

# CRICKET IN GLOBALIZATION

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**"O**ver the course of the past five years, at least fifty new books and at least five hundred new articles have appeared with the term globalisation prominently displayed in their titles. There is a vast economic literature on the subject, a vast sociological literature and burgeoning and profitable production in the academic fields of international relations, history, politics, musicology and literary and cultural studies. Even sports commentators are in on the game.

*Watching a cricket test match between England and South Africa on television the other day, I was startled to hear the renowned Australian commentator, Richie Benaud, suddenly spouting globalisation theory to account for the ongoing diffusion of the game to parts of the world, Kenya, Holland, Bangladesh, where it has not hitherto commanded much attention!"* -

Neil Lazarus, "Charting Globalisation", *Race and Class*, 1998/99.

Expand or die. That's the received wisdom among today's masters of global cricket. If it is to survive in a harshly competitive climate, they argue, the ancient game must reach out to new lands and attract devotees in new cultures. Ali Bacher sees a great future for the sport in China and Japan. "The beauty of that area is that they're mad about sport," he observes, "Their size is good for cricket whereas in rugby union and league, for example, you have to be massive and heavy. Our game is a big plus in countries like that."

One wonders how responsive the Japanese or Chinese will be to Bacher's attempt to appeal to their alleged lack of national stature. In any case, in talking big and thinking small, Bacher's vision of the future is typical of the game's administrators. By adopting the fashionable rhetoric of globalisation, they hope to associate the game with the current triumphalism of the free market and the rapid worldwide spread of information technology. It's all a big change from the coziness of the village green, but are the global claims matched by global realities? Is cricket undergoing a change in image or in substance, and just how does one tell the difference in the contemporary -society of the spectacle?

Forty years ago, C.L.R James asked, "What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?" Today, his question is more pertinent than ever, and in James' spirit of ecumenical inquiry, I suggest that we can learn something about cricket's true place in the global sporting order by a brief look at its distant cousin, baseball.

## Baseball As Big Sport

**I**n the United States, the biggest sporting event of 1998 was not the football World Cup, and certainly not Sachin Tendulkar's blistering run of one day centuries, but the home run record chase by Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa. Thanks to their

heroic performances, baseball enjoyed its most successful season in decades, and, it was claimed, recaptured the national imagination. Examining the popular fascination with the pursuit of a numerical record (most home runs in a single season), one American critic argued that the obsession with statistics was a uniquely American phenomenon, uniquely expressed in the game of baseball. As anyone who has spent time with cricket fanatics will know, that is not the case. Indeed, the fact that the obsession with statistics is shared between baseball and cricket fans, and across several continents, suggests that it has more to do with global capitalism than with national cultures.

Of course, Americans do tend to believe that their world is the world. They have thechutzpah to dub the national championship of their self-styled national game a World Series, in keeping with the characteristic American foible of making universal claims for American culture and the American way of life. But it is notable that baseball has failed to conquer the world. It is enormously popular in parts of Latin America and in Japan, but North America remains both the standard setter for the game and far and away its dominant market.

Nonetheless, the sheer scale of that market puts some of cricket's claims in perspective. Last year the World Series-winning, record-breaking New York Yankees made a profit of \$140 million. In contrast, the World Cup in Britain this summer is expected to bring in 50 million in revenue and yield a profit of at most 20 million. In other words, the single season profit of a single team in North American baseball will be seven times the global profit from cricket's premier global event, held only every three or four years.

What's more, despite the mind-boggling cash flow, you will not see a corporate logo disfigure the sacred Yankee uniform or the historic turf of Yankee Stadium, and in general at baseball grounds advertising hoardings and sponsor's insignia are fewer and more discreetly placed than they are at cricket grounds. This is not because the baseball owners are high-minded or purist about their game; far from it. It's just that they have access to a wealthier market, and can sell the television rights to their game for more money; the television rights to Yankee games in the New York area, for example, are worth more than the global television rights to the World Cup. In this context, cricket's extreme and increasing dependence on corporate sponsorship, which will generate more income for the coming World Cup than will be taken at the gate reflects both the uneven development of its market and the short-termism of the authorities.

Thanks to the huge disposable wealth of their catchment area, the Yankees are the richest team in baseball and probably the richest sporting franchise in the world. Because they are the richest team they are able to scour the market and buy up the best talent. This

year's team included players from Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Japan and Australia, but only one native New Yorker. Its a peculiar form of Americanised globalisation; appropriate the riches of the world and then flog them in a geographically limited but extraordinarily affluent marketplace.

The cosmopolitan make up of the Yankee side does not in the least diminish the rabid partisan loyalty of Yankee fans in New York. They expect their team to buy the best and to be the best, and its victories are seen as victories by and for New York and New Yorkers, wherever the players hail from. This suggests that some of the core assumptions guiding cricket's global masters may be mistaken: that national loyalties are necessarily the deepest (and therefore the most profitable), that sporting competition among nations is necessarily the most compelling and produces the highest standard of play. These are assumptions inherited from cricket's past in which the formalisation of Test cricket preceded that of domestic cricket but they have proved only too consonant with the dictates of the emerging global market.

*In the place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations.*

Karl Marx

Yankee fans love their team while hating their team's owner, George Steinbrenner, millionaire shipping tycoon and long-time pal of Richard Nixon. Steinbrenner is resented by fans partly because he keeps threatening to abandon the team's historic ground, Yankee Stadium, which for baseball fans has some of the historical cachet of Lords, and is trying to blackmail the New York City authorities into building him a new stadium in a more upmarket neighbourhood. The chief virtue of the new stadium, for Steinbrenner, would be the extra room for money-spinning corporate hospitality boxes. American baseball, like football and cricket in other parts of the world, is undergoing what sociologists like to call "white collarisation". According to the 1998 Social Trends Report, during a three month period one third of those surveyed in the top bracket ABC categories had attended a live spectator sports event. In contrast, only 18% of Ds had attended one and only 7% of Es. One of the few truly global characteristics of modern sport is that sports fans from lower income groups are finding it harder to gain access to live sporting events, and are becoming more dependent on satellite and cable television providers for their regular dose of what used to be known as a popular pastime.

Another common element is the ever increasing power of big business over sport. As the gulf between the worlds of baseball and cricket indicates, we do not live in a single global culture of sport, but we do live under the sway of a single "highly complex" sporting industry. Cricket fans may be unfamiliar with the names of baseball stars but they will know only too well the name of the single biggest power in baseball today, Rupert Murdoch. Murdoch owns the Los Angeles Dodgers, as well as the Fox TV network which broadcasts most major league baseball games, along with a large interest in Madison Square Garden and a string of newspapers. All that, of course, is in addition to his sporting interests in the rest of the world, which include football in Britain and China, rugby league in both

Southern and Northern hemispheres, and cricket in both the UK and South Asia.

Murdoch has made no secret of the nature of his interest in sport, which he describes as "a battering ram" to gain access to national markets. Precisely because sport is universal and secular, crossing boundaries of language, religion, culture it is a handy tool for the construction of global markets, and an efficient carrier of corporate messages and symbols. Certainly that's the view taken not only by Murdoch but also by soft drink, beer, cigarette, mobile phone, and other corporate giants who have taken a stake in cricket. It is these companies, in collaboration with the telecasters, packagers and promoters who today form the nexus which governs world sport, cricket as well as baseball. For them, the game is a spectacle that can be commodified and branded, a means to conquer and exploit markets. Their interest is not the game itself, that pointless, trivial exercise that gives so much harmless delight. Indeed, all of these companies have interests in other sports, and should cricket disappear off the face of the earth, they would find something else to put in its place, without shedding a tear.

### Cricket in the Corporate World

**L**ittle by little, this corporate-media-sport nexus is altering the game of cricket. Playing conditions, playing schedules, packaging and presentation, competitive structures are all affected, as are the balance between test and one day internationals, between playing and watching, and notably between the international and domestic game. As I write, every Test-playing nation is at least considering some form of alteration to domestic structures in an attempt to improve the national side. In a global economy, everything is subordinate to national success, even time honoured national traditions. So whether it is league cricket in the north of England, schools cricket in Sri Lanka, or inter-island competition in the Caribbean, all must be overhauled in pursuit of the grail of a Test and one day winning national side. It often seems today that the cricket authorities simply assume that the only thing the fans care about is victory for the national side, even if they cannot afford to pay to see it, live or on satellite. Thus, global economic pressures may induce cricket authorities to take actions which actually undercut the games popular base.

The chief charge against the corporate-media-sport nexus is that it is unaccountable and unresponsive; for lovers of the game it has become harder than ever to know who is really taking decisions and why they have taken them.

A nexus is a knot, and disentangling the various strands of this one is next to impossible. This sad reality is widely understood by cricket fan across south Asia, who have long regarded their administrators as slightly shady characters easily bought off by special interests. Perhaps it is time for English cricket fans and journalists to adopt some of their scepticism.

When Vodafone replaced Tetley Bitter two years ago as the official sponsor of the England cricket teams - Test and one day, A sides, under 19s, even the penurious and criminally neglected women's

team finally got a (inute) slice of the cake. The 13 million four year deal was hailed as a triumph for English cricket and ECB chairman Lord Maclaurin was praised for his wisdom and business savvy. When Maclaurin was appointed chairman of Vodafone a few months later there was hardly a reference to it in the sports pages. And when Vodafone recently merged with Air Touch to form the biggest mobile phone service in the world and the third largest British-based corporation, the silence from cricket correspondents was deafening. With a single stroke of the pen, this merger had increased the value of the sponsorship deal to Vodafone many times over. With new target markets in Australia, South Asia and South Africa, Vodafone's 13 million investment in English cricket looks a snip at the price; those hours of Australian television exposure during last winter's Ashes series are now worth far more than the total sponsorship deal. Presumably, as chairman of Vodafone, Maclaurin knew of the negotiations for the merger and was aware of the company's global corporate strategy. What role, if any, did such awareness play when he donned his other hat, as chair of the ECB? Cricket fans (like Vodafone shareholders) will never know and that is the problem.

The issue is not the personal probity of Lord Maclaurin but the scandalous indifference to potential conflicts of interest, a trait cricket shares with the New Labour government. We need to know who is sitting on which side of the negotiating table when cricket's assets come up for sale. We need to know who represents which interest. We need to build a wall separating the interests of cricket fans from those of television moguls, corporate sponsors and governments. We have to untie the knot to see who is really pulling the strings. It is wilfully naive to answer these concerns, as some cricket correspondents have done, by invoking the high moral calibre of the individuals who dedicate themselves to the beloved game. The Olympic movement was even more high-minded than the cricket world, but that did not stop its corruption by special interests. The bribery scandal became inevitable after the 1984 Los Angeles extravaganza, which showed how corporate sponsorship could be used to turn the games into a major money-spinner. Notice that, in the case of the Olympics, it was neither corporate sponsorship nor public sector authorities which generated the corruption, but the intersection of the two. That's the danger area, and it is one to which cricket seems oblivious. Yet we have already trespassed it in the process which led to the "de-listing" of home Test matches, and their subsequent sale to the Channel Four-Sky consortium, with hardly a word of protest from our ex-socialist sports minister Tony Banks. Could that have something to do with the close links forged between the New Labour government and Rupert Murdoch? Sceptics should remember that Tony Blair abandoned his election promise to ban tobacco sponsorship of sport after receiving a hefty donation from Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone. And compared to Murdoch, Ecclestone is small fry.

### Cricket in Global Popular Culture?

**T**here is no horizon there. There is no continuity between actions; there are no pauses, no paths, no pattern, no past and no future. There is only the clamour of the disparate, fragmentary present. Everywhere there are surprises and sensations, yet nowhere is there any outcome.

*Nothing flows through: everything interrupts. There is a kind of spatial delirium.*  
- John Berger.

Because of the power of television, it matters less and less where the game is played and more and more where it is broadcast to. It is therefore wise to take some of the claims made for the game's recent global spread- to Sharjah, Singapore, Dhaka, Kuala Lumpur, Toronto - with a grain of salt. IMG, the biggest sports promotion company in the world and an organisation which knits together all the strands of the corporate-media-sports nexus, decided to organise the Sahara Cup in Toronto not out of any altruistic wish to promote the game in Canada, but in order to secure the rights to a televised spectacle of huge value in South Asia, i.e. one day internationals between India and Pakistan. Look at some of the sponsors for the World Cup in England this summer: Pepsi, Hero Honda, LG Electronics. Hitherto Pepsi has shown little interest in cricket in England, where the game's image is too crusty and old-fashioned for a product which tries to associate itself with youth and has even attempted to brand a whole generation. Hero Honda and LG Electronics are foreign-based manufacturing companies which market very little in the UK. Like Pepsi, they have sponsored the World Cup in spite of and not because of its British venue; it is only of value to them because of its huge television audience in South Asia, where all three companies have vast interests. It may be a humbling reflection for the mandarins of the venerable English game, but thanks to globalisation, Lords has become merely another off-shore cricket outpost, like Sharjah.

Cricket's global development has been decidedly lopsided. Many of the claims for expansion made in recent years rest largely on the enthusiasm of the south Asian diaspora. The new beachheads in South East Asia, the Gulf, Northern Europe and North America are provided not by local populations suddenly stirred by the glorious game but by expatriate Indians, Pakistanis and Sri Lankans. Without that root in a particular, regional sporting tradition, cricket struggles for recognition in a crowded market.

I have been amused by the fixation of the cricket bosses on the dream of staging a one day tournament in Disneyworld in Orlando, Florida. It is as if they believe that a toehold in the USA is the ticket to the global sporting big-time. For the expansionists, the American market is cricket's unclimbed Everest. For others, it is hubristic fantasy.

The Disney project first surfaced in 1995, when the Disney organisation asked cricket fans in the USA whether they would pay to see "the mighty West Indies" play in Orlando (\$500 for a four nights, all inclusive package deal). Disney has spent \$100 million on a new 200 acre sports complex in Orlando. Facilities are being constructed for some 25 sports. A Disney vice president has declared: "We would like to introduce Americans to this great sport. We're aware of its great traditions." Whether many of the latter will actually be on display in Orlando remains open to doubt. If Disney's staging of cricket is in keeping with the rest of its product, we can expect a theme park with mock-ups of a Caribbean beach shack, an English village green and the Sydney opera house.

Before the ICC members get too excited at the prospect of joining Mickey Mouse in the global pantheon of popular culture, they should bear in mind that for the Disney organisation the cricket proposal is merely a means of luring tourists from England and Australia to fill hotel beds during spring and autumn—the resort's low season. It's just one more item on the Disneyworld sporting menu, along with synchronised swimming, jai-alai, gymnastics, Aussie Rules, and Thai kick-boxing.

It is true that cricket in the USA has undergone a revival in recent years, thanks mainly to the influx of migrants from the Caribbean and South Asia. New clubs are springing up, leagues are growing, competition is improving. And North America is currently the epicentre of cricket-related Internet activity, conducted largely among ex-pat Indians, Pakistanis and Sri Lankans. Here globalised technology has strengthened rather than transcended older identities. Indeed, a quick glance at some of the Internet discussion groups reveals that the India-Pakistan rivalry is pursued most aggressively by individuals far from the native lands which they so zealously defend.

You can tell that the net worth of American cricket is rising, because it has been the subject of a bitter faction fight. ICC representatives have tried to broker a peace, but it may be that their interest (and the resources that come with it) has only spurred competition among rival claimants to the American franchise. One group has signed a \$1.25 million Memorandum of Understanding with IMG; the other has secured sponsorship from Time Out magazine. Ironically, the Disneyworld project cannot proceed until these conflicting deals have been harmonised, for the simple reason that one party or another will sue if they find themselves carved out of the spoils. So the forces of globalisation sometimes create the conditions that limit globalisation, a lesson Marx taught more than a hundred years ago.

As yet, neither the growth of US cricket nor the disputes surrounding it has made the slightest impact on the consciousness of mainstream USA. Cricket remains to the vast mass of Americans a quaint, obscure, absurd English game. The prospects of spreading beyond its ethnic niches in the USA are slim. The decades of investment and promotion that have gone into building a base for football in the country are only now bearing fruit. And football enjoys several advantages over cricket. It is simple and cheap, where cricket is complex and expensive. It has roots among the Spanish-speaking population, which far outnumbers Caribbeans and South Asians. It also received a hefty boost from the World Cup 1994—an event of genuinely global interest which cricket cannot hope to emulate. What's more, to carve out a substantial market in the USA, cricket would have to challenge baseball, which enjoys deep-rooted support.

The question about the current growth of cricket among South Asian and Caribbean immigrants to the USA is this: will their children play cricket or, like the children of every other immigrant group for one hundred and fifty years, turn to baseball in an effort to become American? History suggests that the safe bet is that American cricket will wane again in another twenty years.

The globalisers answer these concerns with proposals to adapt cricket for the American market. Bacher has advocated the promotion of cricket eights playing matches of 16 overs a side which would last three hours, the length of a Major League baseball game. Like the mooted Disneyfication of cricket, Bacher's proposal seems to rest on the assumption that Americans are cursed with a short attention span and an insatiable appetite for visceral excitement. In fact, Americans have shown a predilection for technical and tactical complexity in their sports, as anyone who has listened to the endless hours of expert sports babble broadcast on American radio and TV will have noticed. And is speeding up or truncating cricket really the best way to advertise its unique attractions? It's not as if Americans are starved of fast-paced sporting entertainment.

## Symbolic Goods

*I*formation technology does not only make possible the emergence of the globalised market, within that market it also makes possible the rise in importance of informational and symbolic goods the symbolic component (style) of goods like cars and trainers becomes more and more important, with firms marketing departments contributing as much to design as their design departments." Arun Kundnani.

—Where do you want to go today?

The rise of information capital Baseball may have failed to conquer the world but the same cannot be said of the baseball cap, which has become ubiquitous over the last decade, replacing more traditional forms of headgear on every continent and among every class. The baseball cap may have been invented in the USA, and its global popularity may spring in part from its association with modern American popular culture, but today very few baseball caps are actually manufactured in the USA, including the ones sold to fans at North American baseball parks. Here the cheap labour pools of South and East Asia have become dominant. These also produce the vast bulk of popular sportswear, including branded trainers, like Nikes. Nike pays Shane Warne the single largest endorsement fee in global cricket. This fee is, however, dwarfed by what the same company pays basketball legend Michael Jordan, whose single season \$20 million fee is four times the total amount spent by Nike on the workforce which actually produces its goods. Outside the Sinhalese Sports Club in Colombo, I spotted a barefoot boy in a ragged tee-shirt adorned with a hand drawn Nike logo, not just the letters but even the checkmark-like-swoosh (so-called because Nike's focus groups liked the word, which cannot be found in a dictionary). Not for the first time, I stood awed and appalled at the power of global capital. Like so many others around the world, this boy was prepared to do for free what Michael Jordan will do only for millions.

From its twenty cents an hour sweated labourers in Vietnam to its super-star endorsers Warne and Jordan to the kid in Colombo with his home-made swoosh to the kids in North American ghettos spending scarce dollars on prestigious Nike-branded trainers (or somewhat less on replica Nikes, also made on the cheap in the third world), the Nike empire sums up the unequal and exploitative manner in which globalised sport links the world, and the centrality within it of symbolic goods. It is a snapshot of the corporate-media-sport nexus of which cricket today is a part.

Cricket's prophets of globalisation have great expectations for the coming fusion of television, internet and telephone into a multi-media-digital platform. There will be countless hours on countless channels to be filled, and sports coverage of all kinds will proliferate. But this kind of global dissemination is no substitute for genuine popularisation of the game at the base of society. Let's remember that half the world has never made a telephone call. The digital platform may provide an endless revenue stream for the cricket authorities, but it will also turn international cricket, for the vast majority of spectators, into merely another virtual spectacle, part of a ceaseless flow of visual imagery and information. Ideal, no doubt, for promoting the products of multi-national corporations. But what will be left of the common, shared experience of watching cricket as part of a crowd, with all its biases, tensions, humour and impatience? For all the cultural differences and mutual ignorance, this was an experience which united cricket fans across the globe. In the age of the digital platform, what kind of global community will cricket be able to claim?

### Cricket and Fair Play

**W**hile casting greedy eyes on overseas markets and dreaming expansionist dreams, the cricket elite have done little to put the game's house in order in its established bases. The most remarkable fact about the global game of cricket is that it lacks a coherent global competition, a credible or effective global authority, or even a global consensus about what constitutes fair play.

This uncomfortable reality was highlighted by events at Adelaide during the winter's triangular one day series between Australia, England and Sri Lanka. That Sri Lanka should find itself in bitter conflict with Australia (or more precisely, Australian umpires), while England looked on as innocent bystanders was one of the ironies of cricket's current global disorder, given that over the last 15 years Australia has done far more than England to help build the Sri Lankan game, visiting the island more often than anyone besides the Indians, and inviting Sri Lanka to join triangular tournaments when other countries considered them unworthy of competition.

Whatever his motives, in calling Mutiah Muralitharan for throwing, Ross Emerson inadvertently exposed a gaping hole where cricket's global constitution ought to be. Since nationalist pride both Sri Lankan and Australian has obscured the controversy, it might be useful to try to clarify the nature of the injustice suffered by Murali. This is not merely the allegation that his normal delivery is illegal; if that were shown to be so (and I don't believe it has) then the off-spinner would be guilty of a technical infraction, and in order to ensure fair play he would have to correct the fault. The real injustice is the inconsistent and arbitrary nature of the rulings made against him by a small group of umpires in what appears to be a premeditated defiance of what passes in cricket for international opinion. Murali's action had been examined by an international panel of experts appointed by the ICC, which had declared his action legal. In most other sports, that would be the end of the story, but not in cricket. In this context, Ranatunga was right to make an explicit protest. In the future, his gesture may even come to be seen as an epoch-marking, liberating event.

The fact is that the umpire's word is no longer final and should not be. One of the features that made cricket revolutionary in the eighteenth century was that it was a game played under an agreed code of laws, not the whims of local authorities. If Ranatunga, in this instance clearly representing Sri Lankan cricket as a whole, were to allow Emerson's provocation to pass without an immediate signal of public censure, the basis for international competition—equal treatment of all teams and all players in all places—would have been compromised. In effect, Ranatunga was making an appeal to a higher authority, the match referee and through him the ICC. He was asking this higher authority to uphold the rule of law over the whims of an individual. Appeals of this kind are a common feature in other sports, at Wimbledon or in athletics, and even in football the linesman's decision can be over-ruled by the referee; they are also, of course, the norm in courts of law and in much of civil society. But in cricket Ranatunga's appeal amounted to the cardinal sin of dissent. There was no evidence that he had been abusive or aggressive, merely that he had disagreed "publicly" with the umpire. As a result, he found himself subject to international cricket's Kafkaesque disciplinary system, in which the match referee acts as chief accuser as well as judge and jury. No wonder he insisted on being represented by a lawyer, which for some commentators constituted a further offence.

It is not an accident that Ranatunga should be the first international captain to challenge cricket's obsolete authoritarianism and to insist on due process. As the captain who brought home the World Cup, the greatest sporting triumph—and, by some lights, the greatest international triumph—in Sri Lanka's history, he enjoys unrivalled stature in the island. In addition, his father is a veteran politician and minister in a provincial government; his brother is one of the cricket board's chief administrators. His social and political status cannot be compared with any other active international captain, and undoubtedly gave him the self-confidence to take on umpires and referees. This does not mean that his captaincy since the World Cup has been held above criticism. Fans have laid into him for favouritism, for tactical errors, and for exercising undue influence on selectors and the Board. Politically, he may have felt he had to make the protest if he was to retain general public support at home. Thus, in the era of globalisation, the global shapes the local and the local shapes the global.

### From Feudalism to Democracy

**T**he episode spotlighted cricket's lingering dalliance with feudal elitism, in which authority is invested in a personality, and decision-making is shrouded in the nebulous mystery of revealed wisdom. It is one of the most salient ironies of modern cricket that it should be the Sri Lankans "the last products of the Victorian public school cricket culture" who should learn from bitter experience the hopeless inadequacy of the gentlemen's ethic in ensuring fair play on the games modern stage. And by fair play I mean not some amorphous ethos of generosity and trust, but the more rigorous and less subjective ideal of equality under the law. What is needed is not more moralistic injunctions to play up and play the game from the MCC or the ICC, but delimited specified

powers for umpires, fixed and graded penalties for infractions, workable mechanisms of appeal, and, above all, the accountability of those who make and enforce the laws of the game.

To some champions of globalisation, such democratic notions will seem outdated and impractical, even as they strike horror into traditionalists for other reasons. Here, the pre-modern and the post-modern meet, as they do so often in cricket's silly walk into the future. The dispersal of authority in the game is already well underway, and no one can reverse the trend. Above all, it is television and television replays that have fatally undermined the umpire's authority. Personally, I welcome the third umpire and think his remit should be widened. The appeal to the third umpire has added to the drama of big matches and supplied yet another talking point for the fans. In addition, of course, it provides greater (though not absolute) precision in decision-making, thereby reducing the element of chance (or umpiring bias or incompetence). It has also democratised discussion about umpire's rulings and demystified authority, which in my book are healthy developments. So, thanks not least to television, the medium of globalisation, the umpire's word is no longer final. New structures of authority and new means of adjudication will have to be fashioned.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence that the ICC, as currently constituted, is up to the job, or even aware of its scale. The ICC resolved its own internal conflict over the election to the chairmanship—stemming from Anglo-Australian hostility to Jagmohan Dalmiya and, more broadly, fear of South Asian domination—by abolishing both the election and the chairmanship. Under a plan praised in the cricket press as the last word in Solomonic judiciousness, the ICC will be headed by a president nominated in turn by each of the nine full (test playing) members, each of whom will have a permanent seat on the body's management board, along with three representatives from the lesser associates. This device may minimise public rows about power-sharing, but it will not resolve any of the real conflicts besetting global cricket. Yes, elections can be messy, embarrassing affairs; sometimes the wrong side wins. But they do at least provide the opportunity to contest policies and priorities, and, vitally, the chance to punish and displace the corrupt or the incompetent.

*The universality towards which it [capital] irresistibly strives encounters barriers in its own nature, which will, at a certain stage of its development, allow it to be recognised as being itself the greatest barrier to this tendency*

- Karl Marx

## Global Governance in Cricket

Nothing has highlighted the absence of global governance in the global game more sharply than the ICC's mishandling of the bookmaking scandal. As more evidence emerges, it is becoming clear that some one day matches have been fixed, notably during the Singer Cup in Sri Lanka 1994. Rumours abound, but proof has been rare. However, the detailed statements submitted to the Qayyum inquiry in Pakistan, and leaked in the Indian magazine Outlook, leave no doubt that gambling interests have infiltrated big-time cricket, primarily but not exclusively in South Asia. At some time after the World Cup, some famous heads will roll, deservedly

so. These cricketers have perpetrated a fraud on the spectator (as well as the small-time punter), and thereby undermined confidence in the authenticity of the competition, which is as important to sport as the willing suspension of disbelief is to the cinema. But let's not get too pompous about it. Some of the administrators who will stand in judgement on the players have gotten away with more heinous crimes. What's more, singling out a few scapegoats could well prove an excuse to evade the larger, more intractable issues raised by the affair.

It is important to bear in mind that this is not just about match-fixing, which is extremely hard to arrange. Huge amounts of money (totalling 20 million per game) are now staked on a host of peripheral wagers — who will be the first change bowler, who will come in at number five, will a wide be bowled in the next over, etc. The odds on such questions fluctuate from moment to moment during the course of a match, and thanks to mobile phones, fax machines and e-mails, substantial sums now flow from one rich person to another with blithe disregard for national boundaries. As so often in the globalised economy, information is not only the driving force but a precious commodity in its own right: informants inside the dressing rooms or the press box have been suitably rewarded.

The most disturbing aspect of the bookmaking scandal is not the behaviour of Malik, Waugh or Warne but of the ACB and ICC, who failed to disclose to the Pakistanis the admissions made by Warne and Waugh. In response, in part, to the allegations made by these two, and under pressure from the ICC, the PCB launched two high-level, wide-ranging inquiries. The fact that the two players making the principal allegations were themselves financially involved with a bookmaker, and therefore complicit in the gambling ring, was clearly pertinent to those inquiries. And given that the bookmaker in question was also the one who allegedly tried to set up the bribery attempt which gave rise to the whole business (Malik's approach to Waugh and Warne in Pakistan in 1994), the ACB/ICC omission amounts to jaw-dropping negligence, at best, and something much nastier, at worst. But as so often in cricket, only the players are held accountable for their mistakes.

Much of the money fueling the gambling syndicates originates in that forerunner of globalisation, the drug trade, which links the poppy fields of Pakistan and Afghanistan to the ghettos of Europe and North America. It is funneled into cricket through a network based in Dubai — that capitalist entrepot par excellence. At the heart of this network is said to be the notorious gangster Ibrahim Dawood, who retains a private box at Sharjah, where, it is alleged, he has entertained some of the biggest names in cricket. Dawood is suspected of being responsible for the 1993 bomb blasts in Bombay's financial heart, allegedly a Muslim revenge for the Shiv Sena-sponsored pogroms earlier in the year. The violently anti-Muslim, anti-Pakistani Sena is the dominant political force in Bombay, and every bit as criminal as Dawood himself. Like Dawood, it is heavily involved in cricket, that sub-continental cocktail of power and money.

None of this should send anyone with a knowledge of the history of the game into shock. Cricket emerged as the world's first modern

team sport thanks in part to the vast pool of surplus liquidity which accumulated in England in the 18th century. Much of this was ill-gotten lucre, derived from the slave trade and the plunder of overseas territories, including the sub-continent. Gambling on cricket matches became a means of circulating the loose cash in the hands of the elite. The higher stakes which ensued made the results of the matches more important. Wealthy patrons began investing in cricketers and cricket facilities. Technical innovations and a rising standard of play followed, as did greater public interest.

Just as the gambling, cricketing lords reflected the aristocratic commercial capitalism of their time, so the Dubai-based syndicates reflect the globalised capitalism of ours. They are the dark underside of the corporate-media-sport nexus. The new technology permits a border-free flow of speculative finance, and it is this flow which sustains not only the bookies and the local politicians, but also the television moguls, the corporate sponsors, and the cricket administrator.

### Nationalism and Global Capital

**T**he Asian Test Championship held in February and March of 1999 was meant to be a glimpse of the future. The first triangular test series since 1912 (with the final at Dhaka in Bangladesh, a non-test playing country, the first test on neutral ground since the same year), the ATC was Jagmohan Dalmiya's attempt to give the cricket world a foretaste of a new, globalised competition. In the first match in Calcutta, his dreams crumbled in the face of the contradictory realities of cricket in a globalised economy. Pakistan and India had just split their historic two test series, one each. So, in the popular imagination, the first test of the ATC became the decider, as an entrenched bi-national rivalry was superimposed on the novel multi-sided tournament. On the fourth day, Tendulkar was run out after having been obstructed by Shoaib Akhtar. The third umpire ruled, correctly, that the obstruction was inadvertent, and therefore the batsman was given out. To television viewers with the benefit of endless replays the decision was intelligible, but to many spectators on the ground, it was not. Bottles were thrown and the teams left the field. Dalmiya and Tendulkar (looking none too pleased at the chore) walked around the ground to calm the crowd. After a delay, play was resumed, with India heading steadily for defeat. The next day, India's ninth wicket fell early and a section of the crowd, possibly a few hundred, threw not only bottles but also stones and scraps of concrete torn up from the stands. There was a heavy police presence, but since they were concentrated in groups around the fences dividing spectators from the playing field, they were unable to act against individual miscreants. Eventually, they had to clear the entire ground of 70,000 spectators before play could

resume. So the last wicket of the first match of the ATC was taken before an empty, echoing Eden Gardens. Dalmiya could not guarantee order in his own domain, no less the global empire he dreamed of.

Economic liberalisation, the government policy which provides the foundations for globalisation, had enhanced the value of South Asian cricket many times over. There were new television outlets, new multi-national corporate sponsors, and a new elite with money to burn. But all of this ended up fueling a new and highly aggressive cricket nationalism, as the mushrooming South Asian one day international circuit attracted more and more publicity and money. That nationalism was on display in Calcutta, a city once noted for its knowledgeable and fair-minded crowds. But there may have been another element. Bookies do not pay out on cancelled or forfeited matches. It would not be difficult to recruit a few hundred people in Calcutta to disrupt a match. Certainly, it is strange that the crowd would react more violently to the fall of the ninth wicket in an inevitable Indian defeat than to Tendulkar's controversial run-out the day before. So was the debacle at Calcutta the work of super-patriots or of bookies? Most likely, it was some noxious combination of the two. Nationalism pumped up by global capital, global capital feeding off nationalism. High-handed authorities getting fat off the interaction. An empty stadium and a virtual audience of one hundred million plus television viewers.

*It is necessary to build a new world, a world capable of containing many worlds, capable of containing all worlds.*

- Subcommandante Marcos of the Zapatista Liberation Front.

Despite all of the above, cricket fans should not despair. There is great cricket—attractive, exciting, absorbing cricket—being played today, and thanks to television, we can see more of it today than ever before. And despite the corporate-media-sport nexus, crickets creative juices still flow at the grassroots, albeit through irregular and often obstructed channels. The answer to the uncertain perils of the future is not a retreat into the past. And the answer to the daunting, distant power of the corporate-media-sport nexus is not to slump in front of the television and passively accept whatever's on offer.

To adopt the adage of the green movement, we need to think globally and act locally. We have to mutually discover what we, as cricket fans spread across five continents, really have in common, and what really keeps us apart. In response to the colossal power of globally concentrated wealth, we have to build an internationalism from below. Our advantage here is that, unlike the masters of the global game, we are joined by a shared love of the game, not a competitive desire to exploit it. ■

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