



CRICKETING CULTURES IN CONFLICT

WORLD CUP 2003

EDITED BY
BORIA MAJUMDAR AND J. A. MANGAN



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For bapai and mamoni,
who gave me cricket

Foreword

The eighth ICC Cricket World Cup brought the world's premier cricket tournament to Africa for the first time. With 14 competing nations and 52 matches, it was the biggest yet staged. For our country and our continent it was an immense privilege to host the international cricket community and, judging by the feedback we received, it was an unqualified success and a tribute to all the people involved in its operation.

Matches were staged at 15 venues throughout South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya. In terms of the development of cricket in Africa, this represented a major advance in the globalization of the game in keeping with the International Cricket Council's objectives.

More than that, in today's troubled times, cricket again demonstrated its power to bridge cultural, political and religious barriers in the name of honest sporting endeavour. By way of one example, India and Pakistan competed against each other for the first time in almost three years. The Indian and Pakistani players elected to shake hands on the field at Supersport Park, Centurion, shortly before start of play in their Pool A game. To cement this show of goodwill, the respective captains, Sourav Ganguly and Waqar Younis, exchanged team ties.

There are problems in world cricket which I will not deny but, at the ICC Cricket World Cup 2003, there was enough goodwill from players, administrators and spectators alike to suggest that all involved in the game must do everything in their power to nurture and cherish the ideals and traditions of a sport that are second to none. This book beautifully captures cricketing cultures across the world in all its complexities and nuances and is a privilege to read. I am very happy to have been involved with the project.

ALI BACHER

Executive Director, ICC Cricket World Cup South Africa 2003
June 2003

Series Editor's Foreword

There is always a place in sport for decent aspiration:

modern sports are one of the frail institutions that leaders of religiously and ethnically divided societies call upon to resist the factionalism that threatens always to devolve into fratricidal conflict. If sports are an occasion for the expression of *Communitas*, which they can be, let them express the common humanity as well as the tribal one.¹

This is the appeal of Allen Guttman in *Games and Empires: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism*. Here is a similar appeal by David Underwood in his much praised *Start of Play: Cricket and Culture in Eighteenth Century England*:

If there is one thing we ought to have learned from the whole sorry history of the twentieth century it must surely be the pernicious consequences of excessive nationalism. Of course it is good that people should retain honestly patriotic feelings, based on a sense of what is best in their country's culture and traditions. But nationalism is not the be-all and end-all of our lives.²

In modern international cricket will these appeals also fall on deaf ears? Only time will tell. Has W. H. Auden also a point?

If in the scrimmage of business your image
Should ever tarnish or stale,
Public Relations can take it and make it
Shine like a Knight of the Grail.

 You can mark up the price that you sell at, if
 Your package has glamour and show;
 Values are relative
 Dough is dough.³

Is it time to heed these words?

Sport, as we have so often repeated, reflects the larger society, so it would be naive to expect cricket to be exempt from the impact of changing social assumptions about the connection between the individual and the community. If it continues unchecked, the reduction of all relationships to monetary ones will in the end destroy the spirit of the cricket that has been played - admittedly with many ups and downs - ever since the days of Hambledon.⁴

In future years, cricket enthusiasts will hear a great deal more about "The Shift" - the move of South Asia to the centre of global cricket power. South Asia has its tens of millions of enthusiastic supporters, its super-rich internationals, its strong financial base and its over-compensating administrators eager to replace twentieth century "western" control with twenty-first century "eastern" control. Is the historical domination by one cricketing "culture" over the rest about to be replaced by another and with what repercussions?

The struggle for control in cricket is nothing new. Even at the parochial level of Oxbridge cricket - now more parochial than ever! - Lewis Carroll no less, in a pastiche of Oliver Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* was moved to castigate the upper orders for their callous disregard of the lower orders in turning Oxford's Parks into a university cricket ground:

Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen.
The rude pavilions sadden all thy green;
One selfish pastime grasps the whole domain,
And half a faction swallows up the plain;
Adown thy glades, all sacrificed to cricket,
The hollow sounding bat now guards the wicket ...⁵

There are those who would argue that this kind of arrogance at a global level has brought international cricket to its present fractious state.

It has been observed that "Darwinism theory has no place for stasis. It debars return. It does not countenance absolute replication ..., pure invariant cycle, or constant equilibrium. Nor - except for the extinction of particular species - does it allow interruption or conclusion."⁶

With this claim in mind, perhaps it is appropriate to end with a comment made some years ago which now seems apposite to cricket after the 2003 World Cup: "It is wise to appreciate that there was no culturally monolithic response to utilize sport as an imperial bond ... Any analyst worth his salt should be aware of discontinuities as well as continuities. The unanticipated consequences of stated intentions are neither unusual nor unreal."⁷

In the Victorian imperial era cricket was a political tool of Anglo-Saxon purpose. In this Elizabethan post-imperial era is an Eastern economic "imperialism" with its own purpose about to commence? Whatever the future holds, these thoughts might not be amiss:

If cricket is to survive in any worthwhile form, we need to rediscover its values as it has been (and sometimes still is) played at Taunton, at Worcester, at Cheltenham and at Canterbury; but even more as it is played at Chew Magna, Milnrow, Pudsey St Lawrence – and Hambledon. It may help us to do this if we reflect on the way it was played, more than two centuries ago, on Broadhalfpenny Down.⁸

J.A.Mangan
2003

Acknowledgements

During one of our lunches at St John's College, Oxford, we were discussing how cricket in England and India are so radically different. The county season had just begun and the Daily Telegraph had just published a photograph where a solitary spectator was witness to the early season action. By contrast, in India, a ticket to a one-day match sold on the black market for a few thousand rupees. For us this discussion was routine. An English friend, who had seen Lagaan and Trobriand cricket recently, declared that if crick-eting cultures the world over were so varied this discussion needed to take shape as a book. With the World Cup bringing the variations into focus as never before, the statement was visionary. Our thanks to him.

The book has benefited greatly from the all-too-short period of reflection and discussion we had with Dr David Washbrook, Dr Ross McKibbin, Dr. John Rowett, Jagmohan Dalmiya, Prof. John Macaloon, Mihir Bose and Sharmistha Gooptu. We cherish memories of these discussions. At every stage of the production process we were helped by our friend and colleague Jonathan Manley- our sincere thanks to him. We sincerely thank all our contributors for meeting every deadline and for responding to every query no matter how trivial. This is as much their book as ours. Finally, we are grateful to Dr Ali Bacher for his committed involvement to the volume despite his busy schedule.

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JAM

November 2003

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Prologue

BORIA MAJUMDAR

A few months before the 2003 Cricket World Cup, cricket's bible, *Wisden*, described it thus:

The World Cup is the biggest spectacle in cricket. Purists may talk of how Test cricket is the real thing and how a surfeit of one day cricket is spoiling the game, but when the world cup comes around, even they postpone their lives and sit down to watch. All the top sides of the world gather on one stage and face each other off until, at the end, one is left standing. The battles fought en route enter the stuff of legend, and for four years, the team that holds the world cup does not have to dig too deep to search for pride or motivation. They have the cup, and it runneth over.¹

This view is shared the world over. We mention this at the very outset because we do not want this volume to be naively and erroneously catalogued simply as a stroke-by-stroke and ball-by-ball study of cricket's greatest spectacle. It is concerned with much more: with the beginning of the end of cricket as a mere sport, with the hegemony of commerce over modern cricket, with ideals and idealism and their increasing unimportance, with the death of morality for reasons of realpolitik and with the renunciation, once and for all, of the view that sport and politics do not mix. The last, a political stand, is a point driven home by the contributors to this volume. Politics and sport, as Simon Barnes has argued 'have been blood brothers since the first national anthem was played at a sporting event'.²

In the middle of the nineteenth century, cricket in various parts of the British empire had a singular purpose – the inculcation of imperial manliness.³ By the turn of the century this had changed. Cricket, in more places than one and in more forms than one, was used for the purposes of resistance against colonial rule, an aspect largely ignored by imperialists and academics alike.⁴ Until the beginning of the 1990s, Kerry Packer notwithstanding,⁵ cricket had successfully aspired, less and less confidently admittedly, to be the gentlemen's game. The virtues of fair play associated with cricket were not considered vestiges of a distant past. Now they are. That commerce is king many argue may be traced back to Kerry Packer.⁶ Even if

we date the beginnings of cricket's commercial revolution to the 1970s, it was then an infant that could barely walk. It is now a powerful youth; it tramples on any obstacle that crosses its path. In the 1970s and 1980s, no country would dare contemplate sending a second-string side to the World Cup. Before SA 2003, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, the West Indies and New Zealand, guided by the notion 'commerce is king', thought of this possibility as a viable alternative.⁷

II

Commenting on the 2003 World Cup, Dr Ali Bacher, managing director of the tournament, had declared: 'It will be about South Africa. About tourism, job creation and the empowerment of people, especially black people who were disadvantaged over the decades.'⁸ The world cup mission statement elaborated on these ideas, demonstrating that the organizers envisaged the tournament to be much more than a mere cricketing extravaganza:

We aim to unite all the peoples of the country behind the event, by following it, supporting it and participating in it. ...

It is our intention to have the support and involvement of the Government at all levels – local, provincial and national. ...

The management team that organises the competition must reflect the demographics of South Africa. ...

All grounds must host an acceptable number of black spectators. ...

We want all South Africans to be proud of the event.⁹

Studiously ignoring these pointers, which linked cricket to broader political, social and economic goals, the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), seated in their own sporting bubble, commenting on whether it was prudent to stage the cup in Zimbabwe, repeatedly emphasized that sport and politics were two distinct entities and should be kept separate.¹⁰ The ICC repeatedly harped on its identity as 'cricket's apex body' concerned with cricket alone. Its only 'political' concern, it repeatedly stressed, was to ensure the safety of the players.

The ICC went ahead with staging the tournament in Zimbabwe, ignoring the atrocities, cruelties and hardships perpetrated by Mugabe's dictatorial regime.¹¹ David Gower, condemning the ICC's stand, declared:

The Zimbabwean opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), must fear that Mugabe will use the World Cup to show a world audience how safe his country is. Of course the cricketers will be safe, with the International Cricket Council (ICC), the ECB and everybody else, including Mugabe, bending over backwards to escort them from the new international terminal (where on earth did the money come

from for that?) to the city, to the grounds and out again. The MDC knows that every hint of normality as portrayed to the outside world makes their task as opposition yet tougher.¹²

He concluded by saying: www.wisden.com

At the ICC, [chief executive] Malcolm Speed, no doubt aware of the limited influence of his organisation, can only 'hope that this tournament can be a positive element' and bring relief to a beleaguered population. Just what percentage of that population does he think will get anywhere near the cricket, or benefit from it in any shape or form? The great majority will be totally unaware, as they search for the merest scrap of food, that there is even a game called cricket.¹³

Other cricket writers went an honest step further, labelling the actions of the ICC immoral and cowardly. Referring to the ICC's actions, Andrew Miller declared:

The bottom line is that the ICC is not only immoral, but cowardly as well. It matters not that an entire country is on the brink of starvation – all that concerns them is the safety of their players and officials. Until this morning, they had at their disposal a golden opportunity to get out of an increasingly sticky situation. Instead they have muddied the waters further by copping out of their cop-out.¹⁴

Zimbabwean players, too, were against the Cup being staged in their country.¹⁵ Two of Zimbabwe's front-line cricketers revealed to *The Times* that the national squad was being put under pressure by local police and the home board to gloss over the current situation within the country:

Two days after one Zimbabwe player said that the World Cup would be 'safer in South Africa', where the players' security could be 'more assured', another leading squad member, who also requested not to be named for security fears, said: 'I am strongly in favour of the World Cup games being staged elsewhere. And a lot of the senior players feel the same. But they are afraid of speaking out.'¹⁶

Nothing, however, deterred the ICC from going ahead with its plans. At the end of a two-day visit to Harare in January 2003, both Malcolm Speed, the ICC chief executive, and Ali Bacher, head of the World Cup organizing committee, declared that Zimbabwe was a safe venue for the World Cup.¹⁷

The question remains: why didn't the ECB take up the mantle of moral custodian when the ICC refused to act? All the more so when English players were threatened that playing in Zimbabwe might have dire consequences:

England's cricketers have received anonymous letters threatening violence if they agree to travel to Zimbabwe during next month's World Cup. David Morgan, the chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board, told the BBC that certain team members had received the letters at their hotel in Sydney earlier this week. The letters warned of violent consequences if England played their match at Harare on Feb 13.¹⁸

Following the threats, as is well known, English players appealed to the ICC and the ECB to move the fixture from Harare. Richard Bevan, managing director of England's Professional Cricketers' Association (PCA), had issued a statement on behalf of the players outlining their request that the Harare fixture be moved in view of the deteriorating political situation in Zimbabwe:

The players are greatly concerned for the welfare of the people of Zimbabwe and especially for opposition supporters who might be targeted by police, using brute force. It is very important that no Zimbabwean or any other individual comes to any harm because of a cricket match in Harare. Without doubt the issues have been weighing heavily on the players' minds, taking into account moral, political and contractual aspects. The players have appreciated the difficult position and immense pressure that Tim Lamb, ECB chief executive, and the ECB have been under. The players are keen to support their Board and to come to a satisfactory resolution, but they want to urge all parties to move the fixture to South Africa and to pay the Zimbabwe Cricket Union appropriate compensation.¹⁹

The ICC and the ECB turned a deaf ear to all such requests. Commenting on the players' plea, Tim Lamb stated that the players had merely requested a switch, not signalled indirectly an intention to boycott the match, and that the ECB continued to support the ICC's stance that matches should be moved only if the players' and officials' safety could not be guaranteed.²⁰ The ICC announced in a media release that while it was aware of the players' concerns it found no reason to move the fixture from Harare:

Mr Speed stressed that the ICC Board has previously determined that safety and security is the only criterion to be considered by the ICC. The ICC is an international sporting organisation with 84 members with a variety of cultures, beliefs and political systems. Its members are in place to make judgments on cricket administration and not to take a political stance on foreign policy issues. This is the role and responsibility of governments. Many months ago, the ICC Executive Board discussed this issue and all members, including the ECB, endorsed this position. Of course, should the ECB wish to have this approach reviewed, it will be entitled to argue the case at the meeting

on Friday. We are committed to monitoring the safety and security of players and officials in Zimbabwe and this is being done on a daily basis. To do this we have in place an effective system that will allow us to make a proper, fact-based assessment on the safety issues that each team will be faced with in Zimbabwe. There is in place a properly resourced and highly skilled Security Directorate that is responsible for the safety of all teams. The Directorate has put in place a thorough system to identify, assess and manage any safety and security issues and the tournament will see unprecedented levels of security for all games. The ICC has also now visited Zimbabwe on several occasions to assess the safety issues first-hand, visiting and listening to a number of diplomatic officials from the countries scheduled to play there as well as to a number of relevant stakeholders. In addition, the ICC has appointed an independent firm of international security advisers to provide its expert view on the situation in Zimbabwe. This thorough process allows the ICC to make a proper assessment of the safety and security risks to players and officials based on the expert advice of a range of well-qualified safety experts. As it currently stands, based on this expert advice the ICC Board continues to see no reason to move the games.²¹

The ECB's actions, however unfortunate it may sound, seem to have been guided essentially by fears of monetary loss. Failure to fulfil the fixture could have cost the ECB an estimated £10 million, a sixth of the board's entire annual turnover, because Robert Mugabe, the Zimbabwean president, could have ordered a 'tit-for-tat' action and stopped his country from touring England in 2003. As *Wisden* commented: 'The decision was as good as made when the British government refused to compensate English cricket for the potential loss of income and fines likely to result from any boycott of the match in Harare. Lose £10 million or take a moral stand. If only it were that straightforward.'²² *Wisden's* report concluded declaring: 'English cricket had a chance to show that it was not purely concerned with money, and was willing to offer a lead even if others – including the government – were not. Perhaps the really naïve ones were those who believed that the ECB would consider anything other than the cash.'²³

While the ICC ignored English concerns, the New Zealand board on 30 January 2003 declared that it would forfeit its match against Kenya in view of the deteriorating political situation in Nairobi:

The board has concluded that on the basis of the information currently available the safety and security risk for our players is too high. The New Zealand Cricket board will give notice to the ICC that it does not believe that the decision taken by the ICC last night was reasonable. This is a matter which will now be resolved through legal processes.²⁴

The board went on to assert that it was hopeful of playing the match against Kenya on 21 February at a South African venue, and appealed to the ICC technical committee to resolve the dispute.

Commenting on New Zealand's decision, Kenya's captain Steve Tikolo maintained that Nairobi posed no threat to player safety. Jimmy Rayani, chairman of the Kenyan Cricket Association, called for New Zealand to be banned from the World Cup and suspended for a year from international cricket for their refusal to play in Kenya.²⁵

Following New Zealand's refusal to play in Kenya, the Zimbabwe crater of this African cricketing volcano erupted with England's PCA protesting at the ICC denying it access to the report that said it was safe for the World Cup to be held in Zimbabwe. The PCA declared that it had been contacted by a member of the media who had seen the Kroll report, and mentioned that this had led to serious concerns.²⁶ Refusal of access to the crucial report, the PCA asserted, was unacceptable.²⁷

Strengthening the voice of protest against the ICC, the Australian government announced that it had been warned of potential violence during Australia's match in Zimbabwe. Alexander Downer, the Australian foreign minister, issued a press statement saying that the Australian high commissioner to Zimbabwe, Jonathon Brown, had sent a disturbing report after visiting Bulawayo, the venue of Australia's match on 24 February. The report indicated that the Zimbabwean police would not guarantee a controlled response against planned protests. Accordingly, the Australian government asked the ICC to reverse its decision about playing in Zimbabwe and Kenya.²⁸ Backed by its government, the Australian cricket establishment held emergency meetings about the deteriorating law-and-order situation in Zimbabwe. Tim May, chief executive of the Australian Cricketers' Association (ACA), and James Sutherland, the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) boss, were both in Johannesburg to meet High Commissioner Brown. Sutherland pointed out that Australia had pulled out of matches before after expressing dissatisfaction with safety arrangements, most notably during the 1996 World Cup when the team refused to go to Sri Lanka: 'We've done that before in the last 12 months and I think that should be an indication that we're prepared to do it here and now.'²⁹ Expressing similar views, the Australian Prime Minister John Howard declared:

I can't put my hand on my heart and say you mustn't go there for safety reasons, although it is not the safest place in the world. I think it would be a good thing if the ICC listened to the views of Australia, New Zealand and England and cancelled that part of the World Cup in Zimbabwe. For Australia's part, we are prepared to contribute to any cost that would be involved for the ACB or for cricket generally.³⁰

Complicating the situation further, the English captain Nasser Hussain announced that he retained the prerogative to pull his team out of the game in Harare: