands as a stark reminder of how the beautiful game can become entangled in political intrigue and human rights abuses. Set against the backdrop of Chile's turbulent political landscape and FIFA's questionable decision-making, this match took place in the ominous shadows of Santiago's National Stadium, which doubled as a detention/torture centre for political prisoners.

Chile in 1973 was a nation in turmoil. Salvador Allende, the first Marxist to be elected president in a democratic election in Latin America, was seeking to implement sweeping socialist reforms. However, his presidency faced strong opposition from domestic elites and foreign powers, notably the United States. On September 11, 1973, a military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet ousted Allende, plunging Chile into a dark era of dictatorship characterised by censorship, repression, and human rights violations.

Enter FIFA, which found itself in controversy when it chose Santiago's National Stadium as the venue for the Chile vs USSR match. The decision was met with widespread anger, given the stadium's recent history as a site of torture and imprisonment for political dissidents. Despite calls for relocation or cancellation, FIFA went ahead with the match, raising questions about its complicity in Pinochet's regime and disregarding human rights abuses. The two teams played out a 0-0 draw in the first leg in Moscow, however, the USSR refused to travel to Chile to take part in the game, resulting in a 2-0 walkover victory for Chile.

The game itself became a symbol of defiance and resistance for many Chileans, who saw it as an opportunity to showcase their national pride amidst adversity. However, it also highlighted the moral quandaries faced by both teams and FIFA.

It serves as a cautionary tale about the entanglement of sports and politics. It remains a poignant reminder of the need for sports organisations to uphold their principles and prioritise human rights, even in the face of political pressure and economic interests.



4) Discussion

- a) What are your thoughts on the match between Chile and the USSR?
- b) What do you think of FIFA's decision to go ahead with the match?
- c) Can you think of any other 'questionable' decisions FIFA has made?

