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# Sonny Ramadhin and the 1950s World of Spin, 1950-1961

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**SONNY RAMADHIN AND THE 1950S WORLD OF SPIN, 1950-1961, WITH  
AN EPILOGUE ON THE MODERN FATE OF TRADITIONAL CRICKET**

**DAVID M. TRABOULAY**

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## PREFACE

The idea of a study of Ramadhin and cricket in the 1950s arose from the desire to write something about San Fernando, the town where I was born and grew up. Although I have lived in America for more than forty years, San Fernando still occupies a central place in my imagination and is one of the sources of the inspiration of whatever little I have achieved in my life. Another enduring inspiration, even passion, has been the memory of playing cricket in Trinidad as a young man. So, the decision to write about Ramadhin came almost immediately. A young cricketer from San Fernando and a descendant of Indian indentured immigrants, Ramadhin's magical performances for the West Indies cricket team in the world where cricket was played still resonate in my mind and the minds of West Indians who grew up in the 1950s. I am not sure whether Ramadhin's prowess was the reason why I grew to love cricket, but it was a factor. Before leaving for Europe to study in 1960, I was a promising spin bowler and was selected for South Trinidad youth team and a Trinidad team against Pakistan. On my return to Trinidad in the mid-1960s I represented Trinidad "B" team. So, cricket was "in my blood," so to speak. This book on Ramadhin is, therefore, a labour of love, intended to be an act of giving thanks to my little town of San Fernando.

I am indebted to Mr. Justice Ralph Narine who gave me access to all his articles and documents about Ramdhin. He also made it possible for me to visit Sonny and his wife, June, in Oldham, Lancashire, and begin a friendship that continues today. I must mention the encouragement given by my friend and cricket enthusiast from Sri Lanka, Harold Sirisena, and my colleague from Barbados, Professor Calvin Holder. I am hoping that my grand-nephews, Marcus Bridgemohansingh, Christian Abdool, Caidan and Trizdan Mohammed, will rekindle the flame of cricket that meant so much to their great-uncle; and also my grand-nieces, Paige and

Syana, since women's cricket is finding its place in the sun. The work on Ramadhin was completed three years ago, but I felt that it was still incomplete. One reason was that the fortunes of the West Indies team had sunk low since the early 1990s, and the other was that cricket as I knew it was changing radically. I began to investigate why the West Indies teams seemed to have lost the discipline and passion that brought supremacy in cricket and, at the same time to interrogate the changes that were taking place in both the manner and matter of the game. I have concluded that the answer to the first issue was cyclical. It may be that it was simply a case that rebuilding a competitive team was taking longer than in the past. The second question about the innovations in cricket was more important and I have included a final chapter, an epilogue, posing the question of the fate of the romantic tradition of cricket in our postmodern world.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **LOCATING RAMADHIN AND SAN FERNANDO**

How interesting that both the cricketer Sonny Ramadhin and the Nobel laureate V.S. Naipaul left Trinidad for England in 1950; Ramadhin as a representative of the West Indies cricket team to tour England that summer, and V.S. Naipaul to study for a degree in English literature at Oxford University. As fate would have it, both would make England their home, apart from occasional visits to Trinidad. Among the nations where cricket is played, Ramadhin became famous after his bowling exploits that very year along with his Jamaican colleague on the team, Alf Valentine, because that cricket series established the West Indies, then colonies of Great Britain, as one of the top teams in the world. Understandably, it took much longer for V.S. Naipaul's talents to be recognized and to be placed on the world's stage, and he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001.

In the minds of people the journey from a small place to the metropolis excites the imagination. Trinidadians of East Indian ancestry, Ramadhin and Naipaul took different paths for their voyage, cricket for Ramadhin, and schools and books for Naipaul. Recognising that their talents were nurtured in large part by their upbringing and experiences in Trinidad, each has acknowledged his indebtedness to Trinidad for nurturing his abilities. Ramadhin represented the West Indies until 1961, when at 31, he retired from international cricket, although he continued to play English League cricket until he was 55. His name today remains a household word only for the cricket generation of the 1950s. Ignored for the most part once his playing days for the West Indies were over, there was a resurgence of interest in Ramadhin in the 1990s and he was awarded national honours at the turn of the millennium. This belated recognition coincided with

the increasing confidence and assertiveness of Trinidad's East Indian communities as Trinidadians. Ramadhin was justifiably an Indian hero of Trinidad, but, in truth, in the 1950s Ramadhin was considered a West Indian hero in the eyes of the masses in the West Indies and the *Diaspora*, particularly in England. Bowling with his cap on and his sleeves buttoned down at the wrist, this 5' 4" West Indian mesmerised opponents, bringing joy to the masses huddled around the radios and redifusion sets of villages and street parlours and shops, listening to the cricket commentary from far off England and Australia. Ramadhin's impact was immediate, concrete, visceral, local, and appealed to the emotions. Given the nature of his profession as writer and intellectual, and, of course, his critical view of the Third World, including the Caribbean, V.S. Naipaul hardly stirred the emotions of West Indian people, except for a small section of interested readers. No one can deny, however, that Naipaul's acclaim and writings have brought glory to West Indians.

Naipaul and Ramadhin were early representatives of the mixing of peoples and cultures from the different continents, at first unequally and for some coerced by Western imperialism, and then by global capitalism, a phenomenon and a historical movement that may very well be the defining feature of the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. In this respect, the world has changed utterly from when Ramadhin and Naipaul left small Trinidad in 1950. The world audience, more than specifically West Indian, have found interesting and resonant Naipaul's understanding of the late colonial and post-colonial world, its pain and sense of dislocation. An essentially Westernised audience find Naipaul's narrative of living in colonial Trinidad and his intellectual and emotional journey to self-competence in England fascinating. We follow the transformation of Pundit Ganesh Ramsumair in *Mystic Masseur* (1957), Ralph Singh in *The Mimic Men* (1967), and Mr. Biswas in *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961) with laughter, empathy,

and sadness.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the stagnation of life in colonial Trinidad, the main characters of Naipaul's novels struggle heroically to overcome their situation, and to achieve a measure of success and happiness by reinventing their lives with great difficulty, to be sure, and self-discipline. Some achieved success by leaving Trinidad for England. But, whether their transformation took place in Trinidad or in England, the sense of rootlessness and dislocation remained persistent. Naipaul captivated his readers not only by describing the post-colonial sores of the Third World with his brilliant literary style, but he has continued to argue that Western civilisation had become the universal civilisation, and its cultural values of individual happiness, responsibility, choice, and the life of the mind were destined "to blow away" more rigid systems.<sup>2</sup> At this stage, it is a good question to ask why I have included this brief piece about V.S. Naipaul in the story of Sonny Ramadhin. To compare the achievements of a Nobel Laureate whose works continue to please and be read by people around the world with a cricketer, even a renowned one, whose accomplishments have gone unnoticed by most except cricket enthusiasts of the 1950s seems inappropriate. Yet, the link between Ramadhin and V. S. Naipaul was not far-fetched at all. Seepersad Naipaul, the novelist's father and a journalist with the *Trinidad Guardian*, visited Esperance Village twice in August 1950, a week after his son left for England, to interview Ramadhin's family and friends. Two of his photos of Ramadhin's home, and his friends celebrating Ramadhin's success with a game of street cricket were published in the *Guardian*, while his article on Ramadhin was published in the *Sunday Guardian*. V.S. Naipaul thought that it was a good piece and encouraged his father to send it to British newspapers to see if they would publish it.<sup>3</sup> Describing the village of Esperance as primitive where some of the houses have mud-floors and grass-thatched roofs, where if one were looking for a great cricketer you were most likely to find him "in Timbuktu than Esperance in



Trinidad,” Seepersad Naipaul painted an illuminating picture of Ramadhin’s village, friends, and his grandmother who lovingly worried about Ramadhin’s shyness in England and was anxious for him to get married. To persuade his father to submit his article to London’s major newspapers, V.S. Naipaul told his father that it was not too late because Ramadhin was “known to everyone in England, and very few knew anything about his background.” Ramadhin and Naipaul were East Indian Trinidadians whose grandparents had come as indentured immigrants from India; both nurtured their talents in the Caribbean, and both have contributed to the vitality, humanity, and esteem of the peoples of the Caribbean. Let me say at the beginning that I neither aim to compare Sonny Ramadhin with V. S. Naipaul in this study, nor shed light on the achievements of East Indians of the Caribbean, a worthy topic which has been treated elsewhere. My interest in Ramadhin stems in large part from the fact that he came from a village in my hometown, San Fernando, and his role in placing West Indian cricket at the centre of world cricket in the 1950s. In his thoughtful study, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, the Bulgarian scholar, Tzvetan Todorov, who lives in Paris cited a quotation from the 12<sup>th</sup> century Christian monk, Hugh of St. Victor, given to him by the Palestinian scholar, Edward Said: “The man who finds his country sweet is only a raw beginner; the man for whom each country is as his own is already strong; but only the man for whom the whole world is as a foreign country is perfect.”<sup>4</sup> For Todorov and Said, it means that the exile has become the herald of this new world, and the ideal of non-attachment and criticism in the service of justice is the key to a universal spirit. However, I have found this ideal of the intellectual difficult to achieve.

As I compose this study, writing from my home on Staten Island, New York, I acknowledge now how significant growing up in San Fernando in the 1950s, playing cricket as well as developing a passion and knowledge of cricket, and the love for the unique cultures,

peoples, lands and sea of the Caribbean have been for my own humanity. The purpose of this work, then, is to give significance to a small place, San Fernando, and to show how one talented son was catapulted on the stage of history for a decade as a major player, what he learned, and what he gave to West Indians. This work will not be specifically about the history of cricket, or narrating and analyzing only the Test matches played by Ramadhin. It will attempt to integrate the worlds of cricket, history, culture, and society as they affected Ramadhin and West Indies cricket. As far as the small world of cricket is concerned, I have dared to propose the category of the “spin bowler” for inquiry, since Ramadhin was a spin bowler, an exotic sub-culture in cricket, certainly since the 1960s when the West Indies team was associated with pace bowling bringing them recognition as the best team for several years. In the 1950s a team was considered balanced in their bowling if they included two spinners and two “pace” bowlers. Not now. Except for India and Sri Lanka, it is often the practice for international teams to build their teams around three or four pace bowlers. While the focus of my study will be on Ramadhin, I will try to give full credit to the achievements of Alf Valentine, Ramadhin’s spin “twin.” For the generation of the 1950s, it was the memory of Ramadhin and Valentine that captured our imagination: Ramadhin, an inexperienced 20 year-old right-handed spinner from the village of Esperance in San Fernando, and Valentine, an inexperienced 20 year-old left-handed spinner from Jamaica.<sup>5</sup>

## **GROWING UP IN ESPERANCE**

Born in St. Charles village, San Fernando, on May 1, 1929, Ramadhin was the son of East Indian sugar workers. First his father, and then his mother, Bhagmania, died when he was

still a boy. Orphaned at an early age, he and his older brother went to live with his father's uncle, Soodhai Rock, and Aunt Sumintra in the nearby village of Esperance, two miles south of San Fernando, the second important town of Trinidad. Predominantly an East Indian village whose members traced their ancestry to the period of indentured immigrants from India, the people of Esperance for the most part worked either as small sugar farmers or as workers on the large agricultural estates near Esperance, like Palmiste or Phillipine estate.<sup>6</sup> Ramadhin's parents were born in Trinidad, but a grandfather was born in India.

What was life like in Esperance village in the 1940s? Ramadhin's Aunt Sumintra is still vibrant and her mind as keen as ever; her husband died a few years ago. She said that her husband had come from India when he was nine years old, and that his sister had married Ramadhin's father whose family name was Boodhai. When Ramadhin's mother died shortly after his father, they took Ramadhin and his brother into their family, and placed him in the nearby Canaan Presbyterian school attended by most children of the village, where he completed his elementary education. Contrary to Ramadhin's friends who said that he did not like school and often ran away, Sumintra said that he wanted to go to secondary school but his adopted father did not have the money. There was at that time a fee to go to secondary school in addition to passing an entrance exam. Another of her stories caught my attention. Ramadhin's uncle, who worked at Picton estate and then at the Telephone and Oil Company, also cultivated a backyard garden where he planted vegetables, like most families in the village. She said that Ramadhin liked to play cricket with his friends all the time with a bat made from a coconut branch and a lime for a ball or a rubber ball squeezed from a rubber tree. Once, when Ramadhin replied to his uncle's request to help him work the garden that he was going to play cricket, his uncle quipped: "How are you going to make a living with cricket?" To this Ram replied: "You'll

see, Daddy, I will make a living with it.” She added that although he was playful, he was always respectful and obedient to them and the people in the village.

Sumintra was active as a Hindu, attending regularly Hindu devotions at the temple in Esperance, as did other villagers. Although the Canadian Mission Presbyterian Christian school was an important cultural centre for Esperance, and some of Ramadhin’s friends like Mr. Ramlogan Seedial, were Christians, Indians from Esperance were Hindu, Muslim, and Christian, and religious differences were no barrier to friendship. As a young man, Ramadhin used to attend Hindu weddings, *pujas*, *phagwa*, and the *Ram Leela* celebration, and he said that he was “a staunch Hindu.”<sup>7</sup> He remembered the music of Indian orchestras which celebrated his selection on the West Indies team, and the popular radio program, Indian Talent on Parade, hosted by Kamaluddin Mohammed. On the tour to India he was happy to meet Indian movie stars like Raj Kapoor and Ashok Kumar, and when asked from what part of India his family had come, confessed that he knew only that they were from Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh, but not more than that. Returning for a recent visit to Trinidad, he observed that that part of Esperance where he lived, known as *Bhagi Tola*, where all kinds of vegetables and fruits grew in abundance, was now developed with houses. He added that while he still liked *dhalpuri*, his stomach could not tolerate pepper. Considering that Ramadhin had lived in England since 1950, returning to play cricket for the West Indies or for an occasional visit, this remembrance of things Indian had more to do with a feeling of nostalgia for things past, rather than a resurgence of religious sentiment, like other friends in Esperance today. It was with the same nostalgia that he recalled his village life “playing football, pelting green mangoes, making mango chow” and “catching crab and cascadura.”

Mr. Rampersad, affectionately known to Ramadhin and the villagers as “Goat,” considered Ram as his best friend.<sup>8</sup> Describing those days as teenagers with great joy, he said that Ram and he would run away from school to fish and swim in the pond in Palmiste Park, to catch crabs and shoot birds with sling shots by day and spin their tops and play hopscotch at night with other young people from the village. Some days they would go to San Fernando in the mornings to Gaiety cinema on Mucurapo Street to see matinee shows like *The Masked Marvel*, *Spy Smasher*, and *Tarzan*. As he recorded their world of the 1940s, it was obvious that the beautiful Palmiste Park was the centre of their playful days, and their life. In those days, certainly for Ramadhin and Mr. Rampersad, play was then more important than school. And so the pond and the cricket pitch, and the fields where the cattle roamed filled them with joy and love. It must be said, however, that the youthful activities that Ramadhin and his friend described were not unique to rural Esperance, but quite common in the towns like San Fernando as well.

Two houses from Aunt Sumintra’s house lives Mr. Mahabal who was born in Esperance and went to Canaan Presbyterian school with Ramadhin. From the top floor of his home you could see the vast and beautiful Palmiste estate. Giving his version of their school days, he added that they used to fish also in the pond where the present San Fernando Secondary school is situated. The principal would send other boys to bring them back to school and, if they did not have lunch, he would give them part of his own. He said that Ramadhin loved to swim in the nearby pond in Palmiste park, play cricket in the field next to the pond. Villagers would leave their cattle and sheep to roam the park, and in the evenings Mr. Lamont, the owner of the estate, would hire Ramadhin and other boys to chase the animals into the pond.<sup>9</sup>

For most boys in Trinidad the nearest recreation park occupied a central place in their consciousness because that was where they went after school and their household chores. The villagers of Esperance were fortunate to have Palmiste park so near to their homes. The park was a 40-acre portion of the vast sugar estates of Cedar Grove, Canaan, La Grenade and Cedar Grove estates owned by John and Boydon Lamont, who had migrated to Trinidad from Scotland in 1802. Following the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, John Lamont bought an estate of 360 acres in San Fernando and was made manager of Palmiste estate. At his death in 1850, his nephew, James Lamont inherited his vast estates which prospered till the early 1900s when the importance of sugar declined. In 1869, James Lamont bought Palmiste estate to add to his other estates in nearby Cedar Grove and Canaan. Previously, the estate was administered by Henry Murray for British merchants, and was worked by 155 African slaves until emancipation in 1838. To meet the labour shortage following the abolition of slavery, Indian indentured labourers were brought to Trinidad from 1845. Palmiste estate was intimately connected to the coming of indentured Indian labour. A fertile soil and closeness to the Ciperó river, navigable for flat-bottomed boats, which took the cut cane from the interior to the outlet in San Fernando, contributed to the prosperity of Palmiste estate.

James Lamont's sugar plantations expanded further when he bought the vast surrounding Philippine and La Ressource estates, thereby creating a vast estate of some 2300 acres with a modern factory. Enterprising Indian labourers, on completing their indentureship, established small farms and produced sugar from their own mills, or, on land rented from the large estates, grew cane and sold it to the estate factory for an agreed price. The description of life on Palmiste estate in the 1890s painted a happy picture where the production of sugar was abundant, where

“coolies work about 15 hours a day and sometimes 16 hours on Saturdays...Every fortnight on Saturday night two gallons of rum are given to all the people working at the mills.”

The generosity of James Lamont extended to donating land to the Presbyterian Church to build a school, Canaan Presbyterian School, which he also supported financially. This was the school that Ramadhin and other young people from Esperance attended. The school report of 1891 said that 13 boys and 6 girls attended, and of the 21 Indian children, 9 were Christian. It noted that the pioneer Presbyterian missionary, Rev. Kenneth Grant, the grandfather of West Indies captain, Jack Grant, held weekly services at this school. The sugar industry went into decline in 1907 and after experiencing severe financial losses, James Lamont considered selling Palmiste estate but was persuaded to give it to his son, Norman Lamont, who sought to revive the estate's fortunes by diversifying its agricultural crops, at one time growing bananas, and at other times rubber, cotton, cassava, and limes. Cocoa, coconuts, and the breeding of livestock turned the fortunes of the estates around. Palmiste estate grounds with its elegant and tall Palmiste palm trees, broad, umbrella-like saman trees, and picturesque pond for the grazing of cattle and breeding superior livestock was the stunningly beautiful background for the cricket pitch on which Sonny Ramadhin, Learie Constantine, and Ossie Roach developed their cricket talents. Knighted by the English Crown, Sir Norman Lamont allowed the renowned Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Port of Spain to conduct experiments on his estate. He constructed a large man-made pond shaped like a heart in the centre of the park, and a cricket pitch. A very popular recreation venue for the people of the surrounding villages, the park attracted celebrants of the annual Shia Muslim festival, Hosay, who were encouraged to deposit their *tadjahs* or Carnival-like floats into the pond at the end of the festival. The beauty of Palmiste park did not offer protection from tragedy, as Sir Norman Lamont was gored by his

prized bull on September 2, 1949, while taking photos of the cattle grazing on the grounds, and died the following day. He left the estate to the Trinidad Government with the hope that they would develop it as an Agricultural College, but nothing came of this project and most of it was sold to private investors by 1951 who were more interested in developing the site for housing, although there was often talk of establishing a Palmiste national park.<sup>10</sup>

Describing those early youthful years, Mr. Mahabal said that his home was a carat house with a thatched roof and a mud floor. He helped his mother who worked in the fields planting rice, cutting cane and taking it to the station to be weighed, earning 25 cents a day for his work. He remembered that after finishing school Ramadhin did odd jobs and played cricket for Esperance Sports Club. Before I left, Mr. Mahabal played some Hindu devotional songs and invited me to visit the Diamond Hindu Mandir of which he was the curator. It is worthwhile to mention another of the grand associations of Palmiste estate. Mr. Jack Kelshall (1910-1994), a noted San Fernando lawyer, philanthropist and politician, bought and developed sixteen acres of Palmiste estate and named his development Bryansgate. Mr. Kelshall went on to collect the largest private library in Trinidad of some 20,000 books as well as collect large numbers of local and foreign paintings.

### **THE MAKING OF A CRICKETING GENIUS**

Captain of Ramadhin's school team and secretary of Esperance Sports Club for many years, Mr. Seelagan Seedial confirmed the stories of Ramadhin's early school days and the lure of street cricket, how they played with a coconut bat and rubber ball. At school Ramadhin was more a batsman than a bowler. On leaving school, he was active in playing street cricket and soon began to play for Palmiste Cricket Club in the Rahamut Cricket League, the major cricket league in South Trinidad. Ramadhin was fortunate that Mr. Sampson, the overseer of the estate,



allowed promising young cricketers to practice on the cricket pitch in the park, and even paid their match fees to play in the league. Two outstanding cricketers of South Trinidad, Ossie Roach and Sonny Beekhie, lived in his village and were the first to recognise his exceptional ability. Playing both street cricket and “friendly” club cricket, Ramadhin developed his bowling so greatly that, at sixteen, Beekhie and Roach advised him to play at a higher level of competition, and made it possible for him to join Oriental Club, one of the major San Fernando Sports Clubs which played in the first class league.<sup>11</sup> At Oriental he was introduced to the well-known off-spinner, S.M. Ali, who had the reputation of spinning the ball greatly. It is said that he taught Ramadhin how to grip his off-spinner. Initially, the leg-spinner was his stock ball and the off-spin, the occasional one. But it was Jeffrey Stollmeyer, the captain of the Trinidad team and later colleague on the West Indies team, who suggested that he make the off-spinner his stock ball.

Mr. Seedial recalled that Ossie Roach , Ramadhin, and he liked to listen to the radio commentary of Test matches between England and Australia, and to learn about the great world players like the Australian fast bowlers, Lindwall and Miller. We cannot discount, then, the power of the radio in inspiring Ramadhin to dream of Test cricket. Who in their wildest dreams would have imagined that, a few years afterwards, all of the British Caribbean would be glued to their radios listening to the exploits of Ramadhin and Valentine, and their team-mates. Today, in highly educated societies of the West Indies, it would be difficult to appreciate how profoundly cricket commentaries from England influenced us. Cricket commentators like John Arlott, Rex Alston, Johnny Moyes, and Jim Swanton left as deep an impression on West Indian men as studying Shakespeare at school. For the descendants of immigrants from Africa, India, China, and Europe, cricket linked small places like Trinidad, and even small villages like Esperance to

the wider world, and from the generation of the 1950s onward cricket became the school of the West Indies.

At the end of his first season of club cricket, thanks to Ossie Roach and Sonny Beekhie who worked at an oil company, Trinidad Leaseholds Ltd., Ramadhin was given a part-time job on the company's grounds staff. Selected to represent Leaseholds in the following season, he came to the attention of Mr. Clarence Skinner, an official of the oil company who had represented Barbados in intercolonial matches. Batting against Ramadhin in a practice session, Mr. Skinner was so baffled by Ram's bowling, not knowing which way the ball was going to turn, that he at once felt that Ramadhin was a gifted spinner and did all he could to encourage him and aggressively push for Ramadhin's selection, first for South Trinidad's youth team in the annual North-South Colts match, and then, the following year, for the senior South team against North where, as Mr. Skinner had expected, he impressed the leading figures of the Trinidad team, like Jeffrey Stollmeyer, Gerry Gomez, and Kenny Trestrail. It still came like a shock when he was selected for the two trial matches in 1950 to select the Trinidad team to play against Jamaica that was to serve as the trial to select the touring West Indies team for England later that year. Touted by his friends, Ossie Roach and Clarence Skinner, as already the best spinner in the West Indies, and having made a favourable impression on Jeffrey Stollmeyer, the Trinidad captain, and John Goddard, the appointed captain of the West Indies team, Ramadhin was selected on the West Indies team for England after only two first class matches. A similar surprise was in store for Alf Valentine. A 20 year-old left arm spinner from Jamaica, he also caught the eye of Goddard and Stollmeyer despite a modest performance in the match and was selected for the team. The achievements of the "spin twins, Ram and Val," as they were

affectionately called, and what they gave to the self-esteem of West Indians in the Caribbean and wherever West Indians have migrated have become legend.

## **IMPERIALISM AND CRICKET**

Cricket, indeed sports generally, has its own comparative frames of reference, and has long been associated with the development of humane social and political values. Outstanding individuals must subordinate their talents to the needs of the team, and team spirit is, perhaps, the most valuable cricket virtue. Indeed, talent, industry, self-discipline, courtesy, a willingness to accept decisions, and courage were among the cherished ideals of cricket. Yet, one should know that however meritorious these values have been to the notion of cricket as a school of virtue, cricket emerged as an imperial sport linking colonies to the mother country, England. Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, and the West Indian colonies established cricket series with England. Although the West Indian islands became independent nations in the 1960s following the failure to create a West Indian federation, they continued to play as the West Indies. Cricket was simply one system within the larger imperial system where class, race, and colour were significant barriers to achievement. Although many of the white West Indians developed good relations with the African, Indian, and mixed members of the teams, and even encouraged colleagues like Ramadhin and Valentine, the non-white members of the team were only too aware that the system of selection privileged the upper class of white planters and merchants. Each West Indian island was a colony and had a similar social hierarchy.

The imperial system, designed to exploit and profit from the resources of the Caribbean, established English culture as the dominant culture, a version of English culture where white was superior to black. On the playing field, however, there did not appear to be overt racial

prejudice. On such a passionate subject as race and colour where arguments were extreme, the conversation about race must be nuanced because how else could we understand the sympathy and respect that captains like John Goddard and Jeffrey Stollmeyer had for their team. Or, for that matter, men like Sir Norman Lamont and Clarence Skinner who demonstrated their love for West Indians and the West Indies. While it was common knowledge that people of colour were considered inferior to whites, Ramadhin did not harbour resentments against anyone. Indeed, Ramadhin was always grateful for the kindness and generosity that so many bestowed on him. But achievement in cricket must surely have been an important path in his search for pride and esteem. Among the players who represented the West Indies, his low social class as a rural and Hindu Indian was at the back of the minds of the journalists who did not think that he would have been selected for the West Indies team in 1950. Even though he took 12 wickets in the trial matches, one journalist said: “But Ramadhin suffers a disability and that is, he may not be ‘of good social standing.’” The struggle of descendants of Africans in the Americas and the Caribbean for equality and dignity is well-known.<sup>12</sup> The abolition of African slavery in 1834 set in motion the arrival of indentured Indian labour to the Caribbean to work on sugar plantations, principally in Trinidad and Guyana.<sup>13</sup> Scholars have argued that the difficulties of indentured labour were as inhumane as slavery.<sup>14</sup> Through the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi and his friend, Rev. Charles Andrews, Indian indentured labour was abolished in 1917, and came to an end in 1920. In the hierarchical social order in colonial West Indies, where white and free coloured owners dominated the social order, descendants of African slaves and Indian indentured labourers struggled to create a dignified place in their society.

## **THE JOURNEY OF EAST INDIANS IN THE WEST INDIES**

In 1838, 244 Indians arrived in the ship, the *Whitby*, in British Guyana, and

from 1845 when 237 Indians on the *Fatel Rozack* disembarked in Trinidad until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially after the Great Rebellion in India in 1857, a steady stream of indentured Indians made the journey to the Caribbean. They traveled often by foot for hundreds of miles to the depot in Calcutta where they boarded a large three-masted ship bound for the West Indies, through the cold and strong winds around the Cape of Good Hope, an experience they called “the terrifying sea.” After a stop at St. Helena island in the South Atlantic, they were taken to Nelson Island, Trinidad, where they were taken in large row-boats to the Port of Spain docks, a journey that initially took three months, but later much less with the coming of steamships in 1900. Indian immigration was extended to the British islands of Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, the French colonies of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and French Guyana, and the Dutch colony of Suriname. East Indians made important contributions to the development of the Caribbean. After serving their period of indenture, most chose to remain in the Caribbean and establish roots, although they faced discrimination. In particular, Hindu and Muslim Indians found their customs and religious practices prohibited and ridiculed.<sup>15</sup> The close ties between the British imperial government and the Protestant Christian missionary churches meant that Hindus and Muslims were on the defensive against, first, the Anglican, then the Canadian Mission Presbyterians, and later Catholic efforts to convert them to Christianity. Still, Indians preserved many of their customs and religious rituals they brought from India and also adapted to their new society. In addition, they were grateful to Christian schools and orphanages for the opportunity to educate their children so that they could advance themselves.

Indian immigrants reflected the great diversity of India – religion, caste, language, ethnicity, and region, but, in a process that began as they gathered in Calcutta and continued on

their ship's journey and their new home in the Caribbean, they developed an emerging solidarity which they called "Brotherhood of the Boat." As Hindu, Muslim, and Christian Indians established their own community organisations to provide fellowship and preserve their cultures, their respective villages began to be dotted with temples, mosques, and churches. Schools, work, especially in the towns, and sports were the centres where Indians fraternised with Afro-Trinidadians. By 1869, at the end of their indentureship, Indians began to petition the government for grants of Crown land in place of the return passage to India. There now emerged villages of free Indians in south and central Trinidad who cultivated rice, corn, and peas. Some Indians bought former sugar estates, built homes, demonstrating that Trinidad was their home.

Like their temples, mosques, and churches, cricket teams were important community organisations and celebrations where Indians reached out to other communities and developed their own pride. Oriental cricket club was founded in 1899 in San Fernando, and it was certainly not by accident that Ramadhin was encouraged to join Oriental in 1947 when he showed exceptional promise. It must have been the first visit by an English team to the West Indies in 1911 that prompted Mr. Veeraswamy of British Guyana and George Fitzpatrick of Trinidad to recommend cricket tournaments between East Indian teams from Trinidad and British Guyana. Under the auspices of Oriental club, the first tournament took place in British Guyana in 1914, which continued afterwards and brought to light players like Nyron Asgarali, Sydney Jackbir, and Latchan Jaggernaut from Trinidad.

Jaggernaut and his family did yeoman service in organising cricket in south Trinidad. Active in Oriental club and in the establishment of Ell Jay and Rahamut Cricket Leagues, Latchan Jaggernaut was hailed as one who had done "more for sports in south Trinidad than any other living person."<sup>16</sup> He himself was quite a versatile sportsman, captain of the victorious

Oriental team in 1924 and a member of the Trinidad East Indian team in the 1930s. In 1941 he was among those who organised the raising of contributions on behalf of the allied cause in the war “to speed a democratic victory,” and in 1943 he helped to organise the India Famine Relief Fund which raised 1000 pounds for food and medicine to alleviate the awful famine in Bengal which caused between three and five million deaths, largely through bureaucratic and war-time insensitivity and corruption. The letter that accompanied the Trinidad-wide appeal for contributions illustrated how confident Indians in Trinidad had become and their mindfulness of the civilisation from which they came:

“I appeal to you in the name of our unfortunate brothers and sisters suffering and dying as a result of famine and disease in the Motherland, to organise various functions immediately for the purpose of raising funds to send aid to them.

Sincerely,

A.C. Rienzi, President of India Club”

Like Jaggernaut in sport, Adrian Cola Rienzi (1906-1972) had become a shining light in political and social activity. The son of Indian immigrants, Krishna Deonarine changed his name to Adrian Cola Rienzi, the legendary 14<sup>th</sup> century Roman patriot and tribune of the people. Educated at Naparima College, San Fernando, and Trinity College, Dublin, he was mayor of San Fernando from 1939 to 1942, and member of the Trinidad Legislative Council from 1938 to 1944. When his friend, Tubal Uriah Butler, was jailed in the labour riots of 1937, Rienzi became leader of the Workers Movement. The service and acceptance of Jaggernaut and Rienzi showed that East Indians had traveled far towards center stage of Trinidad’s political and social life.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SURPRISING CONQUEST OF ENGLAND, SUMMER 1950

Judge Ralph Narine, former South Trinidad cricketer and then a law student in London, movingly described Ramadhin's first experience of London in April, 1950, and, indeed, the awe and anxiety all of us from small places like Trinidad faced who encountered London for the first time.<sup>1</sup> On a dull, cold day he went to Waterloo Station to meet Ramadhin and the West Indies team as they arrived in the boat train:

There was Ram – heavily coated in a brownish overcoat looking here and then there in amazement at the thousands of people ceaselessly milling around. He had arrived friendless even though in a friendly country. His teammates didn't really know him nor did he really know them, not even the Trinidad contingent for he had had only one inter-territorial game behind him...his reception of me was not unlike the weather. I tried to make conversation with him; his replies were most times mono-syllabic. We left Waterloo Station. In the course of that week Ram and I saw each other almost every day. It was during that period that I realised that he did not really lack warmth nor spurn friendship but rather that he was by nature shy and indeed overawed. Since then a longlasting and cherished friendship has existed between us.

The first Test match at Old Trafford, Manchester started with surprises. After a long inspection of the pitch, both captains, John Goddard and Norman Yardley, felt that it would soon begin to crumble, thereby favouring spin bowling rather than pace. Ramadhin and Valentine made their Test debut, Ramadhin becoming the first East Indian to represent the West Indies. England won the toss and decided to bat first. Due largely to a magnificent partnership between Trevor Bailey and wicketkeeper Godfrey Evans, who scored his first century in first class cricket, England set the stage for victory over the West Indies by 202 runs.

For England, it was business as usual; from the perspective of the West Indies, the performance of Valentine and Ramadhin in their first Test caught the eye. Alf Valentine, with his prodigious left-arm spin, took 8 wickets in the first innings and 3 in the second, and became



an instant sensation; Ramadhin received only a little less attention with 2 wickets in each innings, frequently beating the bat with no reward. The English spinners, Hollies and Berry, were no less effective, capturing 17 of the 20 West Indies wickets between them. Since the wicket favoured spin from lunch on the first day, the West Indies batsmen found it difficult to develop their innings, except for Jeffrey Stollmeyer, the tall and elegant opening batsman from Trinidad, who made 43 and 78 in each innings, and gave evidence of his talent with his classic stroke-play.<sup>2</sup>

Although Ram and Val were successful in the first Test and attracted the attention of serious critics, what took place in the second Test at Lord's caught everyone by surprise. It was the critical turning point of West Indies cricket. The West Indies defeated England in England for the first time, and at Lord's cricket ground in London to boot, the Mecca of cricket or, as Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies once put it, "the cathedral of cricket." Stunned by England's defeat, English critics interpreted the West Indies victory as "their coming of age." Played between June 24 and 29, 1950, the West Indies won by 326 runs, outplaying the strong English team in batting, bowling, and fielding on an easy-paced Lord's wicket. Two twenty year-old spinners, Ramadhin and Valentine, were the main heroes of this seminal victory: Ramadhin took 11 wickets in the match and Valentine, 7. This was how *Wisden*, the major journal of cricket, described Ramadhin's bowling:

Ramadhin bowled with the guile of a veteran. He pitched a tantalising length, bowled straight at the wicket, and spun enough to beat the bat. No English batsman showed evidence of having mastered the problems of deciding which way Ramadhin would spin and he was too quick through the air for any but the most nimble-footed to go down to meet him on the half-volley with any consistency. Valentine lent able support, but the English batsmen might, with profit, have tackled him more boldly.<sup>3</sup>

The West Indies made 326 and 425 for 6 wickets declared and bowled out England for 151 and 274. A century by opener Allan Rae from Jamaica and good scores from the three Ws, Everton Weekes, Frank Worrell, and Clyde Walcott, all from Barbados, in the first innings, and a magnificent 168 from wicketkeeper-batsman Clyde Walcott and his record partnership with Trinidadian Gerry Gomez, gave the West Indies a total which made them confident that they could defeat England. But all could see that Ramadhin and Valentine were the real “executioners.” In England, the West Indies, and wherever West Indians lived, this victory over England had a significance that transcended sport. West Indian migrants in a burst of emotional outpouring sang and danced in a frenzy of joy. Some even shed tears as they celebrated. Everyone saw the 5’4” Ramadhin, bowling with his cap on and his shirt sleeves buttoned at the wrist and the bespectacled Valentine as heroes. Calypsonians, Lord Beginner and Lord Kitchener, captured the mood wonderfully when he sang of “Those little pals of mine, Ram and Val,” and “Put Ramadhin on the ball and another wicket will fall.”

Why was this victory so significant for West Indians? Did they not defeat England in the recent MCC tour to the West Indies? Writing in 1995, Ralph Narine presented one view of what this match meant:

[I]t is a story of two Davids, armed only with sling shots, with which they successfully stormed an ancient, fortified English citadel and opened its gates for calypsonians to enter and celebrate the first Test victory of their countrymen on English soil. Nothing – not even the universal mastery of the West Indies fast bowlers in the 1980s – can equal the achievement of Ramadhin and Valentine in this match: Their uniqueness is that, at Lord’s in the auspicious month of June, in the sacred year of 1950, two colonial innocents, one descended from African slaves and the other from Indian indentured labourers dared to confront the imperial British lion in his den, and with nothing but sheer skill and natural courage to rely on, tamed the royal beast into docile submission.<sup>4</sup>

Explaining more specifically what he meant by submission, he continued: “When Ramadhin’s arm came over to bowl, they couldn’t tell whether the ball would turn left or right, go straight,

keep low, lift, or disappear into thin air.” How interesting that years later Ralph Narine who did as much as anyone else to describe and explain Ramadhin’s life and technique rationally and historically lapsed into presenting Ramadhin as a mythical figure, the “mystery bowler.”

Samuel M. Wilson attempted to give this very slant of the 1950 Test match at Lord’s to an American audience.<sup>5</sup> Situating the 1950 cricket series within the context of modern history, he reminded readers that although the British Empire had at one time embraced a quarter of the earth’s population, it reached a crossroads following World War II, where India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Jordan, and Israel had become independent nations, and movements for self-government had begun in its colonies in the Caribbean. The challenge to colonialism that marked modern history for more than a hundred years was already in full swing and the road to self-government and a new global economy was being mapped. Given Test match status in 1928 by the MCC, the governing body of cricket, the West Indies team, drawn from the inhabitants of the English colonies in the Caribbean, played England in England in 1928, 1933, and 1939 but did not win any match. In 1950 they had lost the first Test by a wide margin, but Ramadhin and Valentine had given a little hope for future Tests. Samuel M. Wilson was trying to demystify cricket for an American audience for whom “cricket is not in the blood” as it has been for West Indians. He was drawing an insight from the Indian intellectual, Ashis Nandy, who, in *The Tao of Cricket*, an essay about colonialism and cricket, argued that although cricket was initiated by imperialist England, it became an Indian game and was in the blood of Indians.<sup>6</sup> With good reason West Indians could also assert that cricket was a West Indian game, as would Australians, South Africans, Pakistanis, New Zealanders, Sri Lankans, and, more recently, Zimbabweans and Bangladeshis. European imperialism brought the world together in an unequal relationship, and sought to Europeanise the world. It established a cultural structure of reference and attitude

where white was superior to non-white, and Western to non-Western. But this project was understandably contested, and resistance took many forms. On the one hand, the colonised assimilated many aspects of Western civilisation; on the other hand, they struggled to preserve some of their traditional customs and values as vital to the preservation of their dignity.<sup>7</sup> As

Aime Cesaire, the poet from Martinique, poignantly put it:

“There was room for all at the rendezvous of history”

Imperialism created much bitterness and destructiveness as a system, but it is a testament to the courage of the colonised that they did not let colonialism defeat their spirit and in their challenge to the system created new possibilities and opportunities for human dignity by bringing people from different parts of the world together. Cricket became a passion that was shared by all the variety of races and cultures of the British Empire. It was, of course, part of a system to preserve an imperial order based upon English supremacy. In 1950 West Indians showed that they had mastered cricket and imposed their own style and awareness to the game. It was not surprising that this maturity emerged at the same time as the political movements for self-government.

The whole world understands the language and discourse of imperialism, and so it is easier to comprehend the relation between imperialism and cricket. But the language of cricket is far more difficult for societies where there is no cricket tradition. Since our subject is Ramadhin and the world of spin bowling, we should be grateful to Samuel Wilson’s attempt to explain spin bowling:

Ramadhin and Valentine were “spin” bowlers. All bowlers hurl the ball with a straight arm down the long cricket pitch, trying to hit the wicket on one bounce. The heavily padded batsman stands to one side in front of the wicket and attempts to protect it by hitting the oncoming ball with the bat. Fast bowlers (the kind the West Indies have become famous for) come tearing up to the pitch with a long run-up, leap high in the air, and fire the ball at speeds at excess of ninety miles per hour. Spin bowlers take a shorter, more leisurely run-up and throw the ball more slowly...But they put tremendous spin on

the ball so it bounces off at odd angles. There are leg spinners and off-spinners, orthodox and unorthodox spinners, and they bowl flippers, wrong'uns, googlies, and other balls analogous to baseball's change-ups, sliders, and so forth.<sup>8</sup>

There was no doubt that the sharp spin of the orthodox spin of Valentine and the “mysterious, indecipherable, exotic” Ramadhin destroyed the English batting. Indeed, the entire West Indies team was considered exotic because in 1950 the West Indian and South Asian migrants in England was small. Ignorance of migrant cultures was great. Samuel Wilson cited Clyde Walcott who remembered an old woman coming up to him and rubbing her fingers along his hand to see if his black skin would come off. But even English cricket journalists, accustomed to viewing only the series against Australia for the “Ashes” as worthy, left a sour taste when they revealed their condescension by writing of the West Indies victory as their “coming of age,” a sentiment that was not liked by some West Indians who saw its connection to the prevailing view of West Indian people as inferior. West Indian cricket was presented as entertaining and exotic, not disciplined nor thoughtful. That would be achieved later. Cricket between the mother country and the colonies, like the Empire, would not any longer be the same. As the *London Times* declared in an editorial after the victory: “Yesterday was their finest hour.”

The editorial asserted that this was the first West Indies team to bring “the promise of so many fine cricketers to fruition like George Challenor, Learie Constantine, and George Headley.” It continued:

These West Indians play cricket – as their fellow countrymen watch it – in their own gay way. Even if this game had gone against Goddard's team these men would have stayed in the memory: Rae's solid hundred dotted with hard hits to the ring, Stollmeyer's elegance, the flowing eagerness of Worrell, the forceful skill of Weekes, the happy mastery of Walcott behind the stumps and his massive batting – above all the spinning duet of Ramadhin and left-arm Valentine, striplings both with more experience gained in

this one match than in all their brief career before... Under Goddard's leadership West Indian cricket has come of age. There will no doubt be a calypso about it all. Perhaps it has been already composed by the knot of gleeful islanders on the stand behind the sight-screen, with their cries and calls, their songs and music sounding pleasantly strange in the Lord's hush. It will be sung as a battle-honour wherever West Indians bat and bowl.<sup>9</sup>

In Trinidad people followed the match keenly and, when victory came, the newspapers put out banner headlines that the West Indies had "whipped" England, and Ramadhin and Valentine had "terrorised" their batsmen. The *Trinidad Guardian* lamented that many English newspapers ascribed England's defeat to poor batting and West Indian luck, but insisted that victory was not a fluke and that the achievements of Ramadhin and Valentine were the key to victory. It recorded an interview with Albert Gomes, prominent Portuguese-Trinidadian intellectual and politician who had just returned after seeing the Lord's Test match. Attributing success to the clever Captaincy of John Goddard, a well-balanced team, and the wizardry of Ramadhin, Gomes gave a little vignette of Ramadhin at that moment of triumph: "I cannot forget one particular thing about Ramadhin. While we were all celebrating in the dressing room at Lord's after the second Test match triumph, the man who had played such a paramount role in victory was sitting unconcerned on the bannister or verandah gazing at the deserted and holy shrine of cricket."<sup>10</sup> Wondering what Ramadhin was thinking, someone confided to Gomes that he was perhaps lamenting that there were no more wickets to take.

As if to show that the victory at Lord's was not an isolated event, the West Indies utterly defeated England in the third and fourth Test matches, thereby winning the series by 3 victories to 1 defeat. Ramadhin and Valentine continued their domination of English batsmen, but what became clearer was that this West Indies team had achieved dominance in all aspects of the game. The batting was a brilliant and balanced as its spin bowling, and when called to exploit a favourable wicket, the fast bowlers came into their own.

West Indies won the third Test at Trent Bridge, Nottingham by 10 wickets. Batting first on a “green” wicket, England collapsed early to the fast bowlers, losing 4 wickets for 25 runs before lunch, eventually reaching the modest total of 223. The West Indies replied with the mammoth total of 558, their highest total in any Test against England, thanks to a brilliant and elegant 261 by Frank Worrell, and 129 by the powerful Everton Weekes. England did better in their second innings, reaching 436. An opening partnership of 212 by Cyril Washbrook (102) and R.T. Simpson (98) promised much. At one time in their innings England were 326 for only 2 wickets, only 9 runs behind the West Indies total. But they were all out for 436, leaving the West Indies only 102 runs to make which the opening pair of Stollmeyer and Rae knocked off without difficulty. In the first innings, the pace bowlers, Hines Johnson and Frank Worrell, claimed 3 wickets each, but the remaining wickets were taken by Ramadhin, 2 for 49 and 5 for 135, and Alf Valentine, 2 for 43 and 3 for 140. There were two major individual records. The first, Worrell’s 261 was the highest score by a batsman for either country in a Test match in England. At one moment some thought that he would surpass Len Hutton’s 364, the highest score by any batsman in a Test match. The second record was Valentine’s amazing feat of bowling 92 overs in the second innings, more than any bowler in Test history. Ram and Val did the trick again. When it appeared that England was in a position to make a challenging score in their second innings, the wiles of Ramadhin and Valentine doused their fire.

In the fourth and final Test at the Oval, London, from August 12 to 16, the West Indies defeated England convincingly by an innings and 56 runs, and so won the series by three Test matches to one. Once again the West Indies batting piled up a score of 503 in their first innings. Allan Rae (109) and Frank Worrell (138) scored centuries while Gerry Gomez (74) and John Goddard (58 not out) showed that the middle order batsmen could make good contributions also.

England made a reasonably good score, 344 in their first innings, thanks to a magnificent 202 not out from Len Hutton who batted throughout the innings. It was simply a brilliant feat of concentration and stroke play. It was the first time that the dazzling Dennis Compton was available to play for England in the series. He made a dour 44 in a third wicket partnership of 109 with Hutton before he was run out. Overnight rain and a hot sun the following morning made the Oval pitch treacherous. In those days wickets were not covered and spinners relished bowling on a “sticky” wicket. But neither the awkward pitch nor the wiles of Ramadhin, Valentine, and John Goddard prevented the majestic Hutton from playing his scorching cover drives. When asked many years afterwards which batsman played him with the greatest confidence, Ram quickly answered Len Hutton, recalling that splendid innings in the fourth Test in 1950. England failed to save the follow-on by ten runs and were bowled out in their second innings for a paltry 103, losing the Test by an innings. Ramadhin took 4 wickets, Valentine, 10, and Goddard, 5 in the match.

Reminiscing about the 1950 series in England, elegant opening batsman and future captain, Jeffrey Stollmeyer, was in no doubt that Ramadhin was the “most colourful personality seen in the summer of 1950 in English cricket,” in addition to being a brilliant and effective spin bowler who worked hard to perfect his unique skills.<sup>11</sup> Crediting Clarence Skinner for having discovered and encouraged Ramadhin, Stollmeyer remembered batting against Ram in the North versus South Trinidad match in 1949 and immediately took notice of him because he found it difficult to read from his hand which way the ball would turn. Using a typical strategy to counter a spinner, used also later with good effect by Australia, he attacked Ramadhin’s bowling hoping that he would lose his confidence and accuracy. Stollmeyer liked “this quiet, simple, and unobtrusive little figure” who bowled with his sleeves down, and fluffy hat or cap on. He



recalled how difficult it was for Ramadhin to be selected for the West Indies team. To the obstacles of his social background and his peasant origins from the rural village of Esperance was his frail size, since he was only 5'4" tall. Of course, the recommendations of Stollmeyer and John Goddard were influential, but credit must go to the sheer ability and effectiveness of Ramadhin who countered any doubts about his worth. Even after he had taken 4 or 5 wickets in the trial matches, he was asked to come out and bowl against well-set batsmen.

The story of Ramadhin's rise to fame was narrated in terms of mystery and the exotic which made him such a colourful and popular player, but we must not ignore the fact that his genius was achieved in ways that were comprehensible to human understanding. His love for cricket at an early age made him devote hours everyday to playing cricket in the streets or the parks with his friends or his school team, observing the senior cricket matches at the nearby Palmiste Park, receiving advice from local South Trinidad sportsmen like Ossie Roach, Sonny Beekhie, and S.M. Ali.

It was Ramadhin himself who developed his bowling technique as a finger-spinner. With his sleeves rolled down to add another feature of concealment and with a seven-stride run-up, Ramadhin showed the batsman the form of a leg-spinner as the ball left his hand. The ball spun from off to leg and leg to off without apparently any change in the position of his wrist.<sup>12</sup> It took long hours of practice everyday to master this technique and to achieve the accuracy of length and line for which Ramadhin was known to the end of his cricket career. He bowled faster through the air than most spinners, and did not flight the ball much, which was one reason why he was not as successful on fast, "glass-topped" wickets as in Australia.

There were cricketers who insisted that although some batsmen found ways to play Ramadhin successfully, his technique remained a mystery for batsmen throughout his active

cricketing days. One must keep repeating that behind the mystery of his technique was his unwavering accuracy and stamina to bowl consistently long spells, like his “pal” Valentine, and a vital enthusiasm that did not flinch from taking up a challenge because he was tired or ineffective. In one sense, it was no mystery at all that created his genius, but Ramadhin’s intellect and passion which were shaped by his rural community and San Fernando, and then by his association with the West Indies cricket team. Jeffrey Stollmeyer described in part this spirit: “It was Ramadhin’s amazing control of length and direction in addition to his naturally deceptive action, that made him a great bowler. I still find it hard to believe that this slight, timid, inexperienced youth never once faltered or complained of fatigue because, make no mistake, he was asked to do a tremendous amount of bowling.”<sup>13</sup> His cricketing ability and humanity which he developed in San Fernando helped him to overcome his initial timidity on encountering different customs and the English diet, not to mention strange sights like double-decker buses which he called with humour “upstairs buses.” Jeffrey Stollmeyer revealed that Ram was well-liked by everyone and recalled a delightful occasion when the team went for dinner to an Indian restaurant in London. Not shy now, Ram obviously felt like a king as his teammates asked him for advice on Indian dishes. Not only did they praise him for his selection, but were surprised that Ram paid the entire bill with his small allowance, explaining that it was his birthday.

### **AMONG THE FIVE CRICKETERS OF THE YEAR, 1950**

A popular Calypsonian recited a song that declared:  
“With Ramadhin and Valentine  
And give me any nine  
And we can beat England any time.”

In naming Ramadhin, Valentine, Weekes, Worrell, and Walcott from the West Indies team, along with Godfrey Evans, England's wicketkeeper batsman, as the five cricketers of 1950, *Wisden*, the publication of the governing body of cricket, acknowledged that the West Indies victory was a team effort of which Ram and Val were key players. The citation of Ramadhin drew attention to the fact that Ramadhin was almost completely self-taught, achieving glory at the age of 21 by claiming on the tour 135 wickets, an achievement they found "astonishing." Their account of his rise to eminence added that Ramadhin had started as a batsman at school but turned to bowling because he could not get opportunities to bat at the Palmiste Club practice sessions. Their explanation of his bowling threw new light on his technique:

His orthodox attack was the off-break spun with the middle finger down the seam. The forefinger, now thickened, used to bleed when Ramadhin found himself called on to bowl dozens of overs, but the digit gradually became stronger and bathing in hot water proved a salve for soreness. On pitches when the ball did not turn much, Ramadhin attacked the off-stump. If the turf helped spin, then he pitched the ball outside the off-stump. His variations, which kept the batsmen on tenterhooks, were the leg-break and plain straight ball, bowled perhaps twice an over. The leg-break, spun principally by the middle and third fingers, was almost invariably pitched on the middle stump. Ramadhin flighted the ball, yet never tossed it, and with a clever change of pace alternating from slow to medium he presented additional difficulties to batsmen who hesitated to go forward to kill the spin.<sup>14</sup>

## **THE WEST INDIES TEAM OF 1950**

### **ALF VALENTINE**

The thick worn-away skin on Alf Valentine's left forefinger was a reminder of the fierce spin he imparted on the ball. Who could have predicted his phenomenal success in claiming 33 wickets in the Test matches? He had played only two first class matches before the Trinidad versus Jamaica match in February 1950, and his performance was average. But credit must be

given to John Goddard and Stollmeyer who saw the talent in Valentine to risk selecting him for such an important tour to England. As captain, Goddard felt that previous West Indies tours to England might have been more successful if they had included an orthodox left-arm spinner.

Born in Kingston, Jamaica on April 30, 1930, Valentine attended St. Catherine's school, Spanish Town. Leaving school at 16 to become an apprentice machinist, Valentine played junior cricket for the Police, and at 18 represented his club in senior cricket. He displayed great promise and was selected for special coaching by J. Mercer, an English player for Glamorgan who spent winters in Jamaica coaching cricket, who took an interest in him and was credited with inspiring him to develop his spin since he already had mastered length and direction. A few steps to the wicket for his run-up, Valentine bowled almost square to the wicket. Like Ramadhin, he hardly seemed tired after bowling long spells. In time, his spinning fingers became so scarred and sore that he was left out of the team. His 8 for 104 in the first Test at Old Trafford was a record for a bowler in his first Test match. Stollmeyer confided that Val's hobbies were collecting shoes and Bop records. According to him, Val collected 25 pairs of shoes during that tour, and five times that number of Bop records. Neither Val nor Ram terrorised batsmen at the end of their careers. Valentine played in all five Tests in the 1960/61 tour to Australia, and retired from Test cricket in 1962 after a career that spanned twelve years capturing 139 wickets.<sup>15</sup>

### **THE THREE W'S**

Without the support of consistently large total scores by the West Indies batsmen captain John Goddard would hardly have had the confidence to use his spinners, set attacking field positions, and encourage them to be aggressive and take risks against the batsmen. The three

Ws, Worrell (26), Weekes (25), and Walcott (24), all from Barbados, were the bedrock of West Indian batting, and their role in building the tradition of West Indies cricket has become legend.

Born on August 1, 1924, Frank Worrell was an invaluable member of the 1950 team and was destined to become a Titan of world cricket, as player and captain. When death came at the early age of 43 in 1967 from leukemia, the world wept for this colossus from the Caribbean. He batted so elegantly and with such classical style that you would hardly guess that he was never formally coached. Educated at the prestigious Combermere school in Barbados, he played first class cricket at 12 and acknowledged that his model cricketer was J.D. Sealy, a master at the school who was then the youngest cricketer to play Test cricket. Between 1942 and the resumption of Test matches in 1946 Worrell broke several records in inter-island cricket. Initially a slow, left-arm spinner, he ascribed his transformation to a chance decision by his captain to send him in as a “night-watchman” in a match against Trinidad in 1943. Continuing his innings the following morning, he made 64. In the next match he made 188 and 68, and so a batsman was born. His “elegant style, command of every orthodox stroke and perfection of timing” made him a joy to watch, and he was able to discipline his elegance and lay the groundwork for large innings.<sup>16</sup> This was already evident in the 1947/48 MCC tour to the West Indies when he topped the batting averages, and in 8 innings against the MCC averaged 118. Selected for the Commonwealth team’s winter tour of India in 1949/50, he averaged 97.71, and in the 1950 Test matches in England, 89.93 per inning.

Short, stocky, and well-muscled, Everton Weekes complemented Worrell’s graceful style with his own style that sought to destroy opposing bowlers with his square-cuts, slashing cover-drives, and hooks. According to Stollmeyer, “there was no nonsense about Weekes, no tomfoolery...His business was to score runs.” He possessed an excellent knowledge of cricket

strategy, and everyone vouched that his standards were consistently high. Weekes and Worrell so captivated cricket enthusiasts in the 1950s, as Ram and Val did in spin bowling, that Stollmeyer's comparison helps us to understand their unique flair: "I considered Worrell the sounder in defense, Weekes the greater attacking force; Worrell the more graceful, Weekes the more devastating...Worrell appeared to be enjoying an afternoon's sport, whereas Weekes was on the job six hours a day."<sup>17</sup> Born in Barbados on February 26, 1925, Everton Weekes represented St. Leonard's school at 12 and made his debut for Barbados at 18. He, too, was never coached but received encouragement from E.L. Hoad, a former West Indies player, while playing cricket when he served in the Barbados battalion of the Caribbean regiment, and his Barbados captain, T.N. Pierce. Selected for the West Indies against the visiting MCC in 1947/48, Weekes scored 141 in the fourth and final Test, and followed this with four consecutive centuries in the Test series in India the following year. To add to this world record, he equaled George Headley's record by scoring 162 and 101 in the third Test at Calcutta, averaging 111.23 runs an inning in the five Tests in India.

The tall, powerfully-built, Clyde Walcott was the youngest member of the three Ws. Born on January 17, 1926, Walcott first played for Barbados in 1942 at the age of 17, and, with Worrell, was selected for the West Indies against the MCC in the Test played in Barbados in 1948, serving as opening batsman and wicket-keeper, a huge responsibility that played a part in his batting inconsistency until 1953. Yet, his innings of 178 not out and partnership with Gerry Gomez in the 1950 Lord's Test was another turning point in that important series. We cannot forget, too, that he was the wicket-keeper to Ramadhin and Valentine for some 800 overs, and must share the credit given to the spinners. Clyde Walcott achieved no less distinction in batting as Worrell and Weekes in the Indian tour to the West Indies in 1953 when he scored centuries in

the fourth and fifth Tests, and in the 1954/55 Australian tour to the West Indies when he scored five Test centuries, which included 126 and 110 in the second Test in Trinidad and 155 and 110 in the fifth Test in Jamaica. A Powerful stroke-player, he was best known for attacking strokes off the back foot.<sup>18</sup> Walcott contended that the West Indies lost the 1951 series in Australia because of overconfidence after their victory in England and a bad itinerary that did not give the team the best conditions for preparation for the Test matches.

### **OPENERS JEFFREY STOLLMMEYER AND ALLAN RAE**

The opening pair of right-handed Jeffrey Stollmeyer and left-handed Allan Rae was one of the best opening partnerships in cricket, often blunting the terrors at the beginning of an innings and so preparing the foundation so that the three Ws could adopt their naturally attacking style. The son of a German father and an English mother, Trinidadian Stollmeyer was groomed to be captain of the West Indies team since the 1939 tour at a time when it was accepted that the captain had to be white and of a high social standing. Stollmeyer and Rae developed a relationship and a style that consistently gave the West Indies a good start to their innings. In the 1949 tour to India, Rae scored two centuries and a 97, while Stollmeyer had scores of 160, 66, and 85.<sup>19</sup> In the series against England and India, Stollmeyer averaged 68.4 and Rae, 53.42 runs an inning. As for the middle order batsmen and all-rounders, Gerry Gomez and Robert Christiani had already made a name for themselves as useful batsmen. Gerry Gomez attended Queens Royal College, the premier school in Trinidad, distinguishing himself in cricket and football. He was selected for the West Indies tour to England in 1939 at the age of 20, but although his cricket career was put on hold during World War II when Test matches were suspended, he found the intercolonial matches in the Caribbean a rich opportunity to develop his batting and bowling, scoring six centuries between 1941 and 1947. On the resumption of Test

cricket, he became a recognised middle-order batsman and useful off-spinner. It was on the India tour that he developed into a formidable medium-pace bowler who could be an attacking swing bowler when conditions were favourable, and, where the wicket was easy-paced, become one of the foremost economical bowlers. He took 16 wickets in the tour to India. His achievements in 1950 in England, and the subsequent tour to Australia in 1951/52 placed him among the giants of West Indies cricket. When he retired, he was active in the development of West Indies cricket as a member of the West Indies Cricket Board, and was manager of the magnificent 1960/61 team that toured Australia under the captaincy of Frank Worrell.

### **CAPTAIN JOHN GODDARD**

The Captain, John Goddard, whose family owned the Goddard Rum Company of Barbados, played an important role in the teams of the early 1950s, and was credited with leading the side intelligently. There was, however, a lingering resentment about his selection as captain that brought into question the issue of colour and class over merit. In England's tour to the West Indies in 1947, the West Indies Cricket Board selected the great but aging George Headley to be captain for the first and final Tests, and Stollmeyer for the Test in Trinidad, and then chose Goddard as captain for the tours to India and, later in 1950, to England, a move that some interpreted as a continuing unwillingness to recognise unequivocally the excellence of Headley because he was black. Most critics, however, praised Goddard for his captaincy in the victorious 1950 tour, where he put most of his strategic eggs in the basket of the spinners, tactics that proved disastrous on hard wickets, however, in the tour to Australia that followed. If Worrell's criticism of his "gamble on spin" was mild, Stollmeyer's remarks were hardly temperate and nourished the well-known rivalry between Goddard and Stollmeyer, for whom "Goddard's deep-seated and nonchalant disregard for tactical forethought and strategic planning"



was a cause of West Indies defeat.<sup>20</sup> Despite these controversies, West Indies players gave Goddard their fullest cooperation and respect, and he must be given due praise for encouraging Ramadhin and Valentine and giving spin bowling the key role in the bowling attack. Goddard's persistence with this strategy in Australia was understandable in light of the splendid success in England, and was only one of several reasons for the West Indies defeat. Goddard retired as captain after the Australian tour of 1951, but was recalled for the ill-fated 1957 tour of England.

A more immediate issue for some cricketers was the establishment of an adequate stipend for West Indies Test cricketers, an issue that was obviously more important for working class players than those from privileged families. Frank Worrell, then only 23 and already possessing a reputation as a brilliant batsman and expert of the game, demanded an increase in his stipend before accepting the invitation to tour India in 1948/49. When the West Indies Cricket Board refused his request, Worrell, out of a sense of justice and taking a stand to remind the authorities that cricket was the livelihood for the black players, did not give in and was left out of the team. He was recalled for the tour to England.

The fast bowlers, Hines Johnson, Esmond Kentish, and Prior Jones, who bore the brunt of the bowling attack against the MCC in the West Indies in 1947, were disappointing. The brilliance of Ramadhin and Valentine and, to a lesser extent, the medium-pace of Gerry Gomez, more than compensated for the weakness in the area of pace bowling. The West Indies team of 1950 was, therefore, an outstanding, well-balanced team whose players, apart from Ramadhin and Valentine, were experienced in Test cricket and whose abilities and achievements were already considerable. In the previous tour to India in 1948/49, the West Indies batsmen performed brilliantly, especially Weekes, Walcott, Stollmeyer, and Rae, and won the 5 Test series with victory in one Test and the remaining Tests drawn. Reflecting during that tour on the

possible outcome of the future 1950 tour to England, Stollmeyer was of the opinion that the West Indies could defeat England if they strengthened their bowling attack. His disappointment with the performance of the leg-spinner from Trinidad, Wilfred Ferguson, on that tour was perhaps the reason why both Stollmeyer and Captain John Goddard were more open and sympathetic to the talents of Ramadhin and Valentine, and were willing to risk selecting them in spite of their lack of experience.<sup>21</sup> While in the minds of West Indians and the English the 1950 victory was considered a Cinderella performance, the truth was that it was surprising only because the morale of the English team was broken by two 20 year-old spinners whose destruction of the English batting passed into myth.

## **RAMADHIN FACES THE FUTURE**

Shortly after the final Test at the Oval in August 1950, it was announced that Ramadhin was selected for the Commonwealth Cricket team to tour India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka later that year, under the captaincy of Frank Worrell. Rumours spread that Ramadhin was going to play professional cricket for Crompton in the Central Lancashire League. Both announcements showed the high esteem that the cricketing world had of Ramadhin after his incredible performance that summer. The story that Ramadhin was going to play professional cricket in England turned out to be true and, in the trajectory of his life, it was a major turning point for him. It meant that Ram was now committed to earn his living in England; Lancashire effectively became his new home, and so it has been to this day. Everyone was happy for him. Contrary to the doubts expressed by his uncle when Ram was a teenager, Ramadhin now had the opportunity to earn his living by playing cricket. Happily, his professional clubs were not going

to prevent him from representing the West Indies in Test series during his career. While this arrangement was accepted by the West Indies cricket authorities, many were aware that Ramadhin's relationship with his community in Trinidad would come to an end. But, though everyone was enthusiastic about Ramadhin's performances, no one offered him a secure job with a decent salary, and he faced the prospect of returning to Trinidad with uncertainty if he did not accept a professional cricket career in England. Coming from a humble, rural family without much wealth and with an inadequate educational preparation, playing professional cricket was a godsend. In addition, in 1950 West Indies players received only 5 pounds as pocket expenses for a Test match; even as a professional, he received a stipend of merely 15 pounds. Today, players receive 2,000 pounds or more for a Test match.

Ram married an English lass, June, and they had a son, Craig, and a daughter, Sharon. Craig, an accountant, played League cricket as a fast-medium bowler; Sharon's son, Kyle Hogg, has represented England's youth teams, most recently its under-19 team. What this meant was that Ramadhin's destiny was now inclined markedly towards England and Lancashire. He returned to Trinidad for visits whenever the West Indies played a Test series, but the visits were short and few. The little village of Esperance and the town of San Fernando had shaped his life utterly up to 1950. Now, almost abruptly, after 1950, Lancashire and England would become the new centre of his life. Ramadhin played Lancashire League cricket until he was 55, and his accomplishments in bowling broke many records, rivaling even those of Learie Constantine. Ram and June also managed a pub for some twenty-two years, The White Lion in Delph, Lancashire. It remains baffling to imagine how Ramadhin could make the transition from a village in San Fernando to England, the metropolis of a great civilisation, so quickly.

To return to V.S. Naipaul, his education in Trinidad which focused on English literature and history had in a sense given his imagination a map so that English life and culture were not entirely foreign. But Ramadhin had no such cultural map, except the English language and cricket. Cricket was his school that taught him to fit into his new community. His cricket prowess broke barriers and enabled him to become rooted in England. His English wife and children must also have been influential factors in helping him to assimilate to his new society.

Before his ship departed taking the team to England in 1950, his friends showed him to tie a tie, coached him to speak properly and to eat with a knife and fork, and even to dance. Friends said that he was shy because he was aware that, as a country boy, he was not well educated. Mr. Seedial said that Ram praised Frank Worrell for teaching him how to prepare himself for life in England and giving him confidence. The shy, bumbling young “country-bookie” from Esperance soon became the assertive and thoughtful representative of West Indies cricket. But Lancashire’s gain was San Fernando’s loss. In later years, Ramadhin spoke about leaving Trinidad with some regret. Although the memory of Ramadhin’s and Valentine’s exploits in 1950 and after remained in the memories of West Indians everywhere, and especially in San Fernando, his departure from the scene in San Fernando was abrupt. He was not there to tell the actual stories of his achievements in England and, later, in Australia, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and New Zealand. He was no longer there to coach younger West Indian players, like other members of that glorious team, and this, perhaps, was the greatest loss. Much later, in 1985, he told a relative that he wanted to return to Trinidad, perhaps to do some coaching, but this interest was not sustained.<sup>22</sup>

As was the custom, in the review of sporting events of 1950, under a banner headline “SONNY RAMADHIN WAS TOAST OF SPORTS WORLD IN 1950”, The Trinidad Guardian

newspaper wrote that “Ramadhin has won “immortality” by his magnificent bowling and had fired the imagination of all Trinidad sportsmen; John Alleyne, the well-known San Fernando journalist, wrote that Ramadhin was now a “world figure in the great game” and his achievements were “matters of history – big history for the South.”<sup>23</sup> At the San Fernando Town Hall on Harris Promenade on December 5, 1950, Gerry Gomez, another successful member of the West Indies team, told a packed audience that Ramadhin and Valentine were two of the finest examples of youth in cricket, and praised them all the more because they “accepted all the fame that had come to them with an even temper without getting too excited and, above all, not getting swollen heads about it.”<sup>24</sup>

## CHAPTER 3

### THE BATTLE FOR WORLD CHAMPION: AUSTRALIA, 1951

The 1930/31 West Indies team to Australia, under the captaincy of Jack Grant, won one test but was decidedly beaten by an Australian side that had Don Bradman, perhaps the greatest batsman, and Clarrie Grimmett, also with a great reputation as a spinner. After their convincing win against England, everyone looked at the West Indies tour to Australia in 1951/52 as a battle for the world championship of cricket. The performances of Frank Worrell who scored five centuries and claimed 18 wickets, and Ramadhin, to a lesser extent, who got 15 wickets in the Commonwealth team's tour of India had encouraged West Indians to believe that they had a better chance of defeating Australia than in 1930. They shared John Goddard's faith that the "mystery" of Ramadhin and the nagging accuracy and spin of Valentine would mesmerise the Australian batsmen. Although Don Bradman had already retired from cricket, Australia still had a fearsome team, built around the batting of Lindsay Hassett, Neil Harvey, and Arthur Morris, the pace bowling of Ray Lindwall, Keith Miller, and Bill Johnston, and the brilliant all-round cricket of Keith Miller.

What kind of society did the West Indies encounter? In the 1930 tour, captain Jack Grant had made passing reference to the "White Australian Policy" in vogue at the time. In *A History of West Indies Cricket*, Michael Manley argued that Australia was also a colonial society and that the ferocity of the "Bodyline" series between England and Australia was in part the product of the clash between the metropolitan centre and the peripheral colony. It would be more accurate to describe Australia as a complex imperial society.<sup>1</sup> When the first Australian team visited

England in 1862, it was comprised entirely of Australian Aborigines, irony of ironies!

Subsequent tours left Aborigines out altogether from Australian teams.

When Governor Phillip landed at Botany Bay on January 18, 1788, there were about 76,000 aboriginal people with a cultural tradition of their own. The encounter with Europeans brought the same disaster as the native peoples suffered in the Americas. Deemed racially inferior, Aborigines found their lands taken, their society devastated by diseases, and their children segregated by Christian missionaries who found this to be the best way to Christianise the Aboriginal people. But cultural inferiorisation was a double-edged sword. The early British colonies in Australia were used for convicts. In a 80 year span, about 162 convicts in England and Ireland were transported to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. In his novels Charles Dickens described well this group of London burglars, pickpockets, and thieves who were sent to Australia. A large number were from Ireland and they formed secret societies in their new land. Arising from its early history, the notion of convictism has been difficult to remove from the Australian psyche. The expansion of immigration to Australia took place after 1820 with the emergence of sheep raising and commerce in wool, and, later, in 1851 with the discovery of gold, bringing a better educated and more middle-class English people in search of wealth and opportunity.

The "convict" representation of Australians began to be replaced by the migratory shearers from the outback, the "currency lads," the sons of convicts, now pioneers who expanded the frontiers of Australian society creating more democratic and egalitarian values to add to their rebellion against authorities and establishments. Disillusionment with urban society that came with the 1890s depression helped create the popular image of the "bush," which reinforced the pioneer values. Images of "bush" life, the "currency lads," and, later, "the diggers" myth which

arose from the heroism of Australian soldiers in World War I, described as resourceful, independent, and collectivist, enabled Australians to try to forget convictism, and to build a national ethos that was democratic and humane.

But this representation of a democratic Australia shaped by its own peculiar history merged into another powerful myth of British Australia, established by its sacrifices and contributions as part of the British empire from the Boer War in 1899 through World War I and II. Australians were proud that they were an integral part of the British Empire. Federated in 1901, the Australian colonies felt united by their British heritage and it was this sentiment that led to its “white Australia” policies. Australians have tried to integrate the politics of class that went with British traditions with their own egalitarian notions, creating the social ideal of “mateship,” which meant cheerfulness more than social intimacy.<sup>2</sup>

Between 1947 and 1962 Australians accepted 2 million immigrants; 880,000 British received assistance to migrate; the remainder came from Eastern Europe, “Nordic” Europe, and, lastly, Southern Europe – Italians, Greeks, Yugoslavs, and Maltese. Asians were discouraged and the slur, “Two Wongs don’t make a white,” captured the attitude well. Migrants were expected to assimilate to the dominant Australian way of life. The white Australia policy began to change in the 1960s when the ideal of multiculturalism began to challenge the older ideals of white Australia.

To return to cricket, on the surface, the series that was carded as the battle for world champions turned out to be a disappointment in that Australia won the series by winning 4 tests and losing 1. But it was actually a very exciting and close tournament. To the nucleus of the team that routed England the West Indies added an opener, Roy Marshall of Barbados, an attacking middle-order batsman, Robert Christiani of British Guyana, and a medium-fast bowler,



John Trim of British Guyana. The first Test at Brisbane from November 9 to 13 was an exciting contest. The brilliant fast bowling trio of Lindwall, Miller, and Johnston restricted the West Indies to 216 in their first innings, taking 7 of the 10 wickets between them. But Ramadhin, Valentine, and Gomez hit back for the West Indies bowling out Australia for 226 with Valentine taking 5 for 99. The West Indies fared only a little better in the second innings making 245, this time the right-arm leg-spinner, Doug Ring, did the damage with 6 for 80. Left to make 236 for victory, Australia found great difficulty as Ramadhin and Valentine wove their old magic in a very tense situation, but eventually won by 3 wickets with Ramadhin getting 5 for 90 from 40 overs. Many West Indian critics placed the blame for the defeat on captain Goddard for adopting the strange tactics in the situation of bowling the spinners to the point of exhaustion, even rubbing the ball in the ground in Australia's second innings to take off the shine after only 3 overs were bowled by Worrell and Gomez. Michael Manley felt that greater use of the medium pacers would have brought success.<sup>3</sup> Frank Birbalsingh also questioned Goddard's captaincy, but also criticised injudicious West Indies batting in the second innings, like Frank Worrell going down the pitch in the second to last ball of the day and being stumped and Roy Marshall's sudden aggression that caused his downfall.<sup>4</sup> Better judgment could have produced a larger total in the second innings and made the Australian target more difficult. But all this was second guessing after defeat. A more defensible explanation for defeat was the number of catches that were dropped by the West Indies players. Criticism, however, takes away the tension of the narrative of that moment at 225 for 7 when bowlers, Ray Lindwall and Doug Ring, hung on against Ramadhin and Valentine at their deadliest, inching their way for 11 more runs. It was simply glorious cricket. The day to day reports were more revealing. They reported that Valentine turned the ball sharply, and described how left-handed batsmen, Arthur Morris and

Neil Harvey, were at sea against Ramadhin, as the ball time and again beat the bat and the wicket.

As the second Test began at Sydney on November 30, the former great Australian spinner, Bill O'Reilly, commented that the Ramadhin/ Valentine pair constituted "a subtle striking force the like of which has not been seen for years."<sup>5</sup> The correspondent, Phil Thomson, thought that Ramadhin was the "unluckiest bowler in the world." To prevent a repetition of the 1950 experience of England where the "mystery" of Ramadhin and Valentine wreaked havoc, the Australian batsmen had decided on a plan of aggression against Ramadhin hoping to nullify his effectiveness. On a typically fast, marble-topped, Australian wicket where the ball did not turn much, Lindsay Hassett and Keith Miller played Ramadhin as an off-spinner and attacked his bowling. Facing a respectable West Indies total of 362, in which all the major batsmen made good scores, Australia piled up a score of 517, with Hassett making 132 and Miller, 129. With the Australian bowlers limiting the West Indies second innings to 290, Australia won easily by 7 wickets. That Ramadhin's figures were 0 for 143 from 41 overs in the first innings and 1 for 53 in the second spoke volumes about the effectiveness of the Australian strategy. Valentine, however, continued to be successful, taking 4 for 111 in the first innings.

The third Test at Adelaide from December 22 to 25 brought the West Indies victory by 6 wickets and gave them hope that they could still win the 5 Test series. The first day's play was one of the most bizarre in cricket history. Medium-pacers, Frank Worrell (6 for 38) and John Goddard (3 for 36), bowled out Australia for 82, to which Bill Johnston (6 for 62), supported by Miller and Lindwall, responded by bowling out the West Indies for 105. More like boxing than cricket on that day, the West Indies grabbed 2 Australian wickets for 20 runs before that eventful day closed. Near normalcy returned from the second day and Australia made 255 in their second

innings, with Valentine taking 6 wickets for 102. As West Indians huddled around their radios at home or in village shops at night, their ears almost glued to the sets listening to the difficult to understand and static-ridden commentary from Australia, and hoping against hope that their players would bring victory, anxiously and nervously listened to the courageous batting of all the batsmen, but especially Jeffrey Stollmeyer (47), Gerry Gomez (46 not out), and Robert Christiani (42 not out), who eventually brought victory by 6 wickets.

With the series now 2 to 1 in Australia's favour, the fourth Test at Melbourne from December 31 to January 3, 1952 was of crucial importance. If West Indies won, the series would be tied, making the fifth and final Test the deciding match. The cricket was tense from beginning to end, swinging one way and then another. Despite a hand injury that made batting difficult, Frank Worrell made a heroic 108 and was largely responsible for West Indies first innings score of 272. The pace bowler, John Trim, took 5 wicket for 34 runs, and Ramadhin, his confidence and form regained, took 2 for 63 in restricting Australia's reply to 216. Once more the Australian pace bowlers contained the West Indies second innings to 203, thanks to courageous knocks of 54 by Stollmeyer and 52 by Gomez. Set 260 for victory, Lindsay Hassett almost single handedly took on the spin-twins, Ram and Val, now again at their best. As the innings proceeded, the match seemed to go Australia's way, and then the West Indies in one of the most gripping ends of a Test match. When Hassett was out for 102, followed by Langley, Australia was 222 for 9 with only two bowlers at the wicket, Doug Ring and Bill Johnston. 33 runs were required to win and one wicket to fall. It seemed that a West Indies victory was certain. Australia, however, did get the runs, and emerged victorious in the match and the series. Again, Goddard came in for his share of blame from critics who lambasted him for being too defensive, or not defensive enough by placing more fielders in the outfield. In the anxious and

nerve-wracking atmosphere of the final minutes, three run-outs were missed. But that is the nature of cricket, indeed of sport generally. The American baseball hero, Yogi Berra, was credited with articulating a truism: “It ain’t over till it’s over.” Valentine took 5 for 88 in 30 overs and Ramadhin, 3 for 93 in 39 overs in the second innings.

The final Test at Sydney from January 25 was an anti-climax because Australia had won the series by winning the fourth Test. After a low-scoring first innings by both teams in which Australia made 116 and the West Indies, 78, Australia made 377 in their second innings. Despite a classic 104 by Jeffrey Stollmeyer, captain for this Test, West Indies could only reply with 213, losing by 202 runs, and the series by 4 Tests to 1. The bowling figures for the match of Gerry Gomez (10 for 113) and Frank Worrell (7 for 137) deserve special mention. They also provided the fodder for all those who criticised Goddard for employing a strategy of spin bowling throughout the tour and not seeing the possibility of a more balanced strategy of spin and pace, an oversight that Stollmeyer later called “thoughtless,” ascribing this failure to the harsh explanation that Goddard had never read a cricket book.

Defeat was disappointing for West Indians, but it must be recalled that two of the Australian victories were so close that the West Indies might have won them. Perhaps the critics were correct in blaming the failure on placing the central bowling strategy on the arms of Ramadhin and Valentine. The successes of Lindwall, Miller, and Johnston for Australia, and Gomez, Worrell, and John Trim on occasions showed that the West Indies fast bowlers should have been given a greater role in the overall strategy. Valentine was successful in the series, and Ramadhin bowled very well in the first and fourth Tests. To expect Ramadhin who bowled quickly through the air and depended on turn off the wicket, even small turn, for success on fast, easy-paced wickets was asking too much. There were other glaring weaknesses when compared

with the West Indies team to England in 1950. The brilliance of Australian bowlers prevented West Indies from making many scores beyond 300, thereby making it always difficult for the spinners to both attack and contain batsmen. In fairness to the three Ws, Everton Weekes had a thigh injury from the first Test; Clyde Walcott had a back injury; and Worrell injured his hand in the latter Tests. In addition, although Jeffrey Stollmeyer performed well, the opening pair of Allan Rae and Jeffrey Stollmeyer did not give the team good opening partnerships to launch huge scores. The ferocity of Lindwall, Miller, and Johnston must get credit for this. Finally, given Australia's own cricket tradition, and national tradition as well, it was always going to be a very difficult enterprise to defeat Australia in a five Test series in Australia. The West Indies should have been proud of their efforts and achievements in Australia in 1951/52.

The Australian tour was followed by a short tour to New Zealand where the West Indies played two Tests. The West Indies rebounded from their Australian defeat by winning the first Test by 5 wickets. Ramadhin recovered his old form taking 5 wickets for 86 runs in the New Zealand first innings of 236, and 4 for 39 in their second innings of 189. In the second Test, the West Indies amassed a total of 546 for 6 declared, with centuries from Stollmeyer (152), Worrell (100), and Walcott (115). New Zealand replied with 160 with Ramadhin getting 3 for 41 and Valentine, 3 for 29. Following on, New Zealand was saved from defeat when rain washed out play on the final day. It was reported that Ramadhin felt at home bowling on New Zealand pitches, which he said were like in England. New Zealand batsmen did not know which way the ball was going to turn, a feature that Ramadhin sorely missed in Australia. That Ramadhin got the prized wicket of New Zealand's great batsman, Bert Sutcliffe, was evidence enough that his ability had not diminished.<sup>6</sup>

The local Trinidad reporters noted that when the ship bringing some West Indies players like Ramadhin and Worrell and the touring Indian cricketers docked in Port of Spain, a large crowd gathered, cheering Ramadhin and Worrell loudly. The crowd patted Ram on his back and even lifted him on their shoulders to his amazement. Meeting his relatives, he was moved and spoke to them about his experiences, and his duels with Hassett and Miller. When asked whether he was glad to be in Trinidad, Ramadhin replied: "Yes, I'm very glad to be back home." On January 5, he received a rousing reception at Esperance village. The entrance to the street that led to the village had a large "WELCOME HOME" sign. His old friends, teammates at Palmiste, and neighbours crowded his family's house, everyone interrupting him to ask questions about England, Australia, and India.<sup>7</sup> The following day, at a function organised by Esperance Sports Club, Ramadhin was garlanded with white roses at an open-air ceremony at night, and a welcome song was rendered by Mr. Seunarine, followed by the playing of the calypso, "Put Ramadhin on the Ball." Mr. Lagan Seedial, Ram's friend and school captain, read the welcome speech, followed by friends like Ossie Roach and Mr. Ralph Narine. Among the hundreds of people was Oliver Demming, a fast bowler from San Fernando, who was picked for the West Indies team against India. Ramadhin replied simply: "I am overwhelmed by your welcome. It's nice to be home and with you, my friends and playmates again. I hope our village will produce many more Ramadhins. I thank you for this welcome which is a surprise to me."<sup>8</sup> The West Indies team joined the villagers of Esperance and, according to Mr. Seedial, they ate and drank for two days and nights. Mr. Rampersad (Mr. "Goat") who said that Ram was his best friend, remembered showing Alf Valentine where Ram grew up, and climbing a coconut tree at night to pick a coconut for Val.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE PAST AS PROLOGUE: BUILDING A TRADITION

The excellence of the 1950 West Indies team derived in part from its development that began shortly after the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the age of imperialism it was fashionable to describe non-Western peoples as “peoples without history” or that their history began only with the coming of Europeans.<sup>1</sup> Although cricket came to the West Indies with the coming of colonialism and the domination of white colonial elites of planters and merchants, the sons of African slaves and, after abolition in 1834, free Blacks, took a keen interest in cricket with their improvised bats, balls, and wickets.<sup>2</sup> Indian immigrants similarly played cricket in their villages, and it was already popular among the masses before Latchan Jaggernauth began to organise Indian cricket in the 1890s.

We must remember the historical context of cricket to appreciate the achievement of the West Indies. The joy that followed the victorious 1950 team or even the 1961/62 defeated team in Australia under Frank Worrell was not merely cultural, but also social, and akin to the feeling of emancipation and equality, two ideals that were so attractive to all peoples and especially to the colonised. But to understand the significance of this sentiment one must acknowledge that cricket was one cultural product of a worldwide system of imperialism which, in the Caribbean, was established through conquests, exploitation, slavery, and indentured servitude by Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English. The British Empire pioneered the modern industrial revolution and established a system in the Caribbean where African slavery and later Indian indentured labour enriched white colonial planters and their supporters in England. Imperialism was not only an economic system. It also created a cultural system, one of the features of which

was the supremacy of white over coloured and black, and Europeans over natives. While cricket, English literature, English law, and science are considered by many today to be creative and inclusive institutions, they initially operated within the colonial system of race, colour, and cultural supremacy. To illustrate how important colour was to the colonial system, Michael Manley quoted an illuminating passage from West Indian economist and Nobel laureate, Sir Arthur Lewis:

Economically and politically the white man is supreme. He owns the biggest plantations, stores, and banks, controlling directly or indirectly the entire economic life of the community. It is he whom the Governor most often nominates to his Councils and for his sons that the best government jobs are reserved. Socially the whites in general constitute the aristocracy. They run their own clubs from which non-whites are excluded and it is they who constitute the “court life” of his Majesty’s representative, the Governor.<sup>3</sup>

The social consequence of this system was that a small group of white planters or near-white upper classes dominated the system in which the coloured professional classes manned the middle classes of the upper echelons of civil servants, the medical and legal professions, and accountants. At the bottom were the African and Indian masses of workers and peasants, whose small hope for advancement depended on winning a scholarship to one of the elite schools like QRC or Harrison College in Barbados, or own a small shop. The common experience of the masses in the islands was poverty without any welfare or pension system, or minimum wage.

But just as white supremacy was an important feature of colonialism, resistance to it was no less a factor. Hilary McD. Beckles has argued that these interweaving perspectives “determined the framework of everyday life in the West Indies,” a view shared by Michael Manley and that illustrious West Indian intellectual and cricket writer, C.L.R. James.<sup>4</sup> In their minds, cricket occupied a prominent place in the discourse and struggle of West Indians against



colonialism. It was a similar sentiment that sent Frank Birbalsingh into ecstasy at the West Indies victory at Lord's in 1950:

As an assault on the imperial power that had enslaved West Indians for three centuries and ruled them for longer, this victory had the special sweetness of retribution justly meted out on perpetrators of such heinous crimes as slavery and indenture and all their attendant evils.<sup>5</sup>

Cricket in the West Indies was brought by British officers and troops stationed in the islands following the Napoleonic wars, and was soon taken up by the white planters and merchants. Both soldiers and planters sought to exclude Africans and coloureds from the game, making cricket an institution of high culture and the preserve of the upper classes. The story of cricket in the Caribbean is about the challenge of black and coloured West Indians, and later East Indians, to the aristocratic and elite origins of cricket, and to make cricket more democratic. Dominant at the elite schools of the British Caribbean, where cricket became an important part of academic life, and later at exclusive clubs where students could join after they left school, elites kept control of cricket but found its attitude of exclusion of blacks seriously challenged around 1900 when there emerged signs that cricket was opening the previously closed door to the black masses.

In the 1880s and 1890s cricket competition between local clubs commenced and some previously exclusive clubs allowed coloured people to become members. Intercolonial cricket which began in 1865 with a match between British Guyana and Barbados became a feature of West Indies cricket in the 1880s. A triangular series between Trinidad, Barbados, and British Guyana started in 1891. Two English teams visited the West Indies in 1896/97, and for the first time a West Indies team was selected for a match in Trinidad in February 1897. Following the West Indies team's victory, Lord Hawke, a member of the MCC, the governing body of cricket,

invited a West Indies team to tour England in 1900 to play against county teams because he did not think they were good enough to play an English representative team. The West Indies team included 9 whites and 5 blacks, a move that caused displeasure from the planter elites, especially in Barbados and British Guyana. The team lost 8 and drew 4 of their 17 matches, which brought a cartoon in *The Star* newspaper expressing the British view of the team. It depicted the tall, huge, figure of the legendary English cricketer, Dr. W.G. Grace, bat in hand, surrounded by six crouching black men crying, saying, “We have come to learn, sah.”<sup>6</sup> There was another tour to England in 1906, and the first official English visits by the MCC in 1911 and 1912 before World War I put a stop to international cricket.

## ***PELHAM WARNER***

A word must be said about the contribution of Pelham Warner to the policy of including blacks in the West Indies team, “to throw open the gates of West Indian cricket to all men of talent ...irrespective of race, colour, or class.”<sup>7</sup> A respected member of the white elite class, “Plum” Warner, as he was affectionately called, was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad, on October 2, 1873. Educated at Queens Royal College in Port of Spain, the outstanding secondary school for the elite and propertied classes, Pelham Warner was schooled in cricket and aware of the racial situation in the West Indies. In 1886, at the age of 13, his father sent him to Harrison College in Barbados, then the most famous secondary school in the West Indies, but exclusively for the children of the privileged. Harrison College produced generations of graduates who became teachers of the ancient Classics and cricket masters in secondary schools through the English-speaking islands.<sup>8</sup> From Harrison College Warner went to Eton and then Oxford

University where he graduated with a degree in law before returning to Trinidad in 1897 as a member of the touring Lord Hawke's MCC team where he saw again the love and enthusiasm that West Indians had for cricket. Six years later, he was made captain of England and developed into an outstanding batsman. In encouraging the inclusion of black players in the West Indies team, Pelham Warner showed that he had a different imperial vision that was inclusive and multiracial, where through the commitment to social progress and fairness the disadvantaged would be uplifted as equals. For "Plum" Warner, this was the mission of cricket.

However, the typical imperialist view of people of colour and low social standing was best illustrated in a cartoon by the popular A.E. Morton during the 1906 tour which showed W.G. Grace whipping a frightened black monkey-like figure placed over his lap with the caption, "The West Indies got their first whacking yesterday." This depiction placed in stark relief Pelham Warner's efforts to encourage multiracial cricket, and to grant the West Indies team Test status.

## ***THE COMING OF LEARIE CONSTANTINE***

The 1923 tour to England was a major moment in West Indian cricket history. Previously considered not up to Test match standard, many members of the team achieved outstanding performances, among them the captain Harold Austin from Barbados who was now considered one of the best batsmen in cricket, George Challenor, and the fast bowlers, George John, George Francis, and Learie Constantine, then 22. The MCC authorities were so impressed by the promise of the team that they sent a representative, R.H. Mallet, to help organise the West Indies Cricket Board, which was established in 1926, and in 1928 the West Indies was given full

Test status which meant that it joined the recognised international Test circuit. At the time the most anticipated international cricket was between England and Australia which was granted Test status in 1877, South Africa in 1889, New Zealand, 1929, and India, 1932. There followed two West Indies tours, to England in 1928, and Australia in 1930/31.

In their Test debut at Lord's from June 23 to 26, 1928, the West Indies suffered defeat by an innings and 58 runs; they lost the second Test by an innings and 30 runs; and the third by an innings and 71 runs. These crushing defeats occurred at a time when England had one of their best-ever teams. In batting, Jack Hobbs and Herbert Sutcliffe still had the reputation of being one of the best opening pairs in history. Wally Hammond was considered second only to the great Don Bradman of Australia. In the second Test Hobbs and Sutcliffe put on 119 and 155 in each innings, and in the third, Hobbs made 159, his last Test century in England. The fast bowling of Harold Larwood and Maurice Tate, and the new spinner, "Tich" Freeman, were too good for the inexperienced West Indies batsmen. For the West Indies, George Challenor carried the batting but, at age 40, he was past his best. Challenor and Harold Austin, members of the white upper class of Barbados, were the mainstays of the West Indies batting since 1900. Their careers, like that of Pelham Warner, followed the traditional pattern, and their cricket technique and outlook assumed a traditional, classical style that had much in common with cricketers in England.

Learie Constantine showed promise of becoming an outstanding player. Already considered one of the fastest bowlers, Constantine, a black Trinidadian, brought his attacking approach to his batting, bowling, and fielding, and emerged into a fine all-rounder. Comparing him with George Challenor, Michael Manley saw Constantine's dazzling approach to cricket as more representative of the West Indian masses, uncoached but bringing to cricket flair, power,

and a talent for improvisation. This view of cricket in its imperial context as a dialectic between the hegemony of white elites and the resistance of the black masses is an illuminating way to view the role of cricket during the age of imperialism, but the question arises whether the players had a consciousness of their role in the struggle for racial equality. There was little doubt that Constantine, the aggressive, energetic cricketer, possessed the thoughtfulness and high intellect that enabled him to understand that both West Indies politics and cricket were driven by the desire to “keep the black man in his place.” Constantine was capable of admiration for Harold Austin and George Challenor, white members of the West Indies team, but felt that the class divisions in the team between whites and blacks prevented solidarity and unity of purpose to defeat England. That was why he insisted over and over for the team and its captain to be selected on merit, and for the inclusion of outstanding blacks on the team.<sup>9</sup>

The description of Learie Constantine as a heroic personality on the cricket field was no less fitting off the field as we follow his development as a human being and his contributions to Caribbean society and England, where he lived for many years. Born in 1902 in Trinidad, the son of Anaise and Lebrun Constantine, a grandson of slaves, Learie Constantine left school at the end of his primary school education in 1917. At that time, education and sport were considered the paths to advancement. His father was a good cricketer, the captain of Shannon club, but, anxious to prepare his son for a successful future, did not encourage Learie to play cricket, urging him instead to prepare for a legal career as a solicitor. He was a clerk in a solicitor’s firm in Port of Spain with the expectation that after 10 years work and success at exams in law he would qualify as a lawyer. He married Norma Cox, the daughter of a chemist, in 1921.

That his father was an outstanding cricketer was probably the inspiration that nudged him towards cricket, and so he began to play for Shannon, a club that attracted a racially and socially

mixed membership. His prowess was soon recognised as he and another Trinidad fast bowler, George John, developed a cricket rivalry. In a cricket world where there were many barriers to the inclusion and progress of coloured cricketers even in the West Indies, Learie Constantine's star began to shine. Selected in 1922 on the Trinidad team to tour British Guyana, and later against Barbados on the same team with his father, Learie Constantine's performances after only 3 first-class matches won him selection on the West Indies team to England in 1923, an achievement that recalls the feats of Ramadhin and Valentine in 1950. On his return to Trinidad, it was clear that his interest in cricket would dominate any thoughts of legal work. In another development reminiscent of Ramadhin, Constantine was hired at Trinidad Leaseholds Ltd. as a machine-shop clerk on the recommendation of another Trinidad player, Joe Small, an opportunity that allowed him to get a modest salary when he represented Trinidad and the West Indies teams abroad. He was again selected for the West Indies team to tour England in 1928.

Sterling performances on that tour won him a contract to play professional cricket for Nelson in the Lancashire Cricket League in England, a career move that had an enormous impact on his development. Learie and Norma Constantine, and their young daughter Gloria, made their home on Meredith Street, Nelson, in Lancashire the centre of their lives from 1929 to 1949. It gave the family a steady source of income, work that he loved, and a warm community environment at a time when the world was going through one of its chaotic periods. Not all his experiences were warm, however. In those years the presence of a black family in Nelson was unusual. Constantine remarked that children in the area would "jump up at the window to peep at us."<sup>10</sup> They also received racist letters which made them momentarily bitter, but Learie acknowledged later that they recognised that it was more a case of ignorance because they were on the surface different.

In 1932 the noted Trinidad political philosopher and cricket journalist, C.L.R. James, stayed at his home, and they became close friends. James encouraged Constantine to use his popularity on the cricket field to spread knowledge about the peoples and societies in the Caribbean, and in 1933 assisted Constantine in composing his book, *Cricket and I*.

Life and cricket in Nelson gave him a sense of stability, and he was now more inclined to follow his father's advice given in 1917. He joined the local library, became interested in the world of books, took correspondence courses, studied for local examinations, and in 1939 was accepted into the solicitor's office of a fellow Nelson cricketer. Cricket was still the centre of his life, and it was not lost on him that he had a decent salary and circumstances at the time of the Great Depression when other families in Lancashire did not have a job, including cricketers. It was ironical that Lancashire League cricket was most popular at this time as unemployed people now had the time to go to cricket matches. The explosive and exciting character of Constantine's batting, bowling, and fielding must have done wonders to lift the spirits of the crowds. He spent much time with the children of Nelson, coaching them, playing with them at the recreation ground in the evenings and "piling them into his green Austin after a match."<sup>11</sup> When he transferred to Rochdale club in 1937, the Nelson community let him know how much they appreciated what he gave them, calling him "the perfect citizen." Although he now played for Rochdale, the Constantines continued to live at their home in Nelson until 1949. This was how he described the significance of his sojourn in Nelson:

If I had not come. If I had remained in my island, I could not have been the person I am today. I am a better person for coming; I am better materially, I am better socially. I have grown more tolerant. I have grown less selfish. I am a better person for the time I spent in Nelson.<sup>12</sup>

Although he preferred a simple life centred around cricket, Constantine increasingly became involved in public service as well as being called upon to resolve issues of race and colour. He joined the multiracial League of Coloured Peoples and became its president when World War II broke out, a responsibility that enabled him to understand more deeply the problems that coloured peoples from the West Indies and Africa faced in England, an experience that made him more sensitive and active in the cause of fighting racial discrimination. The curtailment of cricket during the war years gave him the time to volunteer his services. As a billeting officer, he saw at first hand the living conditions of the poor and he helped organise projects for housing poor children. He also worked in the Ministry of Welfare and was responsible for finding employment and housing for West Indian technicians and West African seamen. The war had brought thousands of coloured soldiers from the US, the West Indies, and Africa to Britain. Constantine's awareness of the broad discrimination that black people suffered in the world was underlined at times by his own bitter experiences, as when an American air force officer ordered him to get out of the hostel dance hall because he was black. His keen observation and experiences of discrimination made him more active in politics in the 1940s. As a radio commentator on the contribution of West Indians to the war and cricket, he spoke of the treatment he and his family received without bitterness. Selected in 1943 for the Dominions team to play England at Lords together with Martindale and Clarke from the West Indies and cricketers from Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, he and his family were denied lodging at the Imperial Hotel in Russell Square, London. Constantine had booked rooms for his wife and daughter and had paid a deposit. Deeply pained at this insult to his family, especially as he was one of those honoured in this match, he took the matter to court in 1944, which ruled in his favour.



In August 1945, Learie Constantine played his last first- class match when he was made captain of the Dominions side against England. In a BBC Program in 1946 he shared His thoughts as he looked back on his life in cricket and his hopes for the future:<sup>13</sup>

At one time cricket was my life, my religion. It gave me the chance of a decent living. It brought me publicity and a wide range of travel. It gave me, as well, reasonable scope to educate my daughter.

He said that he wanted to complete his legal studies and hinted that he would like to return home to Trinidad, work in the field of education, and help to speed up the process towards “self-reliance and self-government.” 1954 was an auspicious year for him. He qualified as a barrister-at-law, and had his book, *The Colour Bar*, published.

Constantine returned to Trinidad as a legal adviser to Trinidad Leaseholds Ltd. as a member of the senior staff, and spent hours on evenings coaching and giving talks at schools and clubs in South Trinidad in 1955 and 1956. As a promising young leg-spinner at Presentation College, I was selected to join other cricketers from San Fernando to receive coaching from the now legendary Learie Constantine at Skinner Park. I remember that time vividly. He seemed to belie his image as a dynamic, outgoing personality. I remember him as a reserved, almost shy, soft-spoken man who showed me the reliable way to field a ball hit towards me.

Constantine did not need much encouragement to enter the field of politics. He had known intimately the rising star of Trinidad politics in the 1950s, Dr. Eric Williams, when he was a student at Oxford University. Dr. Williams would come to Nelson to spend part of his summer vacation with them, and Constantine recalled that he often drove Dr. Williams to get his favoured German beer. Constantine was made chairman of the Peoples National Movement Party of which Dr. Williams was the leader. He contested and won the Tunapuna seat in the 1956 election and was made Minister of Works. Gradually disillusioned with politics, he did not

contest the 1961 election, but at independence in 1962 he was made Trinidad's first High Commissioner to London. He received high praise for his work in London. Commenting on the selection of Frank Worrell as captain of the 1963 West Indies team to England, he said that Worrell was "the wisest of West Indian thinkers" and lamented that the "South African attitude in the West Indies" was the reason why Worrell had not received the honour of captaining the team in England before.

Disagreement and disillusionment with Dr. Williams and the Trinidad government forced him to retire from politics. Intervening in a dispute with the Trade Union in Bristol over the non-hiring of coloured drivers and conductors, he was criticised by the Trinidad government because the workers were Jamaican. The matter was resolved but Constantine felt that what was at issue was discrimination against coloured people. Dr. Williams did not support his old friend.

The Constantines moved to a flat in Kendal Court in London where Learie concentrated on his law practice and activities on issues of immigration and race relations. Learie Constantine was knighted in 1962, made rector of St. Andrews University in 1968, and appointed to the House of Lords in 1969. Sir Learie Constantine died on July 1, 1971 in London at the age of 68, and was buried in Trinidad. A memorial service was held for him on July 23 at Westminster Abbey, London. Writing in *The Times*, Sir Dingle Foot remarked: "I have never met anyone who inspired more widespread affection among all sorts and conditions of peoples."<sup>14</sup>

## **GEORGE HEADLEY, BATTING GENIUS**

The fortunes of West Indies cricket began to change in the 1929/30 MCC tour to the West Indies. The series was drawn with the MCC and the West Indies winning one Test, and the other two were drawn. This series brought to the attention of the cricket world a batting genius, 20 year-old George Headley, who made 176 in the first Test, then the youngest player to score a century in his Test debut; 114 in the first innings and 112 in the second of the victorious third Test; and 223 in the drawn fourth Test. In their first Test victory in the third Test, Learie Constantine was largely responsible for England's defeat, taking 9 wickets in the match. Mention must be made, too, of opening batsman, Clifford Roach, who made 122 in the first Test, the first-ever century by a West Indies player in a Test match, and a double century in the third Test. For England, notable performances came from opener Andy Sandham who scored 152 in the first Test and 325 in the final Test; "Patsy" Hendren who scored 205 not out in the second Test and 123 in the third; and wicketkeeper, Leslie Ames, who scored 105 in the second Test and 149 in the fourth. In a series that produced many outstanding performances, the spotlight, however, was on George Headley who at 20 had become a hero for the black masses of the West Indies and was later acclaimed by all of the cricketing world as, perhaps, the equal of Don Bradman. His 223 in the final Test endeared him more than ever with the masses. Replying to the massive total of 849 by England, the West Indies made 286 in their first innings. England batted a second time, declaring at 272 for 9. Facing certain defeat, and thereby defeat in the series, the West Indies held on to draw the match with a score of 438 for 5, thanks largely to Headley's innings of 223.<sup>15</sup>

Flushed by their good performance in the home series against England, the West Indies made their first tour to Australia in 1930, then the cricket champions because they had just defeated England for the “Ashes,” the symbol of the series between England and Australia. Australia’s team was awesome. In addition to Don Bradman, acclaimed as the greatest batsman of all time, they had a openers, W.M. Woodfull and W.H. Ponsford, middle-order batsmen, A.F. Kippax and Stan McCabe. In the recently concluded series against England in the summer of 1930 Bradman made scores of 131, 254, 334, and 232, averaging 139.14 an inning, when he was 21. Its bowling was spearheaded by its spinners, right-arm leg-spinner, Clarrie Grimmett, and orthodox left- arm spinner, H. Ironmonger, one of the famous spin pairs of cricket, to be emulated 20 years later by Ramadhin and Valentine. Grimmett was a master of line and length, a very difficult feat for a leg-spinner who is known for great spin and also for waywardness of length. How Grimmett mastered his accuracy bears resemblance to Ramadhin. The story goes that Grimmett trained his dog to retrieve balls, and so he would place a coin on a cricket pitch and aim for his bowling to drop on that coin, whereupon his dog would retrieve the ball. That was how Grimmett developed the pin-point accuracy of his leg-spin, top-spin, and googly.<sup>16</sup>

Captained by Jack Grant, the son of Trinidad merchant T. Geddes Grant, the West Indies team lost the first four Tests and won the final one. Bradman scored 223 in the third Test and 152 in the fourth; Bill Ponsford made 146 in the first Test. It was the Australian spinners who were the critical factor in the West Indies defeat. Grimmett took 7 for 87, and 4 for 96 in the first Test; 4 for 54 and 1 for 9 in the second; 4 for 94 and 5 for 49 in the third; 2 for 46 and 2 for 10 in the fourth; and 3 for 100 and 1 for 47 in the fifth Test. For the West Indies, George Headley made an enormous impact in Australia. He made 102 not out in the third Test when Bradman made 223. What a sight for cricket enthusiasts that Test must have been, Bradman and

Headley at their best and in full flow! The West Indies only victory in the fifth and final Test was due in part to the batting of Headley who made 105 and F.R. Martin who made 123.

Outplayed in the first four Tests, the West Indies salvaged some of their pride by winning the final Test by 30 runs.

Before World War II broke out in 1939, the West Indies made tours to England in 1933 and 1939, and the MCC came to the West Indies in 1934. Inspired by George Headley and Learie Constantine, it was clear that West Indies cricket had continued to develop, even though they lost the 1933 series in England who won the first and third Tests, and drew the second. In the drawn second Test at Old Trafford, Headley made 169 and Ivan Barrow, 105. A surprising feature of the series was the impressive fast bowling of E.A. Martindale from Barbados who took 100 wickets on the tour. For the series in the West Indies in 1934/ 35, England selected a strong team which included Wally Hammond, then at his best, "Patsy" Hendren, Maurice Leyland, and a fine young spinner, Eric Hollies. This was a momentous series because West Indies won their first Test series, defeating England in the second and fourth Tests, losing the first, and drawing the third. In the second Test, 92 by Derek Sealy and 90 by Constantine set the stage for a score of 302 in the first innings; Headley made 93 in the second innings, enabling the West Indies to declare at 280 for 6. The fast bowlers, Constantine, Martindale, and Leslie Hylton routed England for 195 in their second innings, giving West Indies victory by 217 runs. In the fourth Test, a stellar 276 by George Headley helped the West Indies to amass a huge total of 535 for 7, following which fast bowlers, Constantine, Martindale, and Hylton, bowled out England for 271 and 103. Indeed, they were magnificent, especially Martindale who took 7 for 84, taking 19 wickets in the Test series. The power and endurance of Hylton and Martindale, with the explosive bowling of the experienced Constantine, gave the West Indies a formidable attacking

bowling. But, make no mistake about this, it was the brilliant batting of George Headley that laid the foundation to allow the captain to give the pace bowlers the freedom to attack. The 1939 series in England saw the West Indies lose the first Test at Lord's and draw the other two Tests. Of more than passing interest was the decision to replace as captain Jack Grant who had retired from cricket with his brother, Rolph Grant. In the first Test, Headley made 106 out of a total of 277 at Lord's in the first innings and 107 out of 222 in the second innings, the second time he had made a century at Lord's in each innings. The third and final Test saw the great Wally Hammond make 138, his final century for England. Jamaican Ken Weekes made a scintillating 137 but the most significant event from a West Indian perspective was that Learie Constantine took 5 for 75 in the first innings of what turned out to be his last Test match. Two young English cricketers made their mark which pointed the way to glorious future careers when cricket resumed after the war. Len Hutton made 196 in England's 404 for 5 declared in the Lord's Test, and the mercurial Dennis Compton made 120. Hutton made another century, 165 not out, in the second innings of the final Test.

World War II took centre stage, and disrupted the careers and lives of peoples everywhere. As a little over a decade came to a close since obtaining Test status, the West Indies had made considerable progress, a fitting answer to the cartoons of 1928 and 1930 which had defined West Indians as inadequate and unfit. More black West Indians from the masses had found a place in the team, and so cricket served to launch two struggles at the same time: to successfully challenge white dominance of the team, and to show the world that West Indian cricketers were the equal of any group of cricketers in competence, grace, and ability. The inspiration behind this progress came from Learie Constantine and, above all, George Headley who in 1930 was 30 years old, played in 35 Tests, and had scored two double centuries and eight

centuries in Test matches with an average of 66.72 an inning.<sup>17</sup> Both had an excellent understanding of the game, and it must be stressed that they both contributed in an exceptional way to the maturity of West Indies cricket from 1928 to 1939. In 18 Test matches Constantine took 58 wickets and scored 635 runs in 33 innings, when his Test career came to an end in 1939.

He fared best of all in the Lancashire League professional cricket where matches were played on Saturday afternoon in the summer. Matches were single innings and lasted a single day, a forerunner of the 50-over international matches which became so immensely popular and lucrative that a World Cup of cricket was organized around this concept. Professional League clubs hired a professional cricketer who was expected not only to do well with the bat and ball but also to prepare younger cricketers in the team to develop their promise. Since there was no professional cricket league in the West Indies, and in the face of financial and occupational insecurity, many West Indian players were forced to earn their living playing in the Lancashire League. Constantine played for Nelson which won the championship seven times, and his achievements were phenomenal.<sup>18</sup> Among others who played in the professional leagues were Worrell for Radcliffe, Everton Weekes for Bacup, and Sonny Ramadhin for Crompton. As an illustration of Constantine's achievements in one-day cricket, he made 621 runs in 1930 with an average of 38.81 and took 73 wickets; in his final year in 1937 at the age of 35, he hit 863 runs at an average of 43.15 and took 82 wickets.

Born in Panama of Jamaican parents, George Headley was sent at 10 to Jamaica so that he could get an English education. When World War II came, George Headley had become a batting genius. In an essay on Headley, C.L.R. James asked how could a West Indian boy, "untaught either by instructor or the associations of public school, university or county" have developed such talent in batting before he was 21 that he could have been selected for England

or Australia. For James, there was no mystery. At an early age George Headley showed unmistakable signs of competence and “a readiness for whatever fortune or misfortune might send his way.” He honed his batting technique by watching closely the English batsman, Ernest Tyldesley, in 1926. When, in the Australian tour of 1930/31, the Australian tactics of bowling him on the leg-stump brought low scores, Headley solved this crisis by practicing and mastering attacking shots on the on-side after which his scores returned to his own high standards. Clarrie Grimmett, the great Australian spinner of that series, considered Headley to be “the greatest master of on-side play whom he ever bowled against.”<sup>19</sup> James felt that Headley’s unique ability and approach were shaped by his experience of being West Indian: “Headley learned the West Indian respect for the game; and secondly, a wholehearted belief that distinction in cricket was equal to distinction anywhere else. The whole personality, individual and social, could be devoted to it.”<sup>20</sup>

For Michael Manley, Headley was like a giant among lesser mortals, referring to him as an Atlas who “carried, at all times, wherever he went, the hopes of the black, English-speaking Caribbean man.” Linking Headley’s rise to cricket eminence to the struggle of the West Indian masses against discrimination and exploitation during the 1920s and 1930s, and especially to the Marcus Garvey movement for the improvement of black people by self-help and black consciousness, Manley described the significance in this way:

[Headley] became the focus for the longing of an entire people for proof: proof of their own self-worth, their own capacity. Furthermore, they wanted this proof to be laid at the door of the white man who owned the world which in turn defined their circumstances.<sup>21</sup>

There was no doubt that the sparkling performances of Headley and Constantine and the victories at home in the West Indies made the cricketing countries take notice of them and the team. Black players now had one foot in the door, so to speak, but the colonial structure of West



Indian society and cricket would yield little on the dominance of white upper class elites. How else, Michael Manley reminded us, could one explain why Constantine and Headley, recognised as superb cricketers as well as for their knowledge of cricket strategy, were passed over consistently for the captaincy of the team in favour of the sons of a white upper class Trinidad merchant family, Jack and his brother Rolph Grant.

First, the system was shaken and under repeated attack from below; but the structure was still intact. No island had even so much as a minor form of representative government on a basis of universal adult suffrage. No secondary school door had been thrown open to the bright children of the masses...<sup>22</sup>

This prejudice against black captains survived long after Constantine's and Headley's days in cricket were over, and was illustrated best of all when Jeffrey Stollmeyer was selected for the captaincy for the 1955 Australian tour to the West Indies. When Stollmeyer could not play in the final two Tests because of illness, the West Indies Cricket Board appointed Dennis Atkinson, a white player from Barbados, to lead the team. The end of this unjust system of selecting captains of the West Indies teams came to an end when Frank Worrell was chosen to captain the 1960/61 team to Australia.

## **JACK GRANT'S STORY**

The selection of West Indies captains from the upper classes was a constant source of anger among the West Indian masses. Jack Grant and his brother Rolph were subjected to ridicule from those who compared their batting and bowling statistics with Constantine and Headley in the 1930s. To intellectuals whose roots or sympathy lay with the poorer social classes, colonialism was seen as the clear explanation of the terrible poverty and racial

discrimination in the West Indies. The Great Depression had only made matters worse. That was why the labour unrest and protest marches of the late 1930s were considered a movement against colonialism. Jack Grant's story allows us to view how a captain who was drawn from a privileged social class looked at the issues of cricket, race, class, and colonialism.

George Copeland Grant, known as Jack Grant, was born in Trinidad, the son of T. Geddes Grant, a well-known prosperous business family, the basis of which was the formation of an oil company, Apex Trinidad Oilfields Ltd. As significant as this connection to wealth was, a greater influence on his life was the inspiration of his paternal grandfather, Rev. Kenneth Grant, who with Rev. John Morton were the pioneer Presbyterian missionaries to the East Indian immigrants of Trinidad. Rev. Grant's Canadian mission was focused largely in San Fernando, where he and his wife, Catherine Copeland Grant, worked to convert Hindu and Muslim Indians to Christianity, and established schools in South Trinidad and its villages, among which was Canaan Canadian Mission school in Palmiste attended by Sonny Ramadhin. Jack attended Queen's Royal College between 1917 and 1925, noting with approval that students came from "all races – black, white, coloured, Indian, and Chinese," adding that he spoke from a privileged position because "in those days a white skin was privileged."<sup>23</sup>

Jack Grant played cricket and football for QRC, demonstrating exceptional ability, after which prominent sportsmen persuaded his parents to send him to Cambridge University with the hope of playing cricket and football for Cambridge in the annual matches against Oxford university, and securing the highly prized "Cambridge Blue." After a year's preparation at a Canadian University, Jack made his way to Christ's College, Cambridge, to read history with the expectation of returning to Trinidad to teach, perhaps at QRC. In 1927, at a meeting for Presbyterian students at Westminster College, he met his future wife, Ida Madeleine Russell

from South Rhodesia, who had taught at Hope Foundation Mission before coming to Cambridge. In early 1930, the West Indies Cricket board offered him the captaincy of the West Indies team to tour Australia in October, 1930. As expected, he completed his studies at Cambridge in the summer of 1930 with a Teacher's degree, and the prestigious Cambridge "Blue" in football and cricket. It is difficult to read with equanimity how easily he received the captaincy when players like Constantine since 1923 and Headley from 1928 had already distinguished themselves in Test cricket and were bypassed for the captaincy.

Jack and Ida spent five weeks in Trinidad, at times preparing sermons for their churches, Greyfriars in Port of Spain, and Susumachar in San Fernando, founded by his grandmother. On their return to England, they were accompanied by Rolph Grant who was on his way to Cambridge University. On the journey to Australia with the team, Jack wrote that he was aware that the official racial policy was called "A White Australia Policy," and wondered about relationships since the West Indies team comprised whites, blacks, and coloureds. Rubbing shoulders with other races at an early age in Trinidad, he accepted his teammates as friends. This ease was put the test when in anger he insulted a black colleague, who responded: "White man, stop talking to me as a black boy." This incident nudged Jack to ask himself, "Was I a racist?" He acknowledged that he was aware that he was white and so therefore conscious of colour, and that he had privileges as a white man which a black man did not have:

Take the captaincy of the team. I was younger than all of the sixteen players, save three; and most of these sixteen had already played for the West Indies, while I had not. Yet I was the captain. It could not be disputed that my white colour was a major factor in my being given this post.<sup>24</sup>

Jack Grant's consciousness of the consequences of race, colour, and class, an awareness that stemmed in large part from his Christian values and missionary spirit, made him sensitive about perceptions of privilege. Visiting India to see his brother Clifford who was a missionary in Indore, India, Grant acknowledged that he did not behave like "pukka Sahibs," and had no servants to wait on them, and willingly bunked down with ten other Indians when travelling by train. Ida and Jack traveled and taught school in South Rhodesia, South Africa, and Trinidad, and were aware of the pervasiveness of racism and its injustice. He admitted his acquiescence:

[In South Rhodesia] I lived in white segregated areas; I taught in a school for whites; and I played games with whites. Also I made no attempt to learn an African language, or become acquainted with African affairs. In effect, I was little more than a typical white Rhodesian.<sup>25</sup>

Having described the unjust and cruel system of colonialism, he went on to defend the authorities, praising their high sense of duty and high standard of integrity, despite their failings. Quoting Arnold Toynbee, he said that British officials were "professionally irreproachable and personally unapproachable," with a desire for rectitude that prevented them from hearing the painful cries of the governed. Still, he concluded that they were honest.

He returned to Trinidad in 1932 to take up a teaching position at QRC until 1935, and was happy to reacquaint himself with Trinidad. He observed that there was a cricket pitch in every town and village, and that cricket was in the blood of every West Indian: "...cricket is more than a game. It is almost a religion. It is a force which grips people, and holds them in its power." Leaving for Grenada where he was made Principal of the Boys Secondary School, he experienced the crushing heartbreak of the death of his four year-old son, Alick, of diphtheria, shortly after his wife's recovery from a serious illness. He recalled a sermon he gave before Alick died, a narrative that captured his deep religious faith and strength:

They – that is our children – are precious; they are pearls of great price. Yet they are not our own. They are on loan to us from God. Therefore (1). We must not set our hope in them, as they may be called home by God, or they may let us down. (2) We must not set their hope in us, as we may be called home by God or we may let them down. (3) We must try to set their hope in God, and this we cannot do unless we first set our hope in God. But whatever happens, we must love them and do the best we can for them.<sup>26</sup>

From 1944 to 1949, in the last year of the War, he was transferred to the Muslim State of Zanzibar as an officer of the British colonial office where he was Principal of the Boys Secondary School, which comprised boys from Arab, Indian, African, and Goan communities, but not Europeans. In describing the clubs and communities where Europeans associated for recreation, one could see how his own awareness of the imperial world was deepening. In this small island of Zanzibar Europeans separated themselves from the peoples they governed politically, where “the walls of partition separating the communities were far too high and too impenetrable,” concluding that “our communal clubs were in many ways communal ghettos.”

The experience of the power of racial discrimination was at its most severe in their next assignments at Adams College, Durban, South Africa from 1949 to 1956, and southern Rhodesia from 1959 to 1972. Adams College was founded in 1853 by Protestant Christian missionaries. It was the oldest school in Natal and attracted young African men and women students from all of South Africa, and even from surrounding countries. Its teachers were black, coloured, and white. As Jack Grant described the coming to power of the Nationalist Party and its doctrine of Apartheid, sadness and anger returned at the recollection of those awful years. Dr. Henrik Verwoerd, the Minister of Native Affairs, carried out the apartheid policy of segregating schools “with the dedication of a Nazi.” Adams College, and other multiracial schools which refused to carry out apartheid policy, were in the end closed in 1956. Previously apolitical, Jack and Ida, especially, became active in politics. Ida joined the Liberal party, whose chairman was Alan

Paton, author of *Cry the Beloved Country*. Jack and Ida Grant were informed by letter that they were “undesirable residents of, or visitors to the Republic.”<sup>27</sup>

Persuaded that the policy of racial partnership in Southern Rhodesia was more attractive and promising than the apartheid system of South Africa, Jack and Ida Grant moved there in 1959 as secretaries of the All Africa Conference of Christian Churches and field secretary for the United Christian Board. Southern Rhodesia was then part of the Central African Federation which also included Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Instead of leading to greater cooperation, Africans felt that this system consolidated the domination of minority white rule over the African majority. When the British government challenged Southern Rhodesia to implement one of the policies of the partnership doctrine, namely, that it should lead to majority rule, the South Rhodesia government declared its independence outside the Commonwealth in 1965. Jack, Ida, and their fellow missionaries tried to keep alive the projects of integration between blacks and whites at their schools and mission centres, but the government arrested and jailed opponents of the white supremacist rule. Jack and Ida retired in 1972, only to return in 1975 but were informed that they were declared prohibited immigrants who could not submit to the Rhodesian way of life. They eventually made Cambridge, England, their home. Jack died on October 26, 1978.

It was his life as a missionary that held the centre of Jack Grant’s discourse, and the main theme was the project of improving and advancing the relations between blacks and whites, Europeans and natives. He was aware of the cruelties of imperialism, and also of the relation between imperialism and Christianity, and was convinced that racial discrimination and domination were not Christian, but, in his mind and in the minds of; his missionary family, genuine Christian ideals were capable of reforming this system and making it just. Jack Grant

was without doubt a decent, compassionate man, but he, too, was blinded like so many others who were willing to criticise the ills of imperialism but still had faith in its mission to civilise non-European natives. Jack Grant retired from cricket at the age of 27 to commit himself to missionary teaching. He spoke with admiration of Headley and Constantine, the two outstanding cricketers of his time. He called Headley, “consistent and brilliant,” and his respect for Constantine was recalled in his narrative of his final Test as captain in 1935 against England which the West Indies won. On the final day’s play, Jack Grant injured his ankle and could not play. He decided that Constantine was the best man to replace him as captain, called the team together, and without fuss told the team that he was appointing Constantine to act as captain. He wrote that he remembered “the smile of approval given me by George Headley.”<sup>28</sup> It was the first time a non-white cricketer had captained a West Indies side. What Jack Grant did was not lost on Learie Constantine. Twenty years later, as a government minister, Constantine invited Jack Grant to return to Trinidad to be Director of Education, a position he said he would have accepted were it not for his deep commitment to Africa. Jack Grant sacrificed his cricket career for what he considered to be a larger human project. Alan Paton, the eminent political activist and novelist in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, recalled that in 1954 the South African secret police searched Jack’s home and office looking for evidence that he was involved in sedition and added that “the gentle stream of Trinidad was becoming a turbulent river.” Paton praised this son of Trinidad and his wife, Ida, saying that “they came to cherish ideas of justice and of human equality, irreconcilable with the doctrine of white supremacy.”<sup>29</sup> But Jack Grant did not forget Trinidad nor West Indies cricket. In closing his story, he said that he missed the “greater days” of West Indies cricket which began with the three Ws, and Ramadhin and Valentine.

Why present the story of Jack Grant? Although one cannot help but admire his life's commitments, and celebrate his work in Africa, his cricket achievements were not great. He did not make the same path-breaking contributions to West Indies cricket as Pelham Warner, another member of the white upper classes, or equal the achievements of Jeffrey Stollmeyer and Gerry Gomez who displayed an abiding love and service to Trinidad and West Indies cricket and societies when they became independent nations. The purpose of this discussion on Jack Grant was to examine the nuances of the imperial social order by throwing light on the life of a representative of that order. One can argue that such a decent person was not representative of colonialism since colonialism was a virus that produced injured minds, not human compassion. As late as the 1950s, touring English and Australian teams reported that some white, upper-class West Indians spoke disparagingly of the West Indies teams, now dominated by blacks.

I have not used Jack Grant's story either to soften the image of imperialism or to diminish the efforts of people like Constantine, Headley, and, later, Worrell, and others on the West Indies team in their struggle on the fields of cricket for freedom and dignity of West Indian peoples. Jack Grant initially could not feel the pain of discrimination, as, say, Constantine, Headley, or Worrell did, but he understood it intellectually. Later in his life, he felt it as much as he understood it, and when he did, he gave his life to ending discrimination, perhaps not in Trinidad, but in the struggle in South Africa and South Rhodesia. Jack Grant gave us a map of racial discrimination in the British Empire. What he described were worlds of injustice meted to people of colour, but his life was testimony that the imperial system did not necessarily conquer people's hunger for humaneness nor their capacity for respect and love for others.

We must try to answer one more question. What were the influences that forged Jack Grant's social commitments? We certainly should not discount the force of the Christian values



with which he was nurtured by his family, and Ida. Neither should we ignore the Victorian virtues of responsibility, modesty, and duty that QRC, Harrison College, Eton and Oxford must have emphasised. But is it too farfetched to propose that the source of Jack Grant's personality and character was little different from, say, Constantine, Headley, the three Ws, Ramadhin and Valentine, and that was its West Indian-ness? Jack Grant took pride in the multiracial character of the schools he attended in Trinidad, and the West Indies cricket teams. His remark that he had appointed Constantine to act as captain on the final session of one of the most important matches of the early history of West Indies cricket because he was the best person for the job and Constantine's reciprocity years afterwards were profoundly West Indian acts of generosity.

When international cricket competition resumed in 1947 after the war, West Indies teams continued to show sparkle and promise. The war years disrupted Headley's career. In 1939 he was thirty, at the top of his batting prowess, a "second Bradman." He was still a very good batsman seven years later, but he was now in his middle thirties, and as his reflexes slowed, he became more defensive. But a new set of West Indies players were already making their mark, like the three Ws, Jeffrey Stollmeyer, and Allan Rae.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **REMEMBERING THE PASSAGE FROM INDIA; INDIA IN THE WEST INDIES, 1953**

Enthusiastic applause rang out from the large crowd that greeted the arrival of the Indian team, and Worrell and Ramadhin, as they appeared on the deck of their ship. Worrell and Ramadhin had traveled with the Indian team on the journey from England. After the heroic exploits of the West Indies team in England and Australia, West Indians did not view the upcoming contest with India with the same seriousness; in their minds English and Australian cricketers were the best in the world. India and the Indian team were hardly unknown to the West Indies players, most of whom had toured India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka in the successful 1948-49 tour. They would have had fond memories of the exciting fifth Test when in the last over an umpire's error might have prevented India from winning the nail-biting drawn fifth Test. Vinoo Mankad, Vijay Manjrekar, and Dattu Phadkar, who had made a great impression on the West Indies players in that tour, were selected for the 1953 tour to the West Indies.

In Trinidad and British Guyana, however, the visit of the Indian national team was of special significance because of the large Indian population in those territories. The success of Ramadhin, the first Indo-West Indian in the West Indies team, infused great pride among Indian West Indians. As it turned out, the splendid cricket of that tour proved to be significant markers in Indo-West Indian assertiveness in claiming their West Indian identity as Indians.

The issue of identity arose at a time when major moves were being made in the 1950s for self-government and the end of British colonial rule. As the quintessential imperial sport, West Indian cricket was initially dominated by white West Indian planter and commercial elites but gradually Afro-West Indians won the right to be selected on merit. There remained only the issue of captaincy of the team which remained unresolved and problematic until 1960. It must be stated, however, that many were of the opinion that on merit George Headley, Learie Constantine, and Frank Worrell deserved to have been selected as captain earlier. In the 1950s the complexities of race, culture, social class, and politics came to a boil in the movement for self-government. Given the history of Africans and Indians in the Caribbean, the matters of identity and self-esteem were vitally linked to self-government. Test cricket played no small part in building self-respect. Of equal significance was the proposal for a federation of British West Indian territories as the political form of a West Indian nation. It is difficult to say for certain what role West Indies cricket played in how these political issues were examined and resolved.

Ramadhin's performances and his acclaim by all West Indians gave Indo- West Indians a sense of pride and a feeling that they were at last considered West Indians. Since their ancestors' arrival from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century they wondered how long the elite social classes and African masses would continue to see them as foreign, and so they held on to fragments of memories of India handed down to them by their grandparents and parents. The experience of the first Indian team's visit brought a kind of re-connection with their ancestral world.

And so the Test series between India and the West Indies was a source of great pride among Indians from the West Indies. Indeed, all West Indians were impressed by the quality and character of the Indian team. The tour got underway in Trinidad with a match between India and a representative Trinidad Indian team in San Fernando which had a large population of Indians. I remember well the elation I felt as a boy when I saw Polly Umrigar batting. That match was memorable for a young woman from San Fernando. In her story, more appropriate for a Bollywood movie than cricket, she was taken by her father to the match. Her eyes searched out for Subash Gupte, India's young leg-spinner; it was history in the making, or more aptly, love in the making. A few years after, they were married.

Although the Indian team did not win any of the Test matches, they played with grit and flair in batting, bowling, and fielding. The West Indies team, captained by Jeffrey Stollmeyer, depended in batting on the mighty three "Ws", Weekes, Worrell, and Walcott, who were in their best form, and, in bowling, on the spin twins, Ramadhin and Valentine. The Indian team was not well known in the West Indies, and were certainly not considered in the same class as England, Australia or the West Indies. Batting first in the first Test at the Queen's Park Oval, Trinidad, India amassed a total of 417 of which Polly Umrigar made 130 with good supporting scores by Apte and Ramchand. The West Indies replied with 438 with Everton Weekes making 207 and Bruce Pairadudeau from British Guyana scoring 115 in his Test debut. India's second innings reached 294 but they did not give the West Indies a realistic chance of chasing a victory who settled for a draw. The pitches in the West Indies are hard and fast and so made for large scores. But none was as favourable to batsmen as the jute matting wicket at the Oval in Trinidad.

Ramadhin and Valentine were hardly match-winners. Ramadhin got 1 for 107 and 3 for 58, Valentine 2 for 92 and 1 for 47. If Ram and Val were unexceptional in this Test, the same could not be said of India's spin twins, Gupte and Mankad, whose performance, especially Gupte's, catapulted them on the stage of world cricket as among the finest spinners in the world. Right-arm leg-spinner Subash Gupte and left-arm orthodox spinner Vinoo Mankad took on Weekes and Pairaudeau at their best. Backed up by brilliant fielding, Gupte and Mankad refused to be intimidated by the power of Weekes or the grace of Pairaudeau. It was cricket at its finest. In the West Indies first innings Gupte took 7 for 162 in 66 overs and Mankad 1 for 129 in 63 overs. Time and again fieldsmen stopped powerful drives, slashes, and cuts by Weekes and in the same motion threw the ball over the stumps to the keeper with an accuracy that was rare even in Test cricket. Although the match ended in a draw, it served to excite considerable interest in the series.

Controversy arose when Ramadhin was not selected as a certainty for the second Test in Barbados. The local newspaper felt that it was an insult to the spinner and, though admitting that Ramadhin's performance did not live up to his reputation, considered it good enough to be worthy of selection.<sup>1</sup> It was fortunate for the West Indies that Ramadhin was restored to the team. In a generally low-scoring match, the rain-affected pitch gave considerable assistance to the spinners. Batting first, the West Indies made 296 with Walcott top-scoring with 98. Gupte and Mankad did the bulk of the Indian bowling picking up 3 wickets each. India replied with 253, Apte and Umrigar again making good scores. Ramadhin took 2 wickets for 59 and Valentine, 4 for 58. After bowling out the West Indies for 228 in their second innings, it seemed that India

had a good chance of making the 273 runs needed for victory with two days remaining. But the wicket deteriorated on the final day, and Ramadhin was virtually unplayable. India's total reached a paltry 129 with Ramadhin taking 5 for 26 in 24.5 overs. It would be the only occasion in this series when Ram and Val would recapture together the old magic reminiscent of England in 1950. The third Test was played at the Oval in Trinidad with the same drawn result and pattern as the first Test. Replying to India's 279, Weekes made 161 in the West Indies first innings of 315. The young Indian opener Madhav Apte made 163 not out in the Indian second innings of 362 for 7 declared ensuring that India was hardly likely to lose the match while West Indies captain Jeffrey Stollmeyer scored an unbeaten 114 in the West Indies second innings as the match petered out in a draw. The effectiveness of Ramadhin and Valentine was at its lowest point; Valentine got one wicket in each inning and Ramadhin failed to get a wicket. But Gupte continued his stellar performance capturing 5 for 107 in 48 overs in the first innings and 1 for 19 in the second.

The fourth and fifth Tests were also drawn. In the fourth at Bourda, British Guyana, India were able once more to fight back to claim a draw. Bowled out for 262 in their first innings, India worked to contain the West Indies batting to 364. Despite a deficit of 102, India saved the match by batting until the end of the match at 190 for 5. Walcott was the star batsman in the match making 125 in the West Indies first innings. Spinners did relatively well in the match. Valentine took 5 for 127 and Ramadhin 2 for 74 in India's first innings; Valentine 3 for 71 and Ramadhin 0 for 39 in the second. For India, Gupte took 4 for 122 and Mankad 3 for 155 in the West Indies only innings. As in Trinidad, the matches in British Guyana had historical and sociological significance for

Indian Guyanese who formed the majority of the population who were at last gaining the confidence to assert their identity as Guyanese and beginning to seek office in politics and society.<sup>2</sup> The praiseworthy performances of the Indian cricket team gave them another source of heroes with whom they could identify. Later in the 1950s, Rohan Kanhai, Joe Solomon, Alvin Kalliecharan, and Basil Butcher would join Bruce Pairaudeau and Clifford McWatt as cricket heroes for all Guyanese people. In 1953, however, the significance of the Indian team and their quality of cricket for the self-esteem of Indians in the Caribbean cannot be ignored. In his interview with Mihir Bose, Ivan Madray, the Indo-Guyanese spinner who later played two Tests for the West Indies, gave these comments on the Indian tour:

[I]t was a privilege to be an Indian watching the first Indian side playing in the West Indies. Although I was born in the West Indies and I should have identified with the West Indies team, I was, at that time, in total sympathy with the Indians. I think that it is true of most Indians in British Guyana in 1953.. .But I became more dedicated to my cricket; I played with a new courage and I made the pledge to play first-class cricket on that ground. Gupte was my idea of what a leg-spinner should be.<sup>3</sup>

The final Test at Kingston, Jamaica, encapsulated all the magnificent features of the series but at their most refined quality. In the Indian first innings of 312, Polly Umrigar made his second century of 117, and Pankaj Roy, another young opener, made 85. For the first time, all three “Ws” made centuries in the West Indies reply of 576; Worrell made 237, Weekes 109, and Walcott 118. Batting a second time, 264 runs in arrears, India made the impressive score of 444 with Roy (150) and Manjrekar (118) scoring

centuries. Perhaps the West Indies might have better pushed for victory if Ramadhin was on the team but he was dropped from that Test and was already on his way back to England. Valentine took 5 for 64 and 4 for 94 in each innings. The spinners shone for India even in the face of the West Indies batting onslaught. Gupte took 5 for 180 in 65.1 overs, and Mankad 5 for 228 in 82 overs. The fielding, especially by India, continued to be magnificent.

From a spectators' perspective, India's first tour to the West Indies was an exciting and colourful series, full of excellent cricket. The prestige of West Indies cricket was confirmed and the renown of the batting of the three "Ws" had reached its peak. Not least in significance was that the tour highlighted the fact that the West Indies comprised large segments whose ancestors came from India and who demanded inclusion in the West Indian identity, a project in the making, so to speak. For India, the performances of its young team helped to erase the bitter memory of their defeats in England. The consistent batting of Umrigar, Roy, Apte, and Manjrekar gave hope for the future. Umrigar made 560 runs at an average of 62.22 an inning, followed by Apte at 51.1, and Roy 47.87. Manjrekar showed immense promise as a young batsman. Their fielding was memorable, especially when Gupte and Mankad were bowling at the three "Ws". Vinoo Mankad confirmed the high opinion cricket experts had of him as one of the great allrounders as bowler and batsman. Outshining all was the emergence of Subash Gupte as one of the great spinners in world cricket. He took 27 wickets in the series. The next highest was Mankad with 15 wickets. The West Indies spinners, Ram and Val, continued to carry the brunt of the bowling. Valentine was more effective, but Ramadhin also bowled well. As an explanation of why Ramadhin did not do as well as expected, it must



be remembered that it was the fast bowlers, Fred Trueman and Alec Bedser, who were responsible for India's dismal batting performances in England in their previous tour. On the hard, perfect batting wickets in the West Indies, Indian batsmen had greater experience. One wonders what effect the threat of being dropped from the team had on Ramadhin. Ramadhin did not flight the ball as well as Gupte and on West Indian wickets where the ball hardly turned until late in a match, the flighted ball is more likely to deceive a batsman.

### **SUBASH GUPTA AND VINOOD MANKAD**

Commenting on the long line of excellent spinners in India, the eminent scholar and cricket writer, Ramachandra Guha, asserted that spin was “truly the great tradition of Indian cricket.” He traced the line back to Palwank Baloo, an untouchable, born in Dharwad in 1875. The story of his rise to cricket fame caught my eye because it brought echoes of Sonny Ramadhin's story. Settling in Poona, he got his first job with the groundstaff at Poona Gymkhana where he was invited by the English cricketers to bowl at them in the nets. The major tournament of the year was the quadrangular series between Hindu, Muslim, Parsee, and European teams in Bombay. Having overcome the controversy over his social status, the Hindu team was happy to include him once they saw his talent. He was their principal bowler for several years, and was selected for the all-India team that toured England in 1911. The Indian team lost half its matches but Baloo was the star of the team, taking 114 wickets on the tour. One match was worthy of special mention. In the match versus Staffordshire, Baloo's talents were pitted against the great Sydney Barnes, regarded as one of the finest bowlers in history. In a low scoring match which Staffordshire won, Barnes got 14 of the 20 Indian wickets while

Baloo got 8 of 15 Staffordshire wickets. For Guha, Baloo was the first great Indian spinner. Baloo's fame as a cricketer carried over into Indian politics where he was selected to the three member committee of the depressed classes with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and M.C. Rajah which negotiated the Poona Pact with Mahatma Gandhi in 1932. Baloo's pioneering success was the first in the long line that led to Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, Ashwin and Ojha. Along the way, say, in the 1950s, arose what some called the Holy Trinity of Indian spinners: off-spinner Ghulam Ahmed, "flowing effortlessly to the wicket", left arm spinner Vinoo Mankad, his left arm an inexhaustible storage battery," and right arm, leg-break and googly bowler, Subash Gupte, all great bowlers. Speaking for his generation, Guha selected his holy trinity Bedi, Prasanna, and Chandrasekhar.

Gupte's tally of 27 wickets in the Tests and 50 overall on the tour against a very strong West Indies batting side and, arguably, the best batsmen in the world in the three "Ws" was bound to draw attention from the cricketing world. He had played for India against England in one Test in 1951-52 and against Pakistan but his performance was hardly distinguished. His genius as a leg-spinner bloomed in the 1953 tour to the West Indies. Bowling against the famous and in-form Worrell, Weekes, and Walcott on a perfect wicket and supported by superb fielding brought out not only the bowling talents others had seen in him but his character traits of courage, patience, steadfastness and rationality. Still, could the spark of inspiration have been lit during that first match in San Fernando when he was introduced to and fell in love with his future wife? Like Ram and Val, Gupte was without question one of the great spin bowlers of the 1950s. A

celebrity in India, his destiny was, nevertheless, tied profoundly with Trinidad in the West Indies, especially San Fernando.

Gupte's spin-partner Vinoo Mankad was India's first world renowned spinner, entering the international cricket scene in the mid-1930s when India was still a colony and the "jewel" in the British Imperial crown. An elder statesman and the subordinate spin-twin but still one of the best allrounders in cricket, Mankad spanned both India's colonial past and newly independent nationhood. West India, particularly Bombay and Nawanagar in Gujarat, produced the first great Indian cricketers, Prince Ranjitsinghi, his nephew Duleep, and Vijay Merchant. Duleep built up the Nawanagar team in the 1930s and appointed an English professional, Bert Wensley, as captain and coach of the team who recruited young schoolboy M.H. Mankad, called Vinoo by his school friends. Born in Kathiawad, Gujarat, and the son of a physician, Mankad came to the cricket scene as a medium-pace left arm bowler, but, supported as a professional by a Princely state, converted to a slow, left arm orthodox spinner. He practiced long hours at improving his batting, and developed into a very good batsman, often opening the innings for India. Mankad became the first spin bowling hero for Indians, replacing the fast bowlers Amar Singh and Nissar who had distinguished themselves from the time of India's inaugural Test against England in 1932 until World War II began in 1939. One of Mankad's finest performances was in the second Test at Lord's in 1952 when, as opener, he scored 72 and 184, and took 5 wickets for 196 in England's first innings.

India's independence from Britain in 1947 brought a different and more democratic school for Test cricket than the school of princely selection and English coaching which shaped Mankad. In Gupte's case it was the popular cricket competition

on weekends on the vast central park or maidan called Shivaji Park in Bombay that nurtured the promising cricketer's skills, discipline, and competitiveness. According to cricket journalist Mihir Bose, cricket competitions were supplemented by "gully" cricket played at all hours everyday: "Maidans are broad, open spaces, gullies are little lanes running off busy main streets where children learn the game by improvising with a tennis ball, bits of wood, or any other implement that comes to hand."<sup>4</sup> Ivan Madray gave an insightful portrait of Gupte's craft as a spinner, as well as the requirements of the virtues of patience, intelligence, and persistence, a description that can well apply to all great spinners: "On a number of occasions when he was hit, he would stroll back slowly, thoughtfully, to his bowling mark, as if nothing had happened. And when you thought he was giving you the leg-break again, he would bowl his beautifully disguised googly or he would toss it up or shift it. He would try everything in one over, a different ball each time. And rarely did he lose control."<sup>5</sup>

When Gupte returned to India, he showed that his excellence in the West Indies was no fluke. In Test matches against Pakistan and New Zealand he took 21 wickets and 34 wickets respectively between 1954 and 1956, earning the reputation of being India's only match-winning bowler. In the parks of India, millions of young children imitated his action, "the short quick run-up, the chesty action with the right foot dragged at the moment of delivery...and the wrists cocked and the arm high...the lower arm and chesty action for one googly, the high arm for the other."<sup>6</sup>

It was the Australian tour to India in 1956/57 that seemed to eclipse Gupte's glitter. In the three Tests, the Australian batsmen orchestrated a plan to attack his bowling, and indeed all the Indian spinners, to prevent him from settling into his well-

known rhythm and accuracy of length and line so that he could launch his variety of spin attack. This was clear in the second Test at Bombay where Neil Harvey, Burke, and Burge attacked his bowling from the start of their innings. To attack spinners was a common tactic by opposing batsmen. But there were other factors as well. The famed Indian fielding was not up to standard and, most importantly, in the two Tests won by Australia, India did not total 200 runs in each of their innings which meant that Gupte and the general Indian strategy had to be more conservative than attacking, hardly an ideal situation for a leg-spinner. Although Gupte remained, arguably, India's best bowler, he did not pose the same threat to opposing batsmen. His successes were fewer, but he had the incredible figures of 9 for 102 in the first innings of the second Test against the West Indies in India in 1958, and he took 17 wickets in the 1959 tour to England when India lost all five Tests. He missed the series against Australia in 1959/60, but played in all but the final Test against Pakistan in 1960/61. He was anxious to do well against England when they toured India in late 1961. In the second Test he took 5 for 90 in the first innings. The third Test at Delhi was ruined by rain, but turned out to be Gupte's final Test for India.

Rooming during the Test with fellow player Kripal Singh at the Imperial Hotel, Gupte was implicated in a strange scandal about which he certainly was not responsible. When Kripal Singh called the hotel receptionist asking her to go with him for a drink, she promptly reported the matter to the team manager. In the inquiry, Gupte was accused by the Indian Board of Cricket of not preventing Singh from making the call. Worse, the selectors decided not to select Gupte for the upcoming tour to the West Indies, a decision

that left him dispirited and disappointed because he wanted to make the tour to the West Indies his last.

His Test career ended, Gupte and his wife Carol decided to migrate to Trinidad where he secured a managerial position at Caroni Ltd. and played a significant role in the development of cricket in his adopted country. During his Test playing career, Subash Gupte had taken 149 wickets at an average of 29.55 runs a wicket in 36 Tests. Here is how Gupte compares with the other great spinners of the 1950s:<sup>7</sup>

	Balls	Wickets	Times 5 wickets an inning
Gupte	11,284	149	12
Benaud	19,108	248	16
Laker	12,027	193	9
Lock	13,147	174	9
Mankad	14,686	162	8
Ramadhin	13,393	158	10
Valentine	12,953	139	8

I recollect one precious moment meeting Subash Gupte in 1967. He was one of the selectors in a trial match to select the Trinidad “A” and “B” teams that took place at Caroni Ltd.’s Park in Usine Ste. Madeleine. I was selected as a leg-spinner on one team and the young Inshan Ali on the other. That day I took 4 wickets and Inshan Ali, 3. Inshan Ali, the mystery left arm, “chinaman” and googly spinner, was preferred for the “A” team, and later played for the West Indies team in 12 Tests. Three years ago, when I started the research for this study, I met Carol Gupte, principal of her own school for young children, and asked her if her husband would agree to be interviewed. She told me that since his accident in 1987 when he injured his hip while walking his dog he has been in and out of depression and was reluctant to give interviews. I respected this. As I continued the conversation with Mrs. Gupte, she told me that India held a special place in

his heart and that he kept up his friendships in India, especially with Madhav Apte.

In a moving description of his interview with Gupte at his home in San Fernando in April 2002 when India was touring the West Indies, Rahul Bhattaracharya described Gupte's views on many issues about the Indian team of the day, their victory over the West Indies in the second Test, and cricket. Bedridden at 72, and as it turned out, at death's door, Gupte reflected: "It's always nice to hear about an Indian victory. People respect cricketers here. So, when they win, Indian cricket receives more respect. And personally I feel more proud. They respect me more too."<sup>8</sup> The article cited Sir Garfield Sobers' opinion that Subash Gupte was the best leg-spinner he had ever faced. Gupte admitted that the Australian Neil Harvey was the toughest batsman he ever bowled at, and deserves mention because Neil Harvey was the nemesis of other great spinners at the time, especially Ramadhin: "He was superb against me. I could never have his wicket. I still remember that innings in Mumbai where he scored 140-odd. And having completed the century he came to me and said, 'don't forget that as you have a reputation for being a good bowler, I too have one for being a good batsman.' It was real tough against him." Gupte recalled the 9 wickets he took against the West Indies at Kanpur and felt, with smiles, that if Ranjane had been more cooperative he would have got all 10 wickets. He said that he was sure that if Mankad or Ghulam Ahmed were bowling at the other end, they would have bowled wide to give him the opportunity to claim the tenth wicket. He wondered whether Indian officials had the same power as when he was an active player, but he did not mention the incident that made him retire from Indian cricket. He recalled only that he was scolded by officials for wearing a half-pant at practice but not a word was said to captain Pataudi when he wore a blazer over a half-pant when he went out to

toss to decide which team would bat first. When asked whom he considered the best Indian batsman, he replied without equivocation, Sunil Gavaskar.

Gupte's favorite story was still of when he met his wife Carol at a function in San Fernando on the 1952/53 tour and fell in love with her, and the "long flirtation via post" that followed before they were married. He remembered practicing his bowling every afternoon after 3 p.m. at the Oval maidan in south Bombay until 9:30 when he would return home by the local train, and recalled that Vijay Manjrekar used to sing for the Indian team in the dressing room, but he did not think that he was very good.

In his magisterial, *A History of Indian Cricket*, Mihir Bose illuminated the joy and pride of Indo-West Indians in Trinidad and Guyana at the excellent performances of the Indian team, but he also drew attention to the sentiments of Indo-West Indians that they were discriminated against by the Black middle class and masses in Trinidad and British Guyana. Were Bose's comments about racial tension between African and Indian West Indians justified?<sup>9</sup> Of course, Bose was looking at the issue of race relations in British Guyana beyond the 1953 tour to developments in 1963. A general strike broke out on April 18, 1963 and lasted for 80 days, resulting in terrible violence between African and Indian Guyanese. 1500 persons were forced to resettle in communities of their own ethnic group; 1400 homes were destroyed by fire; 176 people were killed and 920 were injured. It was later learned that the strike was secretly inspired and funded by the US CIA and British intelligence. According to historian Arthur Schlesinger, adviser to President Kennedy, the US feared that British Guyana would receive its independence in 1963 and join Cuba as another communist government in the region. In addition, they feared that Premier Cheddi Jagan would nationalize Reynold's Aluminium Company.<sup>10</sup>



Cheddi Jagan and Forbes Burnham who were leaders in the nationalist movement for self-government in the late 1940s and 1950s in the Peoples Progressive Party were both Marxist anti-imperialists and socialists. Jagan maintained that he was also inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian Freedom struggle. The victory of the PPP and Jagan in the election of 1953 was viewed by both the British and US governments as intolerable. Warships were sent in to prevent any turn to the political left and to destabilise the government. The PPP was therefore one of the first casualties of the cold war. The PPP was elected again in 1957 and 1961, and were still unacceptable by Britain and the USA. Active attempts to divide Jagan and Burnham succeeded when the PNC party was founded with Forbes Burnham as its leader. To the issues of anti-imperialism, class hostility, and the cold war was added bitter racial division between Indians and Africans. Local leaders seemed unwilling to give up alliances based on race as they sought to gain or keep political power. Trinidad was spared the kind of racial violence that overwhelmed British Guyana in 1963. But racial tensions exist and come to the surface at elections, like at the elections in 1961 when some talked about partition as a solution in the face of militant political rhetoric. Leaders in Trinidad seem able to pull back from the precipice of extremism. Let it be said, however, that the nationalism conceived by the founding fathers of Caribbean nations was unequivocally inclusive of all races, cultures, classes and religions, and universal in their philosophy. But the mechanism of party politics and the intoxication of power have served to place loyalty to party before humane principle. This tendency often gets in the way of projects for social and economic uplift of the masses of Caribbean people.

But is the racial question in the West Indies more problematic than the religious and social conflicts in India? Were there no similarities between Indian and West Indian nationalism? The secular, multicultural, and nonviolent nationalism of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, among others, as they struggled from 1919 to achieve freedom from British rule rightly deserves admiration. But we cannot forget that as late as 1940 Mohammed Ali Jinnah, one of the leaders of the struggle for Indian freedom and, earlier, an advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity, demanded a separate nation for Indian Muslims, leading to the great pain and suffering of partition and independence in 1947. Nelson Mandela has spoken and written of his admiration for Gandhi's anti-imperialistic and anti-racist struggles, and of the influence of India's freedom movement on Africa's independence movements.<sup>11</sup> Not only was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jnr. inspired by Gandhi's *Satyagraha* to launch his own successful nonviolent movement in the USA,<sup>12</sup> but African American movements and leaders like W.E.B. Dubois from the 1920s were studying Gandhi's movement.<sup>13</sup> Indians and Africans have interacted with each other throughout history, and are not strangers to each other in the West Indies. That African nationalist leaders, Asian and African American people took a serious interest in Gandhi's movement offers a lesson to West Indians whose education until independence focused almost exclusively on British and European civilization, and came to value Western progressive ideals as universal. In cricket, West Indians were more familiar with the great names of British and Australian cricketers, much less of South Asian cricketers. If West Indians were to learn of India's civilization and its cricket history, they will find much in common and certainly much of interest. Above all, they will learn that although cricket was the classic British imperial sport, Indians as well as West

Indians have made cricket Indian and West Indian.<sup>14</sup> Both societies are rich in diversity, and are worthy examples of modern democracy. We can learn from each other, especially to learn to respect and accept cultural differences.

I conclude this section on the India tour with two narratives of my experiences in India as a Professor in 1993 to illustrate how profoundly Indians love cricket. The first was at Delhi University. When my students learned that I played cricket, they asked me to play for a student team at tennis ball cricket. Every morning at 6, from February to April, there was a knock at my door at the Delhi University Guest House inviting me to play competitive cricket until 9 a.m. There must have been twenty matches being played at the same time on the large University grounds, something like the Maidan in Bombay where Gupte and Manjrekar practiced their batting and bowling. The second story took place in Benares, that old and great ancient religious city. As I crossed the Ganges at 5.30 in the morning to see the magnificent sun rise and the countless crowded little boats bringing pilgrims to sacred Hindu sites, my pilots, 10 year-old Vijay and his 8 year-old sister Rekha Baboolal, inquired where I was from. When I replied, "Trinidad," each retorted spontaneously, "Brian Lara." Lara had recently made a smashing double century in Australia. These two Indian kids from Benares knew about it and identified Lara with Trinidad. I doubt very much whether any of my university students in the US would have made that connection.

## CHAPTER 6

### PLAYING AT HOME AGAINST ENGLAND AND AUSTRALIA

#### 1954 AND 1955

England's visit to the West Indies in 1953 was different than earlier tours when their teams did not comprise their best players. The memory of being beaten at home by the West Indies in 1950 on the one hand, and the reclaiming of the "ashes" after 19 years by their recent victory over Australia, thanks to the fast bowling of Frank Tyson and Brian Statham, persuaded the MCC to send their best team under a professional captain for the first time, the great batsman Len Hutton. They obviously hoped to erase the memory of their loss to the West Indies and to prove that they were again the best team in cricket. Their batting line-up included Len Hutton, Dennis Compton, Tom Graveney, Peter May, and Willie Watson, four impressive pace bowlers in Freddie Trueman, Brian Statham, Alan Moss, and the allrounder Trevor Bailey, two spinners, Jim Laker and Tony Lock, with an outstanding reputation, and the brilliant wicketkeeper Godfrey Evans. There was no doubt that they came to win the series. For the West Indies, too, the tour was of the utmost significance. They did not forget that the 1951 defeat at the hands of Australia put paid to their hopes of world cricket supremacy. England's victory against Australia revived their expectation that if they defeated England, they then had the right to affirm that they were the best in the world. For the most part, they had the same team with the three "Ws", Stollmeyer, Gomez, and the spinners Ramadhin and Valentine. Jeffrey Stollmeyer was selected as captain, and no one disputed this. He was a regular

member of the West Indies team, a graceful, accomplished opening batsman, and all agreed that he possessed an excellent knowledge of the game.

The cricket was competitive with no quarter given. Yet, the matches, indeed the general climate of cricket, could hardly be said to be pleasant and good natured, as the previous tour by India. There were frequent complaints about umpiring decisions, players' sportsmanship, crowd disturbances, and even accusations that the newspaper coverage of the series was biased.

That it was a serious time in West Indian societies offered one explanation. The nationalist movements for self-government and independence were strong, and their expression often started with the argument of anti-imperialism and anti-racism. The other issue was equally momentous, whether it would take the form of a West Indies Federation of British territories or each territory would seek self-government for itself. In Jamaica, both the Jamaica Labour Party under the fiery Alexander Bustamante and the People's National Party whose leader was Norman Manley worked for self-government, to build national spirit, and were committed to parliamentary democracy. There was some Marxist influence in the PNP but they were given the choice of resigning or being expelled from the party. When the PNP formed the government in 1955, Norman Manley pledged:

I am not going to steal away the rich man's money nor am I going to take the poor man's goats...I am not going to tax any class out of this country...On the contrary the aim must be to create conditions under which people will stop wanting to run away.<sup>1</sup>

Norman Manley's project was how to transform Jamaica from a plantation society to a modern humane state. Enthusiasm as well as anxiety greeted the 1950s nationalist

movement. In addition, the issue of West Indian Federation, the hope of many West Indian intellectuals up to the present, took a beating in the ups and downs of local Jamaican politics and eventually both parties gave conditional acceptance. October 9, 1953 is considered Black Friday in Guyana. It was the day when the constitution was suspended and British warships arrived to destabilise the People's Progressive Party government accusing the newly elected Premier Cheddi Jagan with being a communist. The governor took over the government with emergency powers and banned all meetings. Supporters of the PPP found themselves victimised.<sup>2</sup> In Barbados, the granting of adult suffrage resulted in the end of white control of the Assembly in 1951.<sup>3</sup> As Black nationalism swept the Caribbean, the masses became assertive in demanding social justice. White Barbadians campaigned against labour unions, adult suffrage, and the University of the West Indies. In forming the People's National Movement in 1955 and as premier of the government in 1956, Dr. Eric Williams fired the minds of the Trinidad masses with anti-colonialist speeches, although he was more moderate in his political agenda. When he brought back in 1958 the brilliant Trinidad Marxist intellectual C.L.R. James to edit his party newspaper, he encouraged James to give his revolutionary stamp to West Indian nationalism in two important issues – support for the West Indies Federation and the movement to make Frank Worrell captain of the West Indies cricket team. In this series against England, therefore, all kinds of conscious and unconscious conflicts were at play.

The first noteworthy event of the series was that George Headley was brought back from the Birmingham league in England to play for Jamaica and the West Indies in the first Test as a replacement for Frank Worrell who had sustained a finger injury and

was unavailable for the first Test. Headley was past his best and his relative failure as a batsman was not unexpected. Boldly, England played four fast bowlers, Trueman, Statham, Moss, and Bailey and left out the experienced off-spinner, Jim Laker. It was an early indication that emotion rather than reason was going to play a greater part in this series.<sup>4</sup> The first Test was played at Sabina Park, Jamaica, in January 1954. Winning the toss, the West Indies amassed a total of 417, with good scores from J.K. Holt, Weekes, Walcott, and Guyanese wicketkeeper Clifford McWatt. Statham with 4 for 90 and Lock, 3 for 76, were the pick of the English bowlers. Surprisingly, England were trundled out for a meagre 170, mesmerised again by Ramadhin and Valentine who took 7 of the wickets and bowled 66 of the 89 overs in the innings. It was reminiscent of 1950, but this time Ramadhin's effectiveness lay less with prodigious spin than with flight and variation of pace. To the amazement of the crowd, captain Stollmeyer did not enforce the follow-on for which he was so vociferously booed that he vowed not to play in Jamaica again. Happily, he changed his mind for the final Test in Jamaica. The crowd did not know that Ramadhin had complained of a sore finger and as a precaution Stollmeyer preferred a day's rest from bowling for his main bowler. For most of the remainder of the match it seemed that he had made the wrong choice. It was only on the final day that fortune turned in West Indies favour. The West Indies declared at 209 for 6 wickets in their second innings with Everton Weekes making 90 not out. Chasing 457 for victory, England's opening pair of Hutton and Watson put on 130, and the second wicket pair of Watson and Peter May, 90. After the first hour's play on the final day England was within sight of victory. Obviously disturbed by this possibility, Stollmeyer adopted the dreadful negative policy of the "leg-theory" and packed fielders on the leg side. Its

purpose was defensive and to prevent England from continuing to attack towards victory. The strategy paid off because England collapsed and were all out for 316, leaving the West Indies victorious by 140 runs. Pace bowler Esmond Kentish took 5 for 49 and Ramadhin 2 for 88.

What was actually an exciting and well contested match was marred by disturbances from the partisan crowd. The young Jamaican opening batsman J.K. Holt, playing in his first Test, was on 94, on the verge of a prized maiden Test century, when he was given leg-before-wicket by Jamaican umpire Perry Burke. A near riot ensued and the umpire had to be escorted home. While condemning the “sordid example of mob behaviour,” Michael Manley explained what happened in this way: “Jamaica, like the rest of the Caribbean, was still at a point of social evolution in which class and national tensions rub like exposed nerves against objective events.”<sup>5</sup> Giving an English version of the Test, the English journalist Alex Bannister said that Holt was clearly out, but the crowd in their anger felt that Holt should not have been given out “even if Holt was leg-before.” A spectator slapped umpire Burke’s wife, others accosted Perry Burke at a station with a knife and later a pistol; one of his sons was beaten up, and his father, employed on the docks, was threatened with being thrown into the sea.<sup>6</sup> To this blistering attack on West Indian crowds Bannister added that there were rumours that “undisguised threats were made to dig up the pitch and boycott the Test if Headley was omitted.” English players criticised the umpiring and J.K. Holt. They alleged that Holt was clearly out when given not out in the match against Jamaica, and in the second innings of the first Test. They questioned lbw decisions against Compton and Graveney when they played forward to Ramadhin and Valentine, although Bannister was prepared



to acknowledge that the pitches in the West Indies were different than in “England, where the ball turns sharper [and] umpires are reluctant to give a batsman leg before if, as he stretches forward, the ball hits the front leg.” This was written in 1954, a remarkably forboding comment of the strategy to undermine Ramadhin’s effectiveness in 1957.<sup>7</sup> To the charges against the emotional crowds and incompetent umpiring was added English players discomfiture at features of West Indian life: barking dogs which caused the team to lose sleep; the vultures that ate a dead dog causing Tony Lock and Freddie Trueman to lose their spirits; hundreds of spectators perched on surrounding trees; and the persistent noise and betting of the crowd.

Len Hutton must have wondered how he was going to revive England’s fortunes in the second Test at Kensington Oval, Barbados. Appointed the first professional captain of England in 1952, he had transformed the performance of the team into world-beaters. Confronted once more by the wiles of Ramadhin and Valentine, he articulated for his team a policy of playing safe, grafting for runs, hoping to wear down the spinners who attacked them. Technically brilliant and capable of batting flair, Hutton emphasised concentration and discipline in selecting when to attack. He tried to make the strength of discipline England’s way to overcome the West Indies.

For the second Test England played two fast bowlers, Brian Statham and Trevor Bailey, and brought back Jim Laker to partner Tony Lock as spinners. As for the West Indies, Worrell re-joined the team but Weekes could not play. Winning the toss a second time, the West Indies made 383. Clyde Walcott made a masterful 220, assisted by Bruce Pairaudeau, 71, and Denis Atkinson, 53. In contrast to Hutton, Walcott’s approach to batting was to attack the bowling whether pace or spin. Although the West Indies had

lost three early wickets to the pace bowling, and in the face of Hutton's menacing attacking fields, Walcott attacked the bowling with his well-known drives off the back foot. In reply, England's conservative approach produced a pathetic batting display. In a day's batting, England could only muster 128 for 7, and were all out for 181. Ramadhin bowled 53 overs taking 4 for 50 with 30 maidens; Valentine took 3 for 61 in 51.5 overs with 30 maidens. Once again Stollmeyer decided not to enforce the follow-on. In their second innings the West Indies declared at 292 for 2 with J.K. Holt making a glorious 160. England made another fine effort to get the 435 for victory but their chase ended at 313. Denis Compton made a sparkling 93 and Hutton, a solid 77. Controversy arose in Barbados also, but not like in Jamaica. Lock was no-balled for "throwing" by both umpires in the match against Barbados when he bowled his faster ball. This did not become too big an issue because it was known that he was no-balled for the same reason in England in 1952. Captain Len Hutton persuaded him not to bowl his faster ball as the way to avoid continuing controversy on the West Indies tour. Two Test defeats brought all kinds of stories and rumours in the English press which said that the English players were indulging in excessive partying.

A great burden was placed on the shoulders of the English players in the third Test at Bourda, British Guyana. Hutton won the toss and elected to bat, putting into practice the Hutton strategy of batting conservatively to gradually build a winning total. England reached 435 of which Hutton made 169 with good supporting scores from Compton and the middle order of the line-up. When Alf Valentine got the wicket of Jim Laker, he became at twenty three the youngest player to get 100 wickets in Test cricket. Ramadhin was the most successful bowler taking 6 wickets for 113 in 67 overs, and

Atkinson, 3 for 78. Despite a fine 94 by Everton Weekes, the West Indies could only make 251 with Brian Statham, bowling brilliantly, getting 4 for 64. Hutton did not hesitate to ask the West Indies to follow-on, and bowled out the West Indies for 256. England easily made the required 75 runs for victory. At last England won a Test match and with their confidence regained had high hopes of winning the next two Tests and gaining the series. In giving his reasons for the victory, Hutton mentioned the great team spirit and brilliant fielding and catching. He could have added that Statham's brilliant bowling on the fastest wicket of the tour and his own magnificent 169 were central to the winning effort.

But controversy and bitterness were too integral a part of the third Test to avoid mention. Vexed over his team's sense that the umpiring was unfair, Hutton remonstrated that the two Guyanese umpires selected for the third Test, Alwyn Rollox and Cecil Kippings, were not up to standard, and asked that they be replaced. It was previously agreed that each colony where a Test was played would provide the two umpires. In the circumstances, E.S. Gillette and "Badge" Menzies were selected as the umpires. Late on Saturday, February 27, 1954, there occurred a disgraceful incident that is often recalled to remind cricketing nations about the excessive zeal that nationalism produces. In the West Indies first innings, seven wickets had fallen for 139 runs, but Clifford McWatt, the Guyanese wicketkeeper, and injured J.K. Holt, batting with a runner, were heroically engaged in a partnership to reach the 286 runs needed to avoid the follow-on. The crowd cheered every run and the partnership reached 98 when McWatt, by his own admission, was two yards short of his ground attempting a second run. Umpire Menzies dutifully gave him out. Hundreds of bottles, tins, and boxes were thrown towards Menzies. On

the opposite side near the press box hundreds of bottles were thrown. The situation threatened to become a full-fledged riot. W.S. Jones, president of the Guyana Cricket Board, went on to the field and suggested to Hutton that the players leave the field. Hutton replied that they were not going to do so. Ken Wishart, secretary of the Guyana Board of Control telephoned police headquarters to send the riot squad. Cricket eventually resumed. This was how Len Hutton's decision to stand his ground was interpreted by English journalists: "The simple action of the dour strong-minded England captain in turning his back on the mob and concentrating on the job on hand was a symbol of English character and, as such, more eloquent than a thousand speeches, more forceful than a volley of bullets. I have never felt prouder of 'our Len.'"<sup>8</sup> There was an almost Kiplingesque echo of British imperial values in this description. Although it represented the old established Guyana elite order, the *Guyana Graphic* in its commentary at least showed that Guyanese understood what happened as part of the political conflict they were experiencing in Guyana: "For some years now there have been foreign trained propagandists in the colony who have been concentrating on stirring up a spirit of disregard for other people's rights, a spirit of hostility to the old ideas of order and discipline, a spirit of contempt for religion and a very false ideas that it savours of the spirit of independence for anyone to be as rough and as crude as possible in his deals with others... When on top of this spirit of lawlessness there is being cultivated a spirit of disloyalty to the Throne to which we all owe allegiance and without whose protection we could not defend ourselves against the attacks of any foreign enemies, then we foresee...useless and serious shedding of blood."<sup>9</sup>

As the series moved to the Queen's Park Oval, Port of Spain, for the fourth Test, all were hoping that the climate of the match would be as placid as the jute matting wicket usually is. That expectation was in vain. Currents of unequal historical relationships were too deep and at the same time were then coming to the surface. Almost from the beginning in the colony match against Trinidad, resentment reared its ugly head. Freddie Trueman, bowling against leg-spinner Wilfred Ferguson, sent down two bouncers. The second hit Ferguson high on his cheek as he tried to hook sending him bloody to the ground. Trueman calmly walked back to his bowling mark, rolled up his sleeves, and surveyed the scene like a boxer after knocking out his opponent. Only when Charles Palmer, acting on instructions from the captain, Trevor Bailey, requested that he should offer some sympathy did Trueman shake Ferguson's hand. At the end of the day's play Trueman ran into the dressing room and did not allow the batsmen to go in first as was the custom. West Indians were livid and interpreted Trueman's behaviour as unsportsmanlike. The *Trinidad Guardian* commented that the "day when the British handed out pretty beads to the natives are long past."<sup>10</sup>

The Test match produced great batting and ended in the expected draw. In the grand West Indies total of 681, Weekes made 206, Worrell 167, and Walcott, 124. England made a spirited reply of 537 with Peter May 135, Denis Compton 133, and Tom Graveney 92. This Test was a run festival. The West Indies declared their second innings at 212 for 4, and England played out the final stages at 98 for 3 wickets.

During the Test the English players seemed to show contempt for the umpires, Ellis Achong and Ken Woods. A little before lunch on the first day the English players were confident that Tom Graveney had caught Holt in the slips but umpire Achong

rejected the appeal. Compton raised his hands in disbelief; Graveney threw the ball to the ground. With the score at 168, Weekes, then at 43, seemed to be caught at the wicket by Dick Spooner but the appeal was turned down by umpire Woods. Minutes later, umpire Achong went to Len Hutton and complained that his fieldsmen were showing disapproval of the decision. In narrating this episode, the *Trinidad Guardian* quoted an English player asking umpire Woods whether he was deaf. In a letter to Len Hutton, the cricket writer, J.S. Barker, acknowledged publicly how distressed West Indians were by the hostility that had arisen during the tour. He admitted that the standards of umpiring might not be as high as in England, but rejected unequivocally that the umpiring was dishonest. He made it known that bad sportsmanship of some English players was intolerable.<sup>11</sup>

The fifth and final Test was played at Sabina Park, Jamaica. For England, spinner Johnny Wardle replaced Brian Statham who was injured. The West Indies left out Valentine because his injured finger which kept him out of the previous Test had not healed completely, and brought in young Garfield Sobers. The match was virtually decided in the first hour's play when Trevor Bailey shocked the first four West Indies batsmen with his fast swing bowling. The score had reached a mere 13 when Holt, Stollmeyer, Weekes, and Worrell were already out. Despite a gritty knock of 50 from Clyde Walcott the West Indies total was a paltry 139, with Trevor Bailey having the amazing figures of 7 wickets for 34 runs. The West Indies bowlers showed hostility and at one time England were 177 for 5, but once again the quality, application, and brilliance of Hutton withstood the onslaught and took England's score to the winning total of 414 of which Hutton made 205. Frank King took 2 for 45, Ramadhin 2 for 71, and Sobers 4

for 75 with his left-arm spin. Batting in their second innings, the West Indies fought hard to save the match, and even the tailenders fought for every run. Around tea time on the final day the innings closed at 346, leaving England to make 72 for victory which they did with about one hour's play left. Bowling with a sore finger, Jim Laker took 4 wickets for 71 runs and Trueman 3 for 88. The series was therefore tied, two tests each. There was at times great cricket, but it was also one of the most unpleasant series in cricket.

For England, Brian Statham got the most wickets with 16 followed by Bailey, Laker and Lock with 14 each. Hutton topped the batting averages with 96.71 runs an inning. The West Indies batting was topped by Clyde Walcott with an average of 87.25. Ramadhin was the most successful West Indian bowler with 28 wickets; Valentine took 7 wickets in the first three Tests and did not play in the remaining two Tests. It was a great triumph for Len Hutton as batsman and captain to come back from two Tests down to tie the series. When asked years later who was the best batsman he bowled against, Ramadhin quickly answered, "Len Hutton."

## **THE AUSTRALIAN CONQUEST OF THE WEST INDIES**

Who could have predicted the utter defeat that the Australians inflicted on the West Indies in their first tour to the Caribbean? They had just lost the "ashes" for the first time in nineteen years when they were defeated by England. In turn, the West Indies must have had doubts of their own form since they had lost two of the final three Tests against England in 1954. One did not need to be a cricket expert to see that Australia brought a formidable team. Their batting consisted of the experienced and outstanding

Arthur Morris, Colin McDonald, Neil Harvey, and Keith Miller while their bowling was powerful and balanced, a mixture of pace from Ray Lindwall, Miller, Ron Archer, Alan Davidson, and Bill Johnston, and spin from the young leg-spinner and alrounder Richie Benaud, Jack Hill, and experienced off-spinner, captain Ian Johnson.

The three “Ws” continued to be the core of the West Indies batting strength although Worrell was not fit for most of the series, while the bowling attack still revolved around the spin of Ramadhin and Valentine who on the fast, shiny, and batting-friendly wickets of the West Indies were not as effective playing at home as they were in England. Two promising young West Indians were considered for selection: Gary Sobers from Barbados had taken 4 for 75 in the final Test against England with his slow left-arm spin, and O.G. “Collie” Smith who had come from the Boys Town Club in Spanish Town, Jamaica, run by Methodist minister Fr. Hugh Sherlock for disadvantaged young men, and was considered by knowledgeable cricketers to be a future George Headley. The most controversial selection of all was the selection of Dennis Atkinson, the Barbadian alrounder, as captain for the first, fourth and fifth Tests when injuries forced the appointed captain Jeffrey Stollmeyer to withdraw from the team. There were tense protests at this by political groups that were angry at the persistence of what they saw as white supremacy in appointing Atkinson over Frank Worrell, an issue that continued to be contentious until Worrell was finally selected as captain for the Australian tour in 1960.<sup>12</sup> This had to have a destabilising effect on the morale of the team and captain Atkinson. Although the accusation about the survival of the system of white supremacy was not implausible, it was certainly unfair to Atkinson the person. Commenting on the issue, Richie Benaud defended Atkinson as one of the most approachable and dedicated



players he knew during his twelve years of Test cricket, and sympathised with his predicament and fear that his accusers would tear him apart, judging by the political rhetoric over the issue. Benaud admitted that his team concluded that the negative politics could not but unsettle the West Indies team. So the Australian team decided to use the situation to their advantage and “jump in there and seize them by the throats” in the first Test.<sup>13</sup>

To use a horseracing metaphor, Australia got out of the starting gate quickly and amassed the huge total of 515 for 9 wickets with centuries from Neil Harvey and Keith Miller which gave them the confidence to adopt an attacking strategy and set the stage for the series. The West Indies bowling attack was not at its best by the end of the first day as Worrell was injured and Valentine’s finger had to be bandaged. All the same, it was clear that Harvey and Miller used the time-worn Australian strategy of venturing down the wicket to attack and undermine Ramadhin from the beginning. Ramadhin’s figures were 1 for 112 in 46 overs, and Alf Valentine 3 for 113 in 54 overs. Clyde Walcott was the most successful bowler with 3 for 50. Australia did not need the off-spin of their captain Ian Johnson as their pace bowlers Ray Lindwall, Keith Miller, and Ron Archer bowled out the West Indies for 259 and 275. Australia won the first Test by 10 wickets knocking off the 20 runs required for victory. For the West Indies, Clyde Walcott made 108 in the first innings and would go on to have an excellent series. The other shining light in the general gloom, however, was the performance of Collie Smith who resisted the wiles of the Australian bowlers and gave his own Jamaican stamp to his batting scoring 44 in the first innings and 104 in the second.

Stollmeyer resumed the captaincy for the second Test played in Trinidad on its new turf wicket which turned out to be little different from the old matting wicket in favouring batsmen. The West Indies made 382 in the first innings and 273 for 4 in the second when the match ended; Australia declared their first innings at the massive total of 600 for 9. For the West Indies, Walcott made a century in each innings (126 and 110), which meant that, counting his final two innings against England, he had scored four consecutive Test centuries. Everton Weekes made 139 and 87 not out, the first time that the Australians saw the measure of his brilliance as he had not done well in the 1951 tour. The other noteworthy fact was that the young Collie Smith who had made a century in his first Test against England made a pair of “ducks” in this Test. In Australia’s innings, Colin McDonald, Arthur Morris, and Neil Harvey made centuries, while Ron Archer (87) and Ian Johnson (66) continued the thrashing of the West Indies bowling. Ramadhin, 2 for 90 in 32 overs, and Valentine, 2 for 133 in 49 overs, were again attacked in calculated fashion by the Australian batsmen who, like mad dancers as in the first Test, preferred to dance down the wicket against Ramadhin to drive him on the half-volley or full toss, a strategy that worked more easily because of the shoddy West Indian fielding. To confirm that there was a method to this madness, the Australian batsmen commented that they had enormous respect for Ramadhin and Valentine as among the best spinners in the world.<sup>14</sup>

Not content with the drawn second Test, the West Indies selectors shocked the cricket world by announcing that they had decided to drop Ramadhin and Valentine for the third Test in British Guyana. Valentine’s omission was understandable since his spinning finger had not healed properly. When it was learned that Ramadhin was left out because batsmen had “exploded” his mystery, even Keith Miller was amazed by this

explanation: “If Ramadhin is exploded, so are Lindwall and myself, and anyhow what chance has a spin bowler had on these wickets so far.”<sup>15</sup> Len Hutton was said to have given this response to Ramadhin’s omission: “Ramadhin is the best bowler I have played against.”<sup>16</sup> Stung by the criticism and nudged by captain Stollmeyer, Ramadhin was recalled to the Test team, but Collie Smith was omitted. This is what an Australian correspondent wrote about the senseless omission of Smith: “In five innings against the Australians Smith scored 169, 41, 104, and two ducks. He has my sympathy. So has the game of cricket, which cannot afford this iniquitous kind of injustice.” Another correspondent, Ray Robinson, felt that this dropping of a batsman of such “uncommon class” suggested that the selectors’ methods were “based on the oranges-and-lemons nursery rhyme principle of chip-chopping the head off the last man to fall.”<sup>17</sup> Australia won the third Test easily by 8 wickets in a relatively low-scoring match. On a good batting pitch, the West Indies surprisingly made only 182 with Weekes scoring a scintillating 81. After Miller and Archer had made the initial breakthrough, leg-spinner Richie Benaud ran through the lower half of the order taking 4 for 15 in 3.5 overs. Australia laboured to a total of 257 as Benaud top-scored with 68. Sobers (3 for 20), Atkinson (3 for 85), and Ramadhin (2 for 54) bowled well to restrict Australia to their modest lead of 75. Fortune did not favour the West Indies as they began their second innings because the wicket began to take spin. Off-spinner Ian Johnson began to exploit the conditions almost as soon as he came on. Three wickets had fallen before the total crossed 25, but in truth more to poor shot selection than the condition of the pitch. Walcott and Worrell tried to retrieve the desperate situation and for a time it seemed that they would change the character of the match. But when the score was 150 and later 162,

first Walcott and then Worrell unbelievably were out stepping on the wicket. The chance of being out “hit-wicket” is close to the proverbial one in a million. Who, then, can offer any explanation why this happened to experienced batsmen who were batting comfortably and had made 73 and 56 respectively at the time they were out? Having bowled out the West Indies for 207 with Ian Johnson taking 7 for 44, Australia made the required 133 for two wickets.

Jeffrey Stollmeyer had injured his shoulder, leg, and ankle when he fell while fielding and was replaced again as captain by Dennis Atkinson for the Test in Barbados. Collie Smith returned to the team to join Sobers as players for the future, and young Jamaican fast bowler Tom Dewdney made his debut in place of Frank King. Once more the captaincy caused a storm of protest. It was clear that West Indian nationalism was taking the form of race consciousness. West Indian masses and radical political groups were incensed once more that Worrell, who had earlier been captain in one Test, was vice-captain in several Tests, and even was deemed knowledgeable enough to be made captain of the Commonwealth team against India, had been passed over again for captain because, allegedly, of the old issue of race.

The fourth Test began inauspiciously for the West Indies. Australia won the toss and made another mammoth score of 668 in their first innings with Richie Benaud (137), Ray Lindwall (118), and Ron Archer (98) making impressive scores batting lower down the order, illustrating perhaps the level of demoralisation the West Indies team had reached. Ramadhin and Valentine hit their low in Test cricket; Ramadhin had figures of 0 for 84 in 24 overs and Valentine 0 for 88 in 31 overs. Tom Dewdney took 4 for 124 in his Test debut, and Atkinson 2 for 108. Batting, the West Indies were reeling at 147 for 6

wickets when the glorious uncertainty of cricket produced one of the great partnerships in the history of cricket and gave captain Atkinson the opportunity to answer his critics that he did not deserve to be on the West Indies team. It was also poetic justice because, however defensible the argument for making Worrell captain was, and it was defensible, the abuse heaped on Atkinson was by no means justified. Atkinson and Clairemont DePeiza, Barbadians, put on a record partnership of 348, Atkinson making 219 and DePeiza 122. The West Indies made 510 and saved the follow-on. In the Australian second innings of 249, Atkinson continued to be the man of the hour, taking 5 for 56 while Collie Smith took 3 for 71. Despite Australia's aggressive drive for victory, the West Indies batted with greater resolve in their second innings and saved the match. They were 234 for 6 wickets when the match ended in a draw. One oddity of interest was the extent of Atkinson's loss of confidence in Ramadhin and Valentine which could be measured in the bowling statistics showing that in the second innings Ramadhin was asked to bowl 2 overs and Valentine 6 overs while Atkinson bowled 36.2 overs and Smith 34.

It came as no surprise that Ramadhin and Valentine were not selected for the fifth and final Test in Jamaica. Indeed, Ramadhin left for England on the Monday before the Test began. The humiliating defeat the West Indies suffered showed that the problem of their cricket was more serious than the failure of Ramadhin and Valentine. The West Indies made a good score of 351 in the first innings, thanks to another magnificent score of 155 from Clyde Walcott. Keith Miller took 6 for 107 and Ray Lindwall 2 for 64. But the West Indies bowlers again could not contain the mighty batting machine of Australia which declared their first innings at 748 for 8 wickets with centuries from Neil Harvey

(204), Colin McDonald (127), Keith Miller (109), Ron Archer (128), and Richie Benaud (121). Australia bowled out the West Indies in the second innings for 319, winning by an innings and 82 runs, and the series by three Tests to none.

Australia had outplayed the West Indies in all areas, batting, bowling, and fielding. Neil Harvey topped the batting averages with an incredible 108.53 runs an inning, but nine Australians had a better than 40.00 average. As for the bowling, fast bowlers Miller and Lindwall took 20 wickets apiece and the spinners, Benaud and Johnson, 18 and 14 respectively. For the West Indies, Clyde Walcott topped their batting average with 82.70 but only three others had a better than 40.00 average. In bowling, Atkinson got 13 wickets, Sobers 6, and Ramadhin, Valentine, Smith, and Dewdney, 5. These statistics told the extent of Australia's superiority. Of course, one wonders whether the racial controversy over Worrell and Atkinson affected team spirit. Or, for that matter, whether Ramadhin's near omission for the second Test had any influence on him or the morale of the team. It must be said, however, that the lack of success of the spinners was not unexpected. Too high hopes were placed on them when the nature of West Indian wickets and the difficulties Ramadhin and Valentine experienced against India and England at home should have reminded the authorities behind West Indies cricket that the policy of concentrating essentially on spin to win matches was risky and that they should have tried to diversify their attack. They should have known that Australia not only had the reputation of conquering eminent opposing spinners but also, practicing on their own wickets, they had the competence to win rather than lose their battles. Two marvelous examples come to mind.

At Headingley, England, in 1948, England set Australia 404 runs to make in the final innings on a spinning wicket. Jim Laker, the off-spinner who would develop into a great spinner in the 1950s, was expected to bring victory for England, but Don Bradman and Arthur Morris attacked Laker in concerted fashion, throwing him off his length and line, and in the end Australia won easily. English disappointment was so great that Laker was kept off England's team for the next two Test series. In the three Test series between India and Australia in 1956, the great Subash Gupte was tamed, and even overshadowed by Australia's leg-spinner Richie Benaud. The Australian batsmen, especially Neil Harvey, attacked Gupte and did not allow him to settle in his well-known rhythm. Some considered this to be a watershed in Gupte's bowling career as he was "not as supreme as he had been" afterwards.

If there was a silver lining for the future of West Indies cricket, it came from the promise of Gary Sobers and Collie Smith who performed creditably in batting and bowling in the series. They were expected to be major players in the transition to the next generation of West Indies players.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **HAPPY TIMES AGAIN, IN NEW ZEALAND, BUT**

### **HORRORS IN ENGLAND, 1956, 1957**

After the crushing defeat at the hands of Australia, the West Indies found a full tour to New Zealand in early 1956 a happy hunting ground; none moreso than Everton Weekes and the spinners, Ramadhin and Valentine, who repeated their successes in the short tour following the Australian series of 1952. The West Indies sent a youthful team built around the experience of Weekes, Ramadhin, and Valentine hoping that Gary Sobers, Collie Smith, and Tom Dewdney would continue their progress and mature their skills against the moderate New Zealand team which had not yet reached the top flight of Test cricket. Stollmeyer and Gerry Gomez had retired from cricket, but John Goddard, still active, was named player/manager of the tour. He batted so well that he was named captain for the forthcoming tour of England in 1957. New Zealand had not yet won a Test match at home or abroad. The outstanding but aging left-handed batsman, Herbert Sutcliffe, and alrounder John Reid were still their best players.

The age of conquest and empire left Europeans dominant in the world, including New Zealand. Situated in the South Pacific and originally peopled by the native Maori, New Zealand owed its British connection to Captain Cook's exploration of the islands in 1769. It was initially a dependency under the jurisdiction of New South Wales colony in Australia. Influenced by European traders and Christian missionaries, the uneasy relations between Maori and European peoples saw the Maori adopt aspects of Western



culture. In 1840 the Maori and representatives of the British Crown signed a treaty ceding sovereignty to the British Crown. Controversy persisted as to whether the Maori understood the content of the treaty. In 1769 the population of the Maori was put at between 100,000 and 200,000.<sup>1</sup> With the increasing settler migration from England and New South Wales, the European population outstripped the natives. By 1872 the European population was 256,000, and the Maori, one fifth of that number. New Zealand's people considered their ties to England and the empire precious, as it was the source of their immigrants, trade, and loans. It considered itself democratic by establishing universal adult suffrage before even England and the USA, and embarked on its modernization at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to bring prosperity and social welfare to its people, thanks to the increasing prices of its wool, meat, and dairy produce.

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century it achieved Dominion status. In all of England's wars, the Boer War, World War I and II, New Zealand sent troops to support Great Britain and its allies, and suffered many casualties. It was an illustration of their loyalty to the British empire that although the Great Depression of the 1930s caused great misery and unemployment, in World War II New Zealand maintained a division in the Middle East and Italy. New Zealanders became aware of the importance of the USA for their defense when the stationing of American marines helped relieve the crisis they felt especially after Singapore fell to the Japanese.

Following that war, the Government and people of New Zealand set out to build a better world for themselves. In supporting the Labour Party they imagined a New Zealand that was free from poverty and sickness, and free from unemployment. On the issue of immigration, however, they insisted on limiting immigrants to British and Whites

“to enhance and consolidate New Zealand as a British society.”<sup>2</sup> For the most part, this policy was meant to exclude Indians and Chinese labour. The immigrant bill was “the result of a deep-seated sentiment on the part of a huge majority of people in this country that this Dominion shall be what is often called a ‘white’ New Zealand...be of the same way of thinking from the British Empire point of view.”<sup>3</sup> This exclusivist policy did not lessen New Zealanders’ self-esteem as a just society. Nor did their exclusion of native Maoris from their Rugby team when it visited apartheid South Africa in 1949 cause undue criticism. Generally, in the 1950s, New Zealanders wanted to forget memories of the Depression and the War and to move on with their lives to better themselves and make a better future for their children. Culture and sport increasingly occupied their leisure, and cricket, rugby, and athletics were of great interest. Industrialization and another period of boom prices for their agricultural products paved the way for New Zealand’s material progress.

As they had done in 1952, Ramadhin and Valentine relished the softer pitches which were prepared more like those in England. At Dunedin in the first Test, New Zealand could muster only 74 and 208, with Ramadhin taking 6 wickets for 23 runs and 3 for 58. In the West Indies first innings of 353 Weekes made 123. The second Test was almost a carbon copy of the first. Replying to the West Indies total of 386, New Zealand were bowled out for 158 and 164 with Ramadhin taking 5 for 46 in the first innings and Valentine 5 for 32 in the second. Weekes made another century (103) in the West Indies innings with Atkinson 85 and Goddard 83. The third Test at Wellington was not much better for New Zealand who lost by 9 wickets. Everton Weekes made yet another century in the West Indies total of 404. New Zealand made 208 in each innings, and the West

Indies knocked off the required 13 runs for 1 wicket. A major surprise was in store for the West Indies in the fourth and final Test at Eden Park. Batting first, New Zealand made 255 with their indefatigable captain John Reid making 84. Tom Dewdney finally displayed his promise by claiming 5 wickets for 21 runs. The West Indies replied with the modest score of 145. In their second innings New Zealand struggled to declare at 157 for 9 wickets, leaving the West Indies to get 268 for victory. The top scorer for New Zealand with 41 in their second innings was Simpson Guillen, who played for the West Indies against New Zealand in 1952 and later migrated to New Zealand. By bowling out the West Indies for 77, New Zealand earned their first Test victory in 26 years of Test cricket.

From the West Indies perspective, the tour to New Zealand restored the reputation of Everton Weekes whose eminence of the early 1950s had been eclipsed by Clyde Walcott. Even more significant was the return to form of Ramadhin and Valentine as a pair. While one must be cautious about singing their praises because months earlier India had inflicted a crushing defeat against New Zealand, it was, nevertheless, wonderful to see them operate and be effective as a pair complementing each other's virtuosity. Ramadhin and Valentine claimed 35 of the Test wickets, of which Ramadhin took 20. In the first Test Ramadhin's tally of five wickets meant that he had joined the select group of bowlers who had taken 100 wickets in Test cricket. J.S. Barker, the *Trinidadian Guardian* correspondent, summed up what most students of cricket felt when he wrote that Ramadhin and Valentine complemented each other, and that neither was as effective without the other bowling at the other end.

## TO ENGLAND AGAIN IN 1957

When the West Indies team toured England in 1957 the Conservative Party was still in power. Having returned to power in 1951 under Winston Churchill, the Conservatives would govern Great Britain for thirteen years with Anthony Eden as its prime minister from 1955. The Conservatives did not curtail public spending and the Welfare State social policies initiated by the Labour Party when it formed the government in the elections following World War II. Despite the glitter of its empire, one third of the population of Great Britain was gripped in poverty between World War I and II, made substantially worse by the Great Depression and the war. This was the principal reason why voters preferred the Labour Party to Churchill and the Conservatives. Pushed by its minister of health, Aneurin Bevan, the Labour Party tackled the problems of unemployment, housing, and access to health facilities. In 1946 a National Insurance Plan was introduced to provide old age pension, unemployment relief, and health and injury benefits.<sup>4</sup> Economic recovery was well under way as the 1940s came to an end. On the political front, there were shifts. NATO was founded in April 1949 as an alliance of democratic capitalist European countries to counter the spread of communism. Although India's freedom struggle had ended in independence and partition into India and Pakistan, there was little awareness of the depth of anti-colonial feeling in the rest of the empire.

There was in 1957 a discernible rise in the standard of living of the British. More and more people bought cars, moved from tenements to housing estates, enjoyed washing-machines, television and popular music. More people lived comfortable lives

and were satisfied with their economic situation. There was also an alternative view of what was taking place, captured by writers like John Osborne and Kingsley Amis and described as “the angry young men” phenomenon. These writers examined the frustration and alienation at the growing limits to Britain’s power in the world and most people’s confusion in understanding the new social forces in their world.

The memory of the mythical 1950 tour must have been uppermost in the minds of the selectors for how else could one explain why John Goddard was chosen to captain the team and not Dennis Atkinson who was the captain for three Tests against Australia and performed very well batting and bowling, and was captain for the previous tour to New Zealand. The team was again built around the batting of the three “Ws” and the bowling of Ramadhin and Valentine. England had an impressive team and were, arguably, the supreme team at that moment, having defeated Australia. Peter May was now captain and was considered by some to be the best batsman in the world.<sup>5</sup> May, Colin Cowdrey, Tom Graveney, and Peter Richardson formed the heart of the batting while the old guard of pacemen Trueman and Statham, and spinners Laker and Lock with the veteran allrounder Trevor Bailey gave England a diverse and formidable bowling attack. The West Indies expectations were high. The three “Ws” and Ramadhin and Valentine performed so exceptionally well in the preliminary county matches before the first Test that the hope that the West Indies would repeat their 1950 success was founded on reason than simple nostalgia. Sadly, Valentine was dropped for the first Test, but a welcome sign was the inclusion of Gary Sobers, Collie Smith, young Guyanese batsman Rohan Kanhai, and the young Jamaican fast bowler Roy Gilchrist. In its commentary before the first Test opened at Edgbaston, Birmingham, *The Times* of London remarked how West

Indies cricket had developed from its “childhood” in 1929 to a cricketing power. In the mind of the correspondent the tour promised to be an exciting one because the team boasted of five players who were among those responsible for bringing West Indies cricket to the highest level . He felt that Ramadhin was the central figure since the English batsmen did not have much to fear from the other bowlers. There was a mystery about Ramadhin that still endured among English batsmen, and they must “unravel and overcome it” if they were to be successful.<sup>6</sup>

The word commonly used to describe the fluctuations and transformations of that Test match was “astonishing.”<sup>7</sup> After the first day’s play the worst fears of England were confirmed as Ramadhin destroyed the English batting on a perfect wicket, taking 7 wickets for 49 runs in 31 overs in England’s total of 186. At the close of the first day the West Indies were 83 for 1 wicket. It was a repetition of the old story of 1950, as the magical description of Ramadhin’s achievement was reported:

But the day revolved around Ramadhin, who bowled hardly a loose ball and deceived one batsman after another with an immaculate display of skill and cunning. Scarcely ever, it seems, does he bowl with two balls alike. An off-break bulging with flight will be followed by another pushed through lower and faster. His leg breaks are of no set pattern and he does it all as nonchalantly as though he was bowling to small boys in the nets. His run consists of a preliminary stutter and four short paces. Before starting it he licks his fingers and bites his lip. He bowls in a cap, his sleeves buttoned at the cuffs, and no Englishman ever threatened to take him by the scruff of the neck.<sup>8</sup>

It was, indeed, Ramadhin’s day, but it was different from other triumphs. In 1950, as on so many other occasions since then, the magic was associated with the idea of the spin twins, Ramadhin and Valentine. The captain and management of the West Indies team had decided that it was going to be Dennis Atkinson, the medium-paced off-spinner, who would be paired with Ramadhin.

As it commented that the West Indies made batting look easy when they took turns at batting, the *Times* correspondent concluded, “For there is only one Ramadhin.”

Responsible and disciplined batting by the West Indies pushed their first innings to 474 with Collie Smith making a magnificent 161. The *Times* reporter acknowledged that he was aware of Smith's "rare talents and immense enthusiasm" but "his sound judgment came as a surprise."<sup>9</sup> Although they were injured, Walcott (90) and Worrell (81) showed their quality while young Sobers (53) and Rohan Kanhai (42), as opener and wicketkeeper, added useful scores. On that sunny Saturday on the first day of June, the young Collie Smith and elder statesman Frank Worrell, allowed a runner, Bruce Pairaudeau, thrilled the large crowd of 32,000, especially their West Indian admirers among them. When England lost 2 wickets for 102 at the end of the day's play, an England defeat seemed certain. Ominously, the wicket began to favour spin and Ramadhin had taken the two wickets.

The glorious uncertainty of cricket is an old lesson of cricket wisdom, but there was really nothing so far in the match to indicate the complete reversal of fortunes the following two days. Overnight batsman Brian Close was out early on the fourth day and Colin Cowdrey joined Peter May with defeat staring them in the face. Batting with great character and grit, and a new strategy against Ramadhin, they battled for all of that day and a large part of the final day, declaring at 583 for 4 wickets. Cowdrey was out for 150 and May, not out with the stupendous score of 285. The partnership put on 411, the highest for England, and the third highest in Tests anywhere. Ramadhin bowled a record 98 overs, 35 maidens, and took 2 wickets for 179. It was said that that he was so tired at the end that he seemed to be sleepwalking. Ramadhin's new partner Dennis Atkinson bowled 72 overs, 29 maidens, and took no wicket for 137 runs. Injuries sustained by

Worrell, Gilchrist, and Walcott meant that there was little relief for Ramadhin and Atkinson.

Well, how can the transformation of the match be explained? The strategy that May and Cowdrey used was not the Australian one of going down the wicket to attack the spinners. May had tried this in the first innings when he felt that he must hit Ramadhin off his length, but after driving him to the boundary for four, he was caught trying to repeat the stroke. The strategy that they now employed was later labelled “padmanship.” To balls pitched on or about the off-stump on a good length the batsman would stretch their left leg down the wicket and then let the ball hit their pad, estimating that they could not be given out *lbw* because of doubts about whether the turning ball would have hit the wicket. As a footnote to this negative strategy, the rule was changed in 1970 so that a batsman could be given out if he played well forward if in the opinion of the umpire he padded a ball which would have hit the wicket. As far as the British journalists were concerned, however, it was more a case of English “pluck” and luck that brought the game back from the edge of defeat, describing May’s innings as the finest ever played by an English captain. They were on the mark, however, when they said that captain John Goddard would have regretted not having Valentine bowling with Ramadhin. How many times he appealed for *lbw*! Some said 50 times, others 100: “The inscrutable Ramadhin would half-turn his head, raise his eyebrows, and look questioningly at the umpire out of the corner of his eye. But the gentleman in white vetoes his requests.” To English batsmen the practice was legal and justified in the context of the match. Ramadhin found that it was more a case of kicking the ball with impunity than cricket. He could understand and accept battles where bowlers and



batsmen attacked each other, or even defensive struggles and techniques. But, in his mind, “padmanship” was hardly a legitimate technique, and when he retired from Test cricket at the age of 31 in 1961 he gave as one of his reasons his frustration at English “padmanship.” Had Gilchrist and Worrell not been injured, Goddard could have mixed up his attack, give Ramadhin and Atkinson periods of rest, and made it more difficult for May and Cowdrey to continue in their batting mould. Frustrated mentally and physically over after over, “the magician lost his magic. The spring had gone out of his run, the poison had left his fingers.”<sup>10</sup> Set to make 296 runs to make in 160 minutes, and now thoroughly demoralised, the West Indies barely survived to draw the match, making 72 runs for 7 wickets on a worn pitch. After the initial damage by Freddie Trueman, Laker and Lock, two of the finest spinners in the world, especially on turning wickets, pounced “like a rattle snake” on the batsmen with England’s fieldsmen all placed close to the wicket. Someone must have noted the irony of Collie Smith’s demise when, after surviving tenaciously for 65 minutes, and despite constant appeals from Laker and Lock, he was given out *lbw* offering no stroke.

The noted former Jamaican Prime Minister and esteemed cricket writer Michael Manley contended that the conquest of Ramadhin by May and Cowdrey effectively put an end to West Indies chances of success in the series.<sup>11</sup> There was no doubt about the psychological advantage that England now had. English batsmen no longer had that concern nor awe when Ramadhin came on to bowl. Having decided to build their attack around the wiles of Ramadhin, the West Indies were unable to try alternative strategies because of injuries to Gilchrist, Worrell, Valentine, and Atkinson. As significant as the ineffectiveness of its bowling was to the decline of the fortunes of the team was the sharp

drop in the scores of the three “Ws.” Comparing their Test scores of 1950 and 1957 illuminates this fact:

	Innings	Runs	Highest	Average
Worrell (1950)	6	539	261	89.83
(1957)	10	350	191	38.88
Weekes (1950)	6	338	129	56.33
(1957)	10	195	90	19.50
Walcott (1950)	6	229	168	45.80
(1957)	10	247	90	27.44

The decline in run production meant that in three of the next four Tests the West Indies made such small totals that they lost in three days by an innings in large part due to chronic injuries to Walcott and Weekes, not to mention the inadequate preparation of the wickets in the Tests at Lords and at the Oval. England had the diversity of bowling to exploit the conditions of the pitch whether they favoured pace or spin.

In the second Test at Lords, Bailey and Trueman, bowling with venom on a green wicket where the ball swung and lifted, bowled out the West Indies for 123. Trevor Bailey took 7 wickets for 44 runs. England replied with 424, Cowdrey continuing with his fine form made 152 and wicketkeeper Godfrey Evans 82. Everton Weekes made 90 in the West Indies second innings total of 261, losing by an innings and 36 runs, Bailey taking 4 wickets for 54 in the second innings. In England’s innings Ramadhin took 1 wicket for 83 in 22 overs and Valentine, returning to the team, bowled only 3 overs for

20 runs. Tailender batsman Freddie Trueman rubbed salt in the wound of Ramadhin's humiliation by hitting Ramadhin for three towering sixes in one over which drew the comment from the London *Times* that three weeks ago Ramadhin was the terror of all England but now even Trueman showed him scant respect. Relishing the West Indies defeat while confessing that the pitch favoured England's bowling, the article, nevertheless, attributed their defeat to "temperamental and technical" shortcomings, made transparent by their loss of esteem.

In the third Test at Trent Bridge, Nottingham, on a pitch "without life, pace, or virtue", England made a total of 619 for 6 declared in their first innings with Tom Graveney 258, Peter Richardson 126, and Peter May 106 the main contributors. Ramadhin (0 for 95) and Valentine (0 for 68) were but a shadow of their old form. The West Indies failed to save the follow-on making 372 with Worrell achieving the magnificent feat of having opened batting through the West Indies innings for 191 not out. In their second innings of 367, Collie Smith made the grand score of 168 and, aided by good scores from Atkinson (46) and Goddard (61), gave England 121 to make in an hour, of which they made 64, the match ending in a draw.

England won the fourth Test at Headingley, Leeds, in three days by an innings and five runs. In a low-scoring match, the West Indies made scores of 142 and 132, and England 279. For England, May (69), Cowdrey (68), and Sheppard (68) were the top scorers, while fast bowler Peter Loader was the star of the bowling attack, taking 6 for 36 in the West Indies first innings and 3 for 50 in the second. The only high quality performance for the West Indies was the bowling of Frank Worrell. With his left arm

medium-paced bowling he took 7 wickets for 69 runs. It was a measure of how Ramadhin had lost his effectiveness that he failed to take a wicket, 0 for 34 in 19 overs.

In the final Test at the Oval, London, on a pitch that was called by Sir John Hobbs as not as good as it should be for a Test match, the West Indies suffered their most humiliating defeat. England won the toss and made 412 with Richardson (107) and Graveney (164) top scoring. For the first time since the first Test Ramadhin's bowling recovered its accuracy and danger. He took 4 wickets for 107 in 53.3 overs. On a spinner's wicket, the English spinners Laker and Lock happily relished the conditions. The West Indies were bowled out for 89 in their first innings and 86 in their second. Laker and Lock shared 16 of the 20 West Indies wickets. Tony Lock took 5 for 28 in the first innings and 6 for 20 in the second. There was some truth in the *Times* commentary that "massacres are never fun to watch," and that the West Indies could have fought with greater determination but their spirit and will had faltered.

The Test averages give a good picture of the difference in performance of the two teams. For England, seven batsmen had higher than 50% batting average with Tom Graveney reaching an average of 118.00, Peter May 97.80, and Colin Cowdrey 72.50. In bowling, Trueman took 28 wickets, Laker 18, Lock 15, Statham 13, Bailey 13 and Loader 10. For the West Indies batting, Collie Smith topped the averages with 39.60, followed by Worrell 38.88, and Sobers 32. Ramadhin topped the bowling for the West Indies taking 14 wickets, Worrell 10, and Gilchrist 10. In his speech during the ceremony following the final Test, the vice-captain Clyde Walcott said that England won because they were the superior team, but warned that just as England in 1957 had

reversed the defeat suffered in 1950, the West Indies would do their best to avenge their defeat in the next tour to England.

The tour marked the end of an era where the three “Ws,” Ramadhin and Valentine, Stollmeyer, Alan Rae, Gerry Gomez, Goddard and Atkinson brought the West Indies to the top flight of cricketing societies. Against Australia in 1951/52, England in 1954, and England again in 1957, they knocked at the door of cricket supremacy, but came up short. If later West Indies teams would climb the mountain top and become world champions, it was because they stood on the shoulders of the giants of the 1950s and before.

Sadness greeted the announcement by Walcott and Weekes that they were going to retire but that emotion was cushioned by the awareness that one of the bright spots of the 1957 tour to England was the promise of the young players, Gary Sobers, Collie Smith, Rohan Kanhai, Roy Gilchrist, Wesley Hall, and Gerry Alexander, the Jamaican wicketkeeper who played in the final two Tests. At the beginning of the tour the cricketing world was saddened by the apparent end of the Ramadhin and Valentine combination. By the end of the tour, it was equally sad to become aware that the world of spin that was the backbone of the bowling of this great West Indies side which had put West Indies cricket on the map was coming to an end.

The diminishing effectiveness of both Ramadhin and Valentine was apparent before the advent of “padmanship.” To some extent it was recurring injuries which were the consequences of bowling for long stretches and being overworked. Ramadhin complained of a persistent painful back and a “Dennis Compton” knee; Valentine’s spinning finger was constantly bloodied after long hours of prodigious spin. Frank

Worrell wondered whether Ramadhin's lack of success in the later 1950s came from playing Lancashire League cricket which seemed to have changed Ramadhin from attacking the stumps to a strategy of bowling defensively to his field to save runs as League bowlers were accustomed to do.<sup>12</sup> Ramadhin and Valentine would continue to play Test cricket until 1961 but, in and out of the Tests, they were not the central actors on the bowling stage as the West Indies looked to develop a more diversified attack, and to emphasise a strategy of pace bowling. Looking back at the achievements of Ramadhin and Valentine, and what they gave to cricket and West Indian peoples' self-esteem, Michael Manley described their significance beautifully:

Ramadhin and Valentine were no ordinary pair of bowlers. There was a moment in the history of the game when they enjoyed a sort of joint charisma and developed a collective persona, despite the incongruity of their physiques in juxtaposition. There is a sense in which they completed what Headley lacked: the ability to justify the batsman's effort by bowling out the other side.<sup>13</sup>

## **ENGLAND'S SPIN TWINS JIM LAKER AND TONY LOCK**

Although West Indians are hardly likely to agree with Clyde Walcott when he wrote that the English spinners, Laker and Lock, were a better pair on all wickets than Ramadhin and Valentine, who were more dangerous on English soft wickets, there is no doubt that Jim Laker and Tony Lock were a magnificent pair of spin bowlers whose roles in England's team of the 1950s were those of superstars.<sup>14</sup> I remember vividly listening to the radio commentary of the first and final Tests of the 1957 series in San Fernando, and can still conjure up the drama and tension as I imagined Laker and Lock as demons

attacking West Indies batsmen. The West Indian islands must have held fond memories for Jim Laker because he made his Test match debut for England in the tour to the West Indies in 1948. From an English perspective, it must have been a depressing series since they lost the last two Tests after drawing the first two. Still, Jim Laker's performance offered hope for the future. In the first Test in Barbados, Laker took 7 wickets for 103 runs in 37 overs. He took 18 wickets in the Tests, more than any other English bowler, raising the eyebrows of English supporters with the hope that he was a future match winner.

Born in 1922 in Yorkshire, the son of Ellen Kane and Charles Laker, Jim Laker was recognised for his proficiency in sports ever since his happy years at Salts High School. He carried a tennis ball in his pocket which he "spun, bounced, and flicked" while walking. His independent, courageous, and self-reliant mother, a school teacher, gave him every encouragement, buying him his first bat, pads, and cricket outfit, and enrolled him at 16 in the coaching sessions at Headingley in the winter months.<sup>15</sup> It was more his promise as a batsman that attracted cricket enthusiasts who recommended him to the Bradford League club, Saltaire, renowned also because the great spinner Syd Barnes played for the club. Laker saw Barnes play once and remarked how accurately he bowled although he was then in his 60s.

World War II interrupted Laker's cricket career in the Bradford League. In 1941, at the age of 19, he volunteered for service and was stationed in Egypt during the war where thousands of servicemen from all nations were stationed in Cairo. Commissioned in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, Laker was active in the cricket competition played by servicemen from Australia, England, and New Zealand. He developed enduring

friendships with the New Zealand batsman Bert Sutcliffe and English batsmen who recognised his promise as an off-spinner. It was in Egypt that Laker mastered his craft as an off-spinner. After demobilisation, he was invited to a try-out for Surrey County Club, and was given a contract in 1946. In a remarkable first season for Surrey, he topped the bowling averages and was selected on Sir Pelham Warner's representative team in a festival match against a South England team. In the second innings Laker took 6 wickets for 109, including a hat-trick, and received a late invitation to tour the West Indies with the MCC team in 1948. As described earlier, his performance was so impressive that England had very high expectations of him in the following series against Australia. Perhaps it was the bitter disappointment when he failed to be the matchwinner in the fourth Test at Headingley, Leeds, that influenced the selectors not to select him for the Test at the Oval, and the tour to South Africa. Indeed, between 1949 and 1951 he played in only four Tests. Jim Laker's genius shone too brightly to be ignored for long. His fortunes for Surrey and England turned in his favour once he joined forces with left-arm spinner Tony Lock.<sup>16</sup>

A boisterous extrovert, Tony Lock seemed the opposite of Laker's calm, thoughtful temperament. When he first bowled for Surrey, he floated the ball with his high action but with little spin. The first turning point in his career occurred after 1951 and 1952 when he worked at coaching in the Allders Indoor School at Croydon for two winters, and improved his bowling technique as well. A new Lock was born. His arm was lower at delivery; Extending his delivery stride, he "dugged in" the ball. This new action produced prodigious spin, and, in addition, his faster ball was very fast. On a spinners' wicket he was unplayable, like in the fifth Test against the West Indies at the



Oval in 1957. The problem about the new technique was that when he bowled, his left arm was bent at the elbow. Lock was called for throwing in England in 1952 and in 1953 in the West Indies. Some English players were of the opinion that umpires and cricket authorities were more lenient then and were inclined to tolerate his action.<sup>17</sup> Jim Laker thought that Lock “threw” only his faster ball. At any rate, it was commonly believed that most spinners did occasionally “throw.”

The brilliance of Laker and Lock as a pair shone brightly in England’s first “ashes” victory in nineteen years against Australia at the Oval in 1953 when they took 9 wickets in the second innings. Jim Laker’s greatest performance was without question, however, at Old Trafford, Manchester, in 1956 against Australia. With the series poised at one Test victory each, England batted first and made 459. Unbelievably, Australia were bowled out in their first innings for 84, and 205 in the second. Laker took 9 wickets for 37 runs in the first, and 10 for 53 in the second innings. Taking 19 wickets in a Test match, and 48 wickets in that series against Australia must surely rank as among the greatest individual achievements in cricket history. Sir Don Bradman saw Laker’s genius demonstrated in his high trajectory, great spin, and excellent body and shoulder movement. For Australian spinner Richie Benaud, Laker could turn the ball on perfect pitches and was the master of spin and swerve. The well-known cricket commentator John Arlott focussed on Laker’s exceptional intelligence, keen observation, flexibility, and sound judgment. Tony Lock’s greatest performances were his 11 for 48 in both innings at the Oval against the West Indies in 1957, and 11 for 65 in 1958 at Headingley. With such a pair of spinners in addition to such brilliant and hostile pace bowlers like Trueman, Statham, and Bailey, it was no wonder that England reigned supreme in cricket

for seven years in the 1950s. Laker's only tour to Australia was in 1958/59 where he developed an arthritic finger which forced him to retire in 1959. He still took the most wickets on that tour, fifteen, and topped the bowling averages in England's loss to Australia, bringing an end to their era of triumphs. The series turned in the second Test at Melbourne where the brilliant Neil Harvey, who had crushed Ramadhin and Gupte on other occasions, found the answer to Laker's genius, and made 167 out of a total of 305 bringing victory to Australia.

Tony Lock's career took another embarrassing turn. When in the New Zealand leg of the 1958/59 tour of Australia and New Zealand he viewed a film taken of New Zealand's previous tour to England, and his own exploits in taking 34 wickets in that series, he and his colleagues were filled with shame at what they saw. There was no doubt that there was a pronounced bending and straightening of the arm.<sup>18</sup> With typical and admirable determination, Lock undertook long days and months of practice to change his technique once again, winning the respect of all lovers of cricket. Lock migrated to Australia in 1963 and led Western Australia to its first Sheffield Shield triumph in 1967/68. He returned to England to captain Leicestershire, and played for England in the fifth Test against the West Indies in 1971 at the age of 41.

## CHAPTER 8

### THE EMERGENCE OF PACE: TOWARDS A NEW ORDER

Predictably, the end of the 1950s brought the transition to a new team and a new bowling strategy. That West Indian teams remained competitive and in contention for world cricket supremacy around an attack that focused on the spin bowling of Ramadhin and Valentine without the benefit of a well-balanced bowling attack as England and Australia possessed speaks loudly of the sustained hostility and effectiveness of the spinners. The crushing 1957 defeat by England, the taming of Ramadhin and Valentine, and the decline of the three “Ws” meant that the old ways had to make room for the new if the West Indies were going to regain their cricket prestige. Ramadhin and Valentine would now be minor actors on the stage of Test cricket, in and out of the team, as new players made their presence felt and the the bowling strength took a new direction towards pace. In 1958 and 1959, the new West Indies team played its first Test series against Pakistan in the West Indies, and, later, undertook a long tour to India and Pakistan.

Although it was unofficial, Pakistan’s first representative match as a new nation born out of the partition of India in 1947 was against the West Indies when they toured India in 1948/49. Sri Lanka did receive its independence in 1948 but freedom from British imperial rule in 1947 was still an unusual event because British imperial rule over its colonies in Africa and the Caribbean continued for the most part up to the 1960s. Mahatma Gandhi’s *Satyagraha* movement for self-rule was an epic struggle, admired by

many leaders of anti-colonial struggles. No less noteworthy was the advocacy of a separate Muslim nation-state of Pakistan by the Muslim League of India, beginning in 1940 and culminating in the partition of India into two nations, India and Pakistan. Comprising provinces in East and West Pakistan, Pakistan experienced another political eruption in 1971 when East Pakistan won its independence from Pakistan as the new nation of Bangla Desh. The horrible civil strife between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs between 1946 and January 1948, and the first war between India and Pakistan over the question of Kashmir brought dismay in the world who came to respect first Gandhi's nonviolent struggle for independence and, later as an old man, his amazing efforts to stop the religious riots. Some 15 million refugees moved from one country to the other in the greatest exodus known, and between 100,000 and 500,000 people were killed. Nation-building was, therefore, a difficult enterprise, more difficult, perhaps, for Pakistan because they had to create a country from scratch since India had inherited both the institutions established by the freedom movement since 1885 when the National Congress was founded as well as the British imperial institutions.

The vision of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru embraced the ideals of secularism, democracy, socialism, and non-alignment.<sup>1</sup> Under the guidance of Nehru, elected prime minister successively until he died in 1964, India won acclaim for its commitment to secularism and democracy and, among colonial peoples, for its foreign policy of non-alignment. But major difficulties lay ahead. How to integrate the millions of refugees, a problem it shared with Paakistan, and the Princely states, many of whose leaders did not support India's independence movement, could not be solved overnight. It was more urgent to set in motion institutions and attitudes to overcome customs rooted

in inequality and hierarchy like class, caste, and gender. Its 1950 constitution set in place the ideals and laws to create a socially progressive India. By the end of Nehru's life the early gloss of Nehru's administration had begun to fade.

Strapped by scarce financial resources and industry, and facing massive refugee problems, Pakistan had to construct and improvise federal and state institutions. The rural Muslim elite and feudal landowners preserved their power and influence in the new nation and, with the military, became the guardians of the new nation. They looked first to Britain and then the USA as protector of their interests. From the beginning democratic movements found it difficult to take root as on the one hand the entrenched landholding elite and military were unwilling to give up their power, and, on the other, the more orthodox religious institutions looked with alarm at the growth of secular movements. Criticising the corruption of Pakistan's political cliques, Ayub Khan (1958-69) assumed leadership as its first military ruler as Pakistan embarked on a program of economic development, land reform, and social reform. In 1959 there began the first serious land reform program in West Pakistan. More money was set aside for the development of the public sector. But, economic development remained tied to the elite social classes, and the inequalities between rich and poor continued. More, the military-bureaucratic entrenchment in the political life of Pakistan did not bode well for the development of democracy.

Although the West Indies won their first cricket series against Pakistan in the West Indies in 1958, the cricket was interesting and some achievements were memorable. It presented an essentially new-look West Indies team to West Indian crowds. Walcott and Weekes were playing in their final Test series but Worrell decided to remain in

England to complete his university studies; Ramadhin did not play while Valentine played only in the first Test. Once again the issue of captaincy caused controversy to break out when Franz Alexander was selected as captain. Among the young team were Gary Sobers, Rohan Kanhai, Collie Smith, the new and exciting opening batsman Conrad Hunte, Roy Gilchrist, and a young, gangling, and future great right-arm off-spinner Lance Gibbs. Members of the Pakistan team were hardly known but by the end of the series several distinguished themselves like the small, disciplined, and elegant batsman Hanif Mohammed, the brilliant medium paced swing bowler Fazal Mahmood, the young left arm spinner Nasim-Ul-Ghani, the youngest Test player at sixteen and a half years, and their astute captain A.H. Kardar.

Following the massive West Indies total of 579 for 9 wickets declared in the first Test in Barbados, in which Everton Weekes made 197 and Conrad Hunte 142, Pakistan were overawed by the fiery pace of Roy Gilchrist, who had created a favourable impression with his pace in the 1957 series in England, and were bowled out for 106 with Gilchrist taking 4 for 36. Following on, Pakistan's second innings was a completely different story. A model of concentration and discipline, Hanif Mohammed batted a little more than sixteen hours to make the mammoth score of 337, and enabled Pakistan to draw the match, assisted by 91 from Imtiaz Ahmed and 63 from Saeed Ahmed. The West Indies won the second Test in Trinidad in a close contest by 120 runs. Kanhai made 96 in the West Indies first innings of 325 with Nasim taking 3 for 42, to which Pakistan replied with 282, Collie Smith taking 4 for 71 with his flighted off-breaks. The West Indies made 312 in their second innings giving Pakistan reasonable hope for a victory. But, despite a painstaking knock of 81 by Hanif Mohammed, Pakistan reached

only 235. Roy Gilchrist did the damage taking 7 wickets in the match to bring victory to the West Indies.

The third Test at Sabina Park, Jamaica, was historic, the scene of the record-breaking 365 runs by Gary Sobers, surpassing the 364 by Len Hutton as the highest individual batting score in a Test match. Sobers had failed to make a century in the previous sixteen Test matches he played, but this mammoth innings was the spark that lit his batting genius that would later produce fireworks wherever Sobers played, and was acknowledged by many cricket experts as the greatest batsman of his time. Conrad Hunte made 260 in that incredible innings of 790 runs for 3 wickets declared. In fairness to Pakistan their bowling attack in that Test was decimated by injuries to pace bowler Mahmood Hussein and spinners Nasim and Kardar which left Pakistan with only two fit bowlers. Still, nothing could contain the joy of the West Indies players and crowd as they danced and sang in jubilation. In their merriment they damaged the pitch thereby preventing play until the following day. The West Indies won that Test by an innings and 174 runs.

In the high-scoring fourth Test in Guyana won by the West Indies by 8 wickets, Pakistan made 408 in their first innings with Saeed Mohammed making 150, and 318 in their second innings, Lance Gibbs taking 5 for 80. Clyde Walcott made 145 and Sobers 125 in the West Indies first innings of 410 with Nasim taking 5 for 116. In the West Indies second innings of 317 for 2 wickets, Sobers made 109 not out and Hunte 114. That the series was not a one-sided affair was confirmed in the fifth Test in Trinidad which Pakistan won by an innings and one run. Fazal Mahmood's 6 for 83 in the first innings and Nasim's 6 for 67 were largely responsible for bowling out the West Indies

for 268 and 227. Pakistan's innings of 496 was built by Wazir Mohammed (189), his brother Hanif Mohammed (54), and Saeed Ahmed (97). Playing in his first Test, pace bowler Jaswick Taylor took 5 for 109 and Lance Gibbs 4 for 108. I recall with a certain nostalgia the series with Pakistan. Before the fifth Test began, a match was arranged between South Trinidad and Pakistan at Skinner Park in San Fernando out of respect for people of Indian (and Pakistani) ancestry as was done in the Indian tour of 1953. I was selected for South Trinidad as a promising young leg-spinner.

### **TO INDIA, 1958, 1959**

The long 1958/59 tour to India and Pakistan saw the continued development of the young West Indies team. Ramadhin played only in the first and third Tests against India, but Lance Gibbs, Collie Smith, and Sobers as an orthodox and "chinaman" left arm spinner demonstrated that they were capable replacements for Ramadhin and Valentine. Franz Alexander proved that he was a very good captain of this young team and was also a competent wicketkeeper and batsman. Sobers seemed to have reached his peak as a batsman and Rohan Kanhai and Collie Smith were not far behind. The retirement of Walcott and Weekes made room for the Guyanese batsmen Basil Butcher and Joe Solomon. The strength of the bowling relied now on pace. The combination of Wes Hall and Roy Gilchrist was a fearsome prospect for India and Pakistan. Indian journalist Mihir Bose likened the devastation of Indian batsmen by Roy Gilchrist to the invasion of the 11<sup>th</sup> century Afghan conqueror Mahmud of Ghazni, accusing the fast bowlers of aiming at the batsmen than the wicket to cause the batsmen "to fear for their lives", as they bowled at times around the wicket to a packed leg side field.<sup>2</sup>



The first Test at Bombay ended in a draw. Gupte showed that he was still an effective spinner in taking 4 for 86 in the West Indies first innings of 227, but India could only reach 152 in their first innings with Gilchrist taking 4 for 39. Sobers made 142 not out in the second innings of 323 for 4 declared. India opted for a draw reaching 289 for 5 at the end of the match, Pankaj Roy (90) and Ramchand (67 not out) defying the West Indies attack. At Kanpur in the second Test, Gupte rose to greatness for one more occasion by achieving his career best figures of 9 wickets for 102 runs in the West Indies first innings of 222. The pace of Wes Hall unnerved the Indian batsmen restricting their total to 222 with Hall claiming 6 for 50. Gupte did not repeat his performance, perhaps due in no small measure to dropped catches at crucial situations, as Sobers (198), Solomon (86), and Alexander (45 not out) allowed the West Indies to declare at the total of 443 for 7. Chasing 444 for victory, for a while it seemed that India would reach their target. But at 173 for 2 wickets, two errors by Umrigar led to two run-outs and India were all out for 240, with Hall taking 5 wickets.

The loss demoralised India. The selectors changed captains and the team almost irrationally. In the circumstances, the fortunes of the West Indies marched forward. In the third Test at Calcutta, Rohan Kanhai made his maiden century in Test cricket with a magnificent 256. Sobers (106), Butcher (103), and Solomon (69 not out) pushed the total to 614 for 5 declared. India did not really put up a fight and were bowled out for 124 and 154, destroyed by Gilchrist who took 9 wickets in the match and Hall 6. Ramadhin took 2 wickets for 27 runs in the first innings now in a supporting role. The West Indies also won the fourth Test easily by 295 runs. In the West Indies first innings of 500 Basil Butcher made 142 and Kanhai was run out at 99, and in their second innings of 168 for 5

declared J.K. Holt made 81 not out. The pace of Hall and Gilchrist again were too fierce for the Indian batsmen and they were bowled out for 222 in their first innings and 151 in the second. Hall and Gilchrist took ten wickets between them in the match. Sobers in his role as bowler took 4 for 36 and 2 for 39. In the drawn fifth Test at New Delhi India showed greater resistance. Young C.G. Borde made 109 in the first innings and 96 in the second as India made 415 in their first innings, and, replying to the West Indies 644 for 8, they were able to bat through the final day for 275 for 9 thereby earning a draw. In the West Indies innings, Holt (123), Smith (100), and Solomon (100) made centuries.

At the end of the India tour the issue of the bowling of Roy Gilchrist arose again. Captain Gerry Alexander had had difficulties in his relations with Gilchrist. Before the second Test, Gilchrist had heated words with Basil Butcher and ignored Alexander's attempt to understand and resolve the matter. Perhaps Alexander was too tolerant of his fast bowlers frequent use of bouncers and beamers. In the final match in India against North Zone in Amritsar, Gilchrist deliberately bowled a beamer at Swaranjit Singh. Despite being warned by Alexander, Gilchrist bowled two more beamers!<sup>3</sup> After consultation with a committee comprising Holt, Ramadhin, Berkeley Gaskin, and himself, Alexander decided to send Gilchrist home, ending the career of a fast bowler who had taken 26 wickets in the recent India series, and who with Wes Hall had shown the promise to take the West Indies to cricket supremacy. Some saw this as another instance of victimisation because Gilchrist was black and from a less privileged social class. Most admired Alexander's action.<sup>4</sup>

Tired after their long but successful tour to India, the West Indies had heard enough stories about Pakistan's near invincibility on their matting wickets, and how

Fazal Mahmood terrorised opposing batsmen moving the ball in the air and off the jute matting wicket, to worry that their loss of Gilchrist would diminish their chances of duplicating their success against Pakistan. Their fears proved to be realistic. In the first Test at Karachi, Fazal Mahmood, 4 for 35, and his slow, left-arm colleague Nasim-Ul-Ghani, 4 for 35, bowled West Indies out for 146 in the first innings. Hanif Mohammed made 103 in Pakistan's reply of 304. In their second innings, the West Indies made only 245, leaving Pakistan only 88 runs to make for victory which they did without losing any wicket. The second Test at Dacca in East Pakistan produced low scores but with the same result. Wes Hall's 4 for 28 restricted Pakistan to 145 in their first innings but in reply the West Indies could only muster 76 with Fazal Mahmood taking 6 wickets for 34 runs, and Nasim 3 wickets for 4 runs. Bowling out Pakistan for 144 in their second innings gave the West Indies hope that they could reach the 214 runs needed to win, but it did not happen. Again the hostility of Fazal Mahmood (6 for 66) and Mahmood Hussein (4 for 48) proved to be too difficult for the batsmen and the West Indies could only reach 172. Freed from the matting wicket for the third and final Test at Lahore, the West Indies made the impressive total of 469. Rohan Kanhai made a brilliant 217. Pakistan could only make 207 in their first innings and collapsed for 104 in the second. In the first innings, Hall took 5 for 87 and in the second Ramadhin took 4 for 25. Ramadhin had taken 5 wickets in the second Test.

A feature of the Pakistan tour was that Ramadhin recovered his form and guile, but now as a stock bowler playing a secondary role to pace bowlers Wes Hall and Jaswick Taylor. This relative success in Pakistan gave Ramadhin the confidence that he could still win a place on the West Indies team and gave a new lease of life to his

bowling career as he looked forward to the upcoming 1960 tour of the West Indies by England.

### **ENGLAND IN THE WEST INDIES, 1959/60**

Having earlier lost the “ashes” to Australia, four Tests to none, after being unbeaten in a series for seven years, England saw the tour to the West Indies as an opportunity to build a new team. Peter May was still captain, and Cowdrey, Trueman, and Statham were still around. But there were new faces like Ken Barrington, Ted Dexter, Mike Smith, Geoff Pullar, Ray Illingworth, and David Allen. They were certainly not expected to defeat the West Indies who had an impressive tour to India where their young players seemed to have matured. Although cricket is by definition an uncertain sport, few could have imagined that this English team would defeat the West Indies for the first time in a series in the West Indies.<sup>5</sup> The ban on Roy Gilchrist for indiscipline deprived the West Indies of a formidable opening pair of pace bowlers because Wes Hall had also reached the pinnacle of his ability.

A far more devastating and profound loss to the West Indies and the entire cricketing world was the death by accident of the exciting, warm, and humane Collie Smith in the summer of 1959. An orphan who grew up in the tough Boys Town school in Jamaica, Collie Smith was known and respected for his sense of values and character as much as for his ebullient attacking batting and bowling. He charmed the peoples of the West Indies, England, Australia, New Zealand, India, and Pakistan.<sup>6</sup> Sobers, later knighted as Sir Garfield Sobers for his achievements in cricket, confessed that he was so overcome by grief over his friend Collie Smith’s death, since he was driving the car at the

time the accident occurred, that he turned for a while to drink and gambling in his depression.

One development that affected this Test series was that the length of a Test match was extended to six days. The result was that pitches were overprepared and both batsmen and bowlers adopted defensive attitudes and practices, sometimes slowing down the game even more than Test matches are inclined to do. Since neither Valentine nor Gibbs played in this series, Ramadhin played as the major spin bowler. Watson was selected to partner Wes Hall as the frontline pace bowlers. In the first Test in Barbados, England made the West Indies aware that they were a very good side by amassing 482 with centuries from Ken Barrington (128) and Ted Dexter (136 not out). The West Indies replied with 563 for 8 wickets declared, with Sobers (226) and Worrell (197) leading the scorers. The match ended in a draw. Ramadhin and Watson took 6 wickets in the match, and Trueman 4 wickets for England.

The second Test at the Oval in Trinidad produced the only decisive result; the other Tests were drawn. England's victory was overshadowed by a distasteful episode like the ones in the 1954 series. England made 382 in their first innings which featured centuries by Barrington (121) and Mike Smith (108). Ramadhin and Watson took 3 wickets apiece. There was a huge crowd of 30,000 on hand to see the West Indies bat but, as happens too often, high expectations turned to anger. When Trinidadian Charran Singh was run out with the score at 98 for 8, a riot developed with bottles thrown on the field and spectators invading the field. The riot police were called out to maintain order. The premier of Trinidad, Dr. Eric Williams, sent an apology to the MCC, the governing body of cricket. When play resumed, the West Indies were routed for 112, with Trueman

(5 for 35) and Statham (3 for 42) the main tormentors. England did not enforce the follow-on and made 230 in their second innings, giving the West Indies ten hours to make 501 for victory. Rohan Kanhai batted for more than six hours for 110 in a desperate attempt to save the match, but the West Indies were all out for 244, and lost the Test by 256 runs. The West Indies made great efforts to square the series in the remaining Tests and had chances of doing so, but England resisted and earned draws.

In the third Test in Jamaica, England made 277, thanks to a brilliant 114 from Cowdrey. Sobers (147), McMorris (73), and Nurse (70) threatened to give the West Indies a big lead but managed to reach only 353 after being at one stage 299 for 3 wickets. England made 305 in their second innings with Cowdrey making 97 and Geoff Pullar 66. The West Indies made an effort to get victory but the uncertain bounce of the pitch and an injury to Kanhai, made worse by captain Peter May's refusal to allow a runner for him, forced them to play for a draw after Kanhai was out for 57 and reached 175 for 6 wickets when the match ended. Wesley Hall took 7 for 69, and Ramadhin 2 for 78 in England's first innings; in the second Watson took 4 for 62 and Ramadhin 3 for 38. In the fourth Test at Bourda, British Guyana, Wes Hall's 6 wickets for 90 restricted England's first innings to 295. A brilliant century (145) by Gary Sobers paved the way for the big West Indies first innings total of 402 for 8 declared. Batting a second time, England reached 334 and drew the match with centuries from Dexter (110) and Subba Row (100). Ramadhin did not play in the fourth Test but returned for the fifth and final Test in Trinidad. As Peter May had to return to England, Colin Cowdrey was appointed captain, and Jim Parks, who was on a coaching assignment in Trinidad at the time of the tour, was drafted into the Test team. A century by Colin Cowdrey (119) and good batting

performances by the team took England's first innings to 393 with Ramadhin taking 4 wickets for 73 runs in 34 overs. The West Indies declared their first innings at 338 for 8, and had high hopes of a victory when England were in dire straits in their second innings at 148 for 6. Their hopes faded as Jim Parks (101) and Mike Smith (96) rescued England, taking the score to 350 before declaring. The match petered out into a draw with the West Indies at 209 for 5. England surprised many by winning the series one Test victory to no losses. The West Indies were by no means outclassed. They pushed for a victory in the final three Tests but England resisted courageously the best efforts of the West Indies. As far as individual performances went for the West Indies, there were no disappointments. Wes Hall confirmed his position as the West Indies strike bowler while Ramadhin's regeneration was a surprise. He took 17 wickets in the four Tests he played, second to Hall's 22.

## CHAPTER 9

### THE END OF THE AFFAIR: THE 1960/61 AUSTRALIAN TOUR

There have been many accounts of the 1960/61 West Indies tour to Australia, and all have concluded that it was one of the best, if not the best, cricket series ever played.<sup>1</sup> Ramadhin played in only the first two Tests before an injury forced him to give way to another great West Indies Spinner, Lance Gibbs. He took only two wickets in the two Tests, but he still considered the tied first Test to be the greatest Test he played, and the series to be the most joyful.

One reason was that Frank Worrell was at last made captain of the team. A friend and admirer of Worrell since 1950, Ramadhin has always spoken highly of how Worrell helped him to assimilate to life in England when he moved from a rural village in San Fernando to the capital of a world empire. As one looks back on the fifties, one of its splendid features that exalted cricket as a civilising institution was Frank Worrell who combined a calm demeanour and graceful batting and bowling to a delicate sense of justice, whether it was for a better job, fairer wages, or selection based on merit. Yet, as we praise Worrell's captaincy, so must we also praise the integrity of Gerry Alexander who, despite his success as captain in the series against India, Pakistan, and England, gave up the captaincy to Worrell because he felt that Worrell was for some time the best person for the position of captain. And so Frank Worrell became the first black West Indian to captain the West Indies for a series. As the team set out by boat for Australia, it was noticeable that team spirit was high.



Although Australia, like New Zealand, received warmly American influences in their society after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, and supported the American policy of anti-communism, Robert Menzies, prime minister from 1949 to 1966, made it clear that Australia was part of English civilization. The cultural and political histories of Australia, England, and the USA were therefore interlocked in the 1950s.<sup>2</sup> But Australia has developed slowly towards accomodating different cultures. Indeed, one wonders whether the success of the 1960/61 cricket series played some role in shifting their cultural ethos. Australians were initially reluctant to depart from their white immigration policy. Of the two million immigrants between 1947 and 1969 Australia assisted 880,000 British in their new country. The demand for immigrant labour forced the government to accept immigrants from Europe but not from Asia, as a white only policy continued to be the official immigration policy. Assimilation to Anglo-Australian culture was the dominant ideal as schools, the media, and government sought to protect their homogenous society. As the 1950s proceeded, Asian students were permitted to study in Australia and by the middle 1960s the anti-coloured policy was changed to allow Asians to come to Australia.

At the same time discrimination against Aboriginal Australians was also being relaxed and after a constitutional rererendum abolished the article in the constitution that said that Aborigines were not to be counted as members of the commonwealth of Australia, Aborigines were finally recognised as Australians. Australian society moved gradually and uneasily towards tolerating a multicultural and pluralist ideal. This would pick up steam with the rise of the anti-Vietnam war, feminist, and gay rights movements of the 1960s. The significant sentiment at the end of the 1950s was that materially life

had improved considerably. A thriving domestic market for new manufactured goods like stoves, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, cars, and export-import trade principally with Great Britain for wool and meat, created the sense of optimism of the Australian dream.

Before the first Test at Brisbane on December 9, 1960, Frank Worrell and the Australian captain, Richie Benaud, promised to play attacking and attractive cricket. Worrell won the toss and decided to bat. Alan Davidson bowled into a grassy patch on the off stump just short of a good length. The West Indies batsmen attacked the bowling but quickly lost the wickets of Cammie Smith, Conrad Hunte, and Rohan Kanhai in eleven overs for 61 runs. Sobers and Worrell then came together, settled down, and then Sobers began to attack the bowling. Benaud came on to bowl his leg-spinners hoping to get him out as he did in the match between the West Indies and New South Wales. In a manner reminiscent of Neil Harvey's attack against the spin of Ramadhin, Gupte, and Laker, Sobers crushed three 4s off Benaud's second over and by lunch the score raced to 130 for 3 wickets. Frank Worrell, a stroke-player in his own right but of an earlier era, went stroke for stroke with the younger genius. Sobers was out for a brilliant 132 and Worrell for a superb 65. Joe Solomon from Guyana reached 65 before he was unlucky to be out hit wicket. The following day gritty innings of 60 by Gerry Alexander and a surprising 50 by Wes Hall allowed the West Indies to close their innings at 453. Alan Davidson took 5 for 135 in 30 overs. Richie Benaud bowled 24 overs for 93 runs and did not take a wicket.

As Australia began their first innings, Worrell encouraged his opening pace bowlers Hall and Sobers to attack the batsmen. Hall was fiery, exploiting the same grassy spot as Alan Davidson. McDonald and Simpson took blows to the body but

carried on slowly and courageously. When the score reached 84 McDonald was out for 57 followed soon by Neil Harvey. Simpson, who had been in and out of the Australian team, and Norman O Neill began to get the better of the fast bowlers. Worrell was reluctant to bring on his spinners too early because he knew well the Australian strategy of undermining a team by attacking its spinners. O Neill got chances when he was 47 and 54, but he and Simpson got into their stride and attacked spin and pace. When Simpson was bowled by Ramadhin for 92, Favell, Mackay, and Davidson became useful partners for O Neill. Australia passed the West Indies total for 5 wickets and looked set for a big lead, but Wes Hall bowled an inspiring spell and Australia were bowled out for 505, a lead of 52, O Neill made the magnificent score of 181. Wes Hall took 4 for 140 in 29.3 overs, Sobers, 2 for 115 in 32 overs, Ramadhin 1 for 60 in 15 overs, and Valentine, 1 for 82 in 24 overs.

Alan Davidson was again the destructive force in the second West Indies innings taking 6 wickets for 87 in the total of 284, leaving Australia to make 233 for victory. Since the wicket still looked good for batting, the odds favoured an Australian victory. But Hall, bowling at his fastest and aggressively, had Simpson and Harvey caught early. Soon Australia had lost 5 wickets for 57 runs. The pendulum had now shifted to West Indies favour. Hall was rested after taking 4 of the 5 wickets off 12 overs. As if he was the man of destiny in this match, Davidson got the batting rolling again with McKay until McKay was bowled by Ramadhin. Captain Benaud joined Davidson and at tea Australia were 109 for 6 wickets, and needed 124 in two hours play. By attacking and running with discretion, the score climbed steadily so that when the new ball was taken Australia needed 27 runs in the last thirty minutes.

The runs began to come one by one. Hall's long thirty yards run-up added to the tension of the moment. With eight minutes left and 7 runs needed, Benaud played Worrell to mid-wicket and called for a run. As Davidson ran down the pitch, little Joe Solomom picked up the ball, threw it in one motion, and hit the stumps. Davidson was run out for 80. With three wickets left Australia still had the advantage. Wally Grout made a single off his first ball. Benaud hit the next ball hard but Solomon fielded smoothly. Expected to panic, the West Indies team remained cool and focussed, undoubtedly due to the inspiration of their captain Worrell.

When Hall began what surely was the last eight ball over of the day, Australia needed six runs to win with three wickets intact. Grout missed his swing at the first ball but, the ball at his feet, the batsmen scampered for a single leg-bye. Benaud hooked the second ball but got an edge and was caught for a marvelous 52. The tension was at its maximum, and odds were now even. Six O Clock struck but the law stipulated that the last over must be completed. Meckiff played the next ball but no run ensued. Five balls left, five runs to win. Meckiff missed the fourth ball but Grout had already been backing up midway down the pitch and ran for the single. Alexander threw to the non-striker's end but Hall was in the way. Luckily Valentine prevented extra runs by backing up the ball. Grout skied the fifth ball high in the air to Kanhai who waited for a simple catch. Alas, in his enthusiasm Hall ran over to catch the ball and dropped it. A run was taken. The dropped catch could have unnerved the most placid of cricketers but Worrell called to his players "to keep cool." Three balls to go, three runs to win. Meckiff connected Hall's sixth ball. As the ball soared to the legside boundary, the batsmen ran for one, then two, and then three that would have brought victory, but Conrad Hunte dived on the

ball, picked it up, and threw it accurately and swiftly to Alexander who ran out Grout. Those who saw the throw maintained that it was the best throw they had ever seen. The scores were now level, two balls left and one wicket remaining. Lindsay Kline came in. Hall roared in and bowled the seventh ball fast and straight. Kline pushed the ball to mid-wicket and both batsmen ran for the winning run. Once again Joe Solomon, the little Guyanese of East Indian ancestry, picked up the ball and with only a stump to aim at from his position knocked it down and the last Australian wicket was run out.

The West Indies players embraced each other; members in the press box shouted and hugged each other. Some thought Australia had won; others, the West Indies. Worrell could not hold back his tears of joy. It was the first tied game in Test cricket. Sir Don Bradman thought that it was “the greatest Test of all time.”<sup>3</sup>

The second Test was played in Melbourne in the midst of a heat wave. After their performance in the first Test, large crowds numbering 65,000 on a public holiday came to the match. It was, however, a disappointing Test for the West Indies and the crowds. Winning the toss, Australia made 348 in their first innings. They battled back from 189 for 5 wickets and later 251 for 8 to reach their total. Hall took 4 for 51. Ramadhin (1 for 21 in 5 overs) and Valentine (1 for 55 in 11.1 overs) were not given much work in the innings. Once again Alan Davidson did the damage when the West Indies batted with 6 wickets for 53. In a small total of 181, Kanhai (84) and Nurse (70) were the only batsmen to show any fight. Following on, the West Indies fared only a little better making 233 with Hunte making a fine 110 and Gerry Alexander a fighting 72. When Joe Solomon was out hit wicket when his cap fell on the wicket dislodging a bail, the crowd,

sympathetic to the West Indies, booed Benaud, perhaps unaware that Solomon was legally out. Australia made the 67 runs required for victory for 3 wickets.

The third Test at Brisbane was almost a carbon copy of the second but with the shoe on the other foot. Lance Gibbs replaced Ramadhin who had suffered a strained muscle. This move turned out to be fortunate for Gibbs because spin became a factor in the three remaining Tests. Gibbs, Valentine, and Benaud were heartened by this development. This marked the end of Ramadhin's Test career. Another century by Sobers (168) enabled the West Indies to make 339 and so seize the advantage by winning the toss. Davidson continued his great bowling taking 5 for 80. Benaud's 4 for 86 indicated that the wicket was responsive to spin and gave encouragement for the prospects of Gibbs and Valentine. In their turn at the wicket, Australia succumbed to the spin of Gibbs (3 for 46) and Valentine (4 for 67), and reached a modest total of 202. After little success in the first two Tests, Valentine was happy to make an impact for the West Indies again. He must have remembered with nostalgia the 24 wickets he took in Australia in the 1951/52 series. A century by Alexander and 82 by Worrell pushed the West Indies second innings to 326, giving Australia 464 to make for victory in nine hours. Harvey and O'Neill offered a promising challenge but when the third wicket fell at 191 a West Indies victory was no longer in doubt as Australia collapsed for 241, Gibbs taking 5 for 66 and Valentine 4 for 86. The series was now tied.

The excitement of the first Test returned miraculously to the fourth and fifth Tests. In the fourth Test at Adelaide, Rohan Kanhai was the batting star with 117 in the first innings and 115 in the second. The West Indies made 393 in the first innings with Benaud taking 5 for 96. Australia replied with 366 helped by a string of good scores

from Simpson (85), Benaud (77), and McDonald (71). Again the spinners did well. Gibbs took 5 for 97 and Sobers 3 for 64. Gibbs had the added distinction of taking the first hat-trick in Australia in fifty seven years by taking three wickets in successive balls. Kanhai's century, Alexander's 87 not out, and Hunte's 79 allowed confident West Indies to declare at 432 for 8 wickets. Kanhai's memorable innings won him the same acclaim as Sobers as great world batsmen. One correspondent described his moment of universal recognition in this way:

There are no finer sights in modern cricket than Kanhai in full cry...Kanhai is small but has immense development about his shoulders and biceps, and this strength, allied to a wonderfully swift reaction that enables him to wind up and strike the ball with a full swing of the bat, gives his stroke play an explosive power.<sup>4</sup>

When 3 wickets fell for 31 runs before the fourth day ended leaving Australia to get 428 on the final day with 7 wickets in hand, a West Indies victory was in the cards. So it continued to appear for most of the final day. When the ninth wicket fell at 207, there were still 100 minutes left to take the final wicket. MacKay had already batted for close to two hours when Kline joined him. Worrell ringed the batsmen with ten men waiting for a catch. Soon after Kline came in, Mackay pushed forward to Worrell and Sobers grabbed what he and the other fieldsmen thought was a legitimate catch. In jubilation Worrell and his men headed for the pavillion with an apparent victory. But Mackay stood his ground and umpire Egar at the bowler's end said not out without consulting the other umpire, ruling that the ball had bounced before going to Sobers. As the minutes

ticked away and the drama intensified, Worrell rotated his bowlers, trying all sorts of strategies to get the final wicket, but to no avail. Australia had courageously defied the West Indies and saved the match. Interest in cricket caught fire all over Australia. Out of gratitude for Worrell's and the West Indies part in restoring the excitement of cricket, the Australian Cricket Board announced that they were going to present a special trophy for series between Australia and the West Indies to be called the Frank Worrell Trophy.

The deciding Test at Melbourne lived up to expectations. On the second day there was a record attendance of 90,000. It was clear from the beginning that the climate was heavy with tension which was not good for fluency and ease of batting, bowling, or fielding. Put in to bat first by Benaud, the West Indies fought hard to make a total of 292 with good contributions from even the tailenders. Australia replied with 356. Sobers with his medium pacers took 5 for 120 and Gibbs 4 for 74. At one stage it seemed that Australia would have made a much higher score after MacDonald (91) and Simpson (71) had put on an opening partnership of 146. In their second innings the West Indies made 321 with Alexander capping a successful tour with 73. Alan Davidson crowned his outstanding bowling performances during the series with 5 wickets for 84 runs. Set 258 to make for victory on a good batting pitch, Bobby Simpson attacked the bowling. At the beginning of the final day Australia had to make 201 runs with 9 wickets remaining. McDonald was out when he reached 92. The runs began to mount, and wickets fell, too. At tea, Australia were 208 for 5 wickets, needing another 50 runs. The cricket was exciting, rivalling the tension of the first and fourth Tests. Davidson was out to Worrell at 236 and the seventh wicket fell at 248 when Burge was bowled by Valentine. When the score was 254, with 4 runs needed for victory, Grout cut Valentine and got two runs.



At that moment wicketkeeper Alexander drew the attention of the umpire to a dislodged bail on the pitch. The umpires decided that neither the batsman nor the keeper touched the wicket, giving Grout not out as well as the two runs. Photographs seemed to indicate that Grout had played on. Grout was out caught the following over at 256 for 8 wickets. Martin skied a ball to mid-on but did not reach Hall for a catch, and took one run. Two balls later, the ball beat the stumps and Alexander for the winning run. Australia won the Test and the series. It was equally true that the series was a victory for cricket.

Two days after the series ended, the West Indies team were given a reception at the Town Hall in Melbourne that was appropriate for royalty. 300,000 Australians lined the streets to pay tribute to the West Indies cricket heroes, making them ride in a motorcade to acknowledge the cheers of the crowd. This was how Sir Frank Worrell described the scene:

The Australians must be regarded as one of the most hospitable nations in the world today... We shall never forget the spontaneity of the ticker-tape farewell accorded to us by the people of Melbourne... As we travelled through the milling crowd at snail's pace, we heard tremendously gratifying statements from the sporting Aussies such as 'Good on you, boys,' 'you morally won, mates,' 'well played, boys,' but the statement which was quite frequently made and which brought a lump to my throat and tears to my eyes was: 'Come back soon.'<sup>5</sup>

It was fitting that Australians, West Indians, and the World chose Sir Frank Worrell as the symbol to represent the spirit of this series, unequivocally one of cricket's finest moments. Worrell was not any longer the superstar in batting and bowling that he was in the early 1950s, but his influence and significance were now universal. From a West Indian perspective, he represented the possibility of a quintessential West Indian humanism and wisdom. Richie Benaud captured this idea well when, in commenting on Worrell's death on March 13, 1967, at the age of 42, he said that he was a wonderful

leader of men, an inspiration for the game and on other people, and one of the greatest cricketers the world has known.<sup>6</sup>

### **THE LEG-SPIN OF RICHIE BENAUD**

To an inquiry about Australian bowling of the 1950s at once the names of Lindwall, Miller, and Davidson come so readily to mind that the name of Richie Benaud seems an afterthought. If the subject turns to spin bowling, the mystery bowler Jack Iverson, Doug Ring, and Ian Johnson somehow seem more central in our imagination. Yet, Richie Benaud was one of the great leg-spinners of cricket just as he was a great allrounder and great captain. In the 1955 series in the West Indies he quietly topped the bowling averages with 18 wickets at 26.33 runs a wicket and, in batting, who could forget the 121 he hit in the fifth Test in only 78 minutes.

Born in New South Wales in 1930, Richie Benaud's youth was nurtured on cricket. His father, a very good cricketer who played for Central Cumberland Club in New South Wales, gave him every encouragement. He remembered, too, the first Sheffield Shield match he saw in 1940 between New South Wales and South Australia in which he was awed by such Australian legends as Sir Donald Bradman, Stan McCabe, Bill O Reilly, and Clarrie Grimmett, and confessed that it was the leg-spin of Grimmett which inspired him to bowl leg-spin. A promising cricketer at Parramatta High School and at his father's Cumberland Club, his ability was noticed by New South Wales selectors when he left school at 16. At eighteen he was on the second team of New South Wales and made such progress that he was selected for the final Test against the West Indies in 1951/52, taking one wicket for 14 runs and making scores of 3 and 19.

Benaud's rise to greatness in spin bowling was not sudden like Ramadhin and Valentine or Gupte. It took many years before his bowling matured to the extent that he became a match winner. All the while the selectors, realising his quality, persevered with him. His early Test career took place at the time when Australia after 1953 lost their dominance in cricket to England. In his *Anything But An Autobiography*, Benaud revealed the moments and events that were turning points in his progress toward mastering his leg-spin craft. As a leg-spinner, he revealed how important it was for him to find quick remedies for spinning fingers that were bruised, swolled, and bloodied by imparting spin for overs upon overs. He said that nothing seemed to work until a pharmacist in New Zealand, Ivan James, recommended a concoction of Calamine lotion and Boracic powder that worked so well and so quickly that he felt it played no small role in his development as a spinner. In the 1952 South Africa tour to Australia, Benaud was interested in the great off-spinner Hugh Tayfield, who was a master of flight and spin and bowled with the unusual field placing of three or four men close to the batsman at short mid-off or mid-on. His conversation with the great Australian spinner Bill O Reilly as the 1953 tour to England was winding down was another stepping-stone.<sup>7</sup> Bill O Reilly gave this advice: On the field he should not give the batsman anything and recognise him as an enemy; off the field it was alright to have a drink with him; he should develop the leg-break as his stock ball and spend a year or two mastering it in such a way that it could be both an attacking or defensive weapon; he should not seek to take a wicket from every ball because by bowling a different ball in an over it would be difficult to maintain line and length; finally, he should be observant about field placing and opposing batsmen strengths and weaknesses because captains were likely to be batsmen and knew too little

about the “best methods and thought processes of a spin bowler.” Benaud confessed that O Reilly’s advice allied to his father’s was a significant lesson that helped him to become the first Test cricketer to do the double of making 2,000 runs and taking 200 wickets in Test matches.

Although Australia was again defeated in their series in England in 1956, he remembered the encouragement he received when he read an article in the *Manchester Guardian* before the Lords Test written by Neville Cardus, one of the outstanding cricket journalists, which praised Benaud as a gifted cricketer even though he had not yet produced a great batting or bowling feat. Such praise gave him the confidence to try new things to improve his cricket.

On the return to Australia the team stopped off in India to play a series of Tests. He had observed closely Laker’s style of bowling, his relaxed run up and delivery, and decided to experiment with changing his bowling method. In Madras he shortened his run-up to the crease, hoping to achieve greater balance and rhythm. He practiced this for an hour and had Neil Harvey observe and comment upon his action. Examining the bowling from all angles, Harvey concluded that his new action seemed smoother. In the very first innings of the first Test, Benaud took 7 wickets for 72 runs, his best ever figures in an innings and in the third and final Test at Calcutta he had match figures of 11 wickets for 105 runs from 53 overs. These exceptional feats could not help but boost his decision to alter his bowling style. At the mid-point of his Test career, it seemed that his bowling art was on the verge of maturing. Constant training and disciplining one’s craft are the master keys to progress and, as Benaud described it, he would go to the ground at 3 in the afternoon and bowl until 6, breaking off for a twenty minute batting stint.<sup>8</sup> On

tours, like in South Africa in 1957, he kept up with his rigorous training schedule, bowling twenty overs in the morning and between ten and fifteen after lunch, aiming for a spot on the pitch, and bowling largely leg-breaks and some 'flippers' as Bill O Reilly advised him. After hitting a century in the first drawn Test against South Africa, Benaud took 9 wickets in the victorious second Test, and 4 for 70 and 5 for 84 in the third and final Test that Australia won by 10 wickets. The 1958/59 cricket season was a momentous one for Benaud. He was made captain of the Australian team as they prepared to challenge England for the 'ashes.' Australia crushed England by three Tests to none with the third Test drawn. Benaud took 9 wickets in the decisive fourth Test at Adelaide. In the first serious challenge to Australian supremacy from the West Indies in 1960/61, Benaud took 23 wickets in that magnificent series.

## **FAREWELL TO TEST CRICKET**

The replacement of Ramadhin by Lance Gibbs after the second Test was a major turning point in Ramadhin's career and West Indies cricket. On the one hand Ramadhin decided that it was time to retire from Test cricket. He was thinking about it since the 1957 tour to England and the beginning of the strategy of "padmanship." There was certainly no bitterness towards Gibbs. Indeed, Ramadhin was assured that West Indies spin bowling for the future was in the excellent hands of Lance Gibbs, especially after his outstanding performances. On the other hand, the series in Australia launched the brilliant career of Lance Gibbs who was to blossom into one of the world's finest

spinners in the 1960s up to 1973, taking 247 wickets in his stupendous Test cricket career.

Born in Georgetown, British Guyana in 1934, Lance Gibbs made his debut for the West Indies in Pakistan's 1958 tour to the West Indies when Ramadhin was not available. He was used sparingly but was selected for the tour to India and Pakistan the following year but played only in the tests against Pakistan. It was fortunate for the West Indies that at the very moment that Ramadhin departed the Test scene, another genius blossomed to fill his shoes. Although Gibbs' greatness rose to maturity later, it is not out of place in a study of great spinners of the 1950s to recall the English cricket journalist E.W. Swanton's description of his bowling:

Lance, ball in hand, is a beautiful sight from the moment of his light run-up to the rhythmical wheel of the arm and snap of the fingers as the leather is released...Only to the superficial watcher, the cricketing ignoramus, does each ball look similar to the last. All indeed are different, mostly only a little different, in the position of the feet, in pace and flight, in the degree of spin, in direction: variations subtly purveyed on the constant theme of length.<sup>9</sup>

Ramadhin, Valentine, and Gibbs were the best West Indies spinners. Each was a colossus who graced cricket with great dignity: each was different, to be sure, but it was as members of the West Indies cricket team and as West Indians that each realised his potential genius. With charming vignettes the great journalist Jim Swanton captured the unique yet universal humanity of the great West Indies spin trio: "Sonny Ramadhin's little eyes would wrinkle in amusement as his victims groped and prodded"; "Alfred

Valentine's teeth were often bared in a grin, whether he were taking wickets or not"; "[A]n aura of dignified uncompromising hostility has always surrounded Lance on the field."<sup>10</sup>

We should not conclude that Ramadhin's retirement signified that his ability had declined markedly. He was still only 31, and had topped the bowling averages in the 1959/60 series against England. In the 1961 Australian tour he topped the bowling averages for all first-class matches with 24 wickets. Ramadhin was still a very fine bowler. Effectively, it was the final series for Valentine also. He was selected for the 1963 tour to England but he did not play in the Tests in preference to Gibbs and Sobers.<sup>11</sup>

That Ramadhin would remember the tied first Test and the entire series against Australia as among his happiest memories requires an explanation. After all, he took only one wicket in the amazing final innings of the tied Test, and was replaced by Gibbs after the second Test. Ramadhin and other members of the team, indeed West Indians everywhere, were aware that what mattered most of all was that, under Sir Frank Worrell's captaincy, the West Indies had proved to themselves, Australians, and the cricket world that they were the equal of all people in human dignity and cricket ability. The assertion of the West Indian personality and character in the greatest Test series of the twentieth century was more significant than individual performance.

## CHAPTER 10

### HOME AND THE WORLD AND LANCASHIRE LEAGUE CRICKET

Ramadhin continued to play competitive cricket in the Central Lancashire League until he was in his fifties. It is difficult to place too high a value on the part professional Lancashire League cricket played in giving players from the West Indies and the British Commonwealth the opportunity to earn their living playing cricket, giving them a sense of community and respect away from their homes, and generally educating them about the world. The story of Learie Constantine is typical of hundreds of such narratives, and that of Ramadhin is no less moving. Of course, the Ramadhins and Constantines gave much to their English communities and must receive credit for assisting in the development of England as a pluralistic society.

It was the Victorian mill-owners of Lancashire who introduced League cricket in the mill towns in the 1890s. Cricket was, of course, romanticised by its association with rural England with its village-greens and gentlemen amateur players displaying Victorian ideals. Not so the Lancashire League.<sup>1</sup> Here in the towns playing fields were made for the working classes who would rush from their crowded tenement homes to the playing fields. These matches were fiercely competitive, noisy, at times disorderly, and partisan, so different from the official version of the rise of cricket, and more like cricket in India and the West Indies.

The industrial middle class and working class were attracted to the game as professional teams played visiting matches in the industrial towns of Lancashire. The cotton mills of Lancashire began to thrive again after the American Civil War came to an



end in 1865. Cotton was king and, as the textile industry thrived, industrial towns competed with each other in sport.

Team players were working class amateurs, and in due course each team was allowed to hire a few professionals whose expertise would help them win matches, draw crowds, and instruct young Lancashire players. The success of Constantine in 1929 and George Headley and Manny Martindale in the 1930s paved the way for the flood of West Indies, Indian, Pakistan, and Australian cricketers who played professional cricket in the Lancashire League. The three “Ws”, Ramadhin and Valentine, and, later, all major West Indies cricketers played for one team or the other in Lancashire, enabling them to earn a good living, to uplift themselves educationally, to build their families there, and, not least, to develop their skills on English wickets.

Ramadhin got his contract with Crompton as the end of the 1950 tour and has lived, played, worked, and raised his family in Lancashire. Almost to a person, West Indies cricketers assimilated into English working class culture with mutual respect and were rooted in their new societies. Lancashire working class culture was an important element in the development of their cricket skills and humanity. They cared for their English friends in their community as well as their West Indian colleagues and migrants. In some ways, Lancashire was home away from home, and the spirit engendered in the Test matches was enriched as they kept in touch with each other in Lancashire.

One of the most moving incidents to illustrate the spirit of friendship among the Test players in Lancashire involved the accident and death in 1959 of one of the most promising and loveable of West Indies cricketers, Collie Smith, who played for Burnley in the Lancashire League. He was taken to hospital with a suspected spine fracture from

a car accident traveling with Gary Sobers who played for Radcliffe, and Tom Dewdney, who played for Darwen. Collie Smith never regained consciousness and when he died three of his close friends were at his bedside, Worrell, Ramadhin, and Cec Pepper.<sup>2</sup>

By the end of his Test career, Ramadhin was already deeply rooted in his community in Lancashire. Sonny and June raised their family in Oldham, one of the towns of Greater Manchester, a great city of the modern world because of its association with the rise of the Industrial Revolution in England. Crompton, Oldham, Delph, Saddleworth and other Lancashire towns where he played professional cricket from the 1950s to the early 1980s were linked to the industrial textile industry, especially the textile mills. Crompton, for example, was a major centre of wool manufacturing since the 15th century but like other towns was replaced by cotton in the 1780s.

It was Manchester and its towns that created the wealth with which the imperial power and reach of Great Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was built. The cotton textiles boom also led to revolutionary technological inventions in dyeing, spinning, and weaving like Samuel Crompton's spinning mule and James Hargreaves spinning jenny. Abundant supplies of coal nearby meant that power for steam engines was cheap and plentiful. The emergence of railways and canals gave Lancashire industry convenient access to transportation. Systems of mass production brought great wealth. Cotton mills and their tall chimneys dominated the landscape of Greater Manchester. Despite the decline of the cotton textile industry today, the tall chimneys remain a feature of the landscape. It was about these mills that the French writer Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in 1835, "...a place where some 1500 workers, labouring 69 hours a week, with an

average wage of 11 shillings, and three quarters of the workers are women and children.”<sup>3</sup>

De Tocqueville’s observation of the exploitative conditions of 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial capitalism explained why at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century revolutionary new ideas about collective bargaining and trade unions arose in Manchester, which became a major centre of the labour movement. It was in Manchester also that the woman suffragette movement started with two Manchester women Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughter Christabel through whose efforts by 1918 women over 30 won the right to vote, and in 1928 at 21.

By the time Ramadhin migrated to Lancashire in the early 1950s, the cotton textile industry was in decline. The independence of India which occupied a central place in the cotton textile market, the development of synthetic fibers for woven cloth, and the consequences of not investing in research on new technology and methods were some of the factors that led to the decline. Many of the mills closed in the years after World War II causing widespread unemployment. With a new emphasis as a distribution centre and its access to the sea, Manchester attracted new business, especially the establishment of Trafford Park Industrial Estate.

Eight miles from Manchester lies the town and borough of Oldham where are situated the towns and villages of Crompton, Delph, Saddleworth, and Lees, the scenes of Ramadhin’s new community, now his home and world. Charles Dickens’ novels have familiarised us with the grime and smoke of factory life in early industrial England, and that was one experience of these industrial towns, but Oldham is set in the Pennine hills, and with the Saddleworth Moors and the canals connecting Lancashire and Yorkshire,

there is also a distinctly rural and picturesque component to these communities in addition to the modern and industrial. Oldham was one of the world's leading cotton textile towns whose eminence arose because it had begun to produce its own coal, and pioneered engineering technology for the textile industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Saddleworth, for example, had a thriving woollen trade from the middle ages until it was replaced by cotton.

As Ramadhin's cricket career was characterised by a sudden leap from rural club cricket in San Fernando to Test cricket in major world cities, so his life and work experience underwent a sharp and momentous change from a pre-industrial village tempo to the capital of the industrial age. The change was dramatic, to be sure, but professional league cricket, his prowess and international fame as a West Indies Test cricketer, and, above all, his marriage to June and their children and grandson, made Ramadhin's journey from a small place like Esperance, San Fernando, to Oldham, Lancashire, surprisingly without great anxiety. This did not mean that his first visit to England did not cause any culture shock. Mr. Justice Ralph Narine's narrative of his meeting with Ramadhin at Victoria Station as he arrived in London for the first time was a poignant reminder of the experience of awe that was common to many immigrants to European capitals in the 1950s. The landscape of the towns and villages of Oldham and Lancashire, however, must not have been entirely strange to him. The hills and moors, and even the chimneys of the mills resembled, even in a small way, Ramadhin's ancestral village of Esperance with its sugar plantations, Palmiste Park, the miles upon miles of sugar cane fields bending to and from with the winds, and the San Fernando Hill in the background, then lush and verdant and not eaten through excessive quarrying as now.

Ramadhin left San Fernando as the sugar plantations that brought riches to the British West Indies were in decline, and moved to Lancashire as its textile industrial revolution was in decline. Lancashire and England had to create new economic and social institutions to replace the old ones.

Sonny and his wife June were in the licensed trade for 28 years, first as landlords for two pubs in Uppermill, the Hare and the Hounds and the Cloggers, before settling at Delph where Ramadhin was landlord of the White Lion public house for 24 years. As Ramadhin put it, “I have played cricket and entertained people and served the public all my life.” Sonny and June built up an excellent reputation for themselves, and their White Lion pub was a centre for the community.

When he retired from Test cricket, Ramadhin played in the Lancashire leagues in the North and Midlands, achieving many outstanding feats, like taking a record 135 wickets in a season in the Saddleworth League with Delph. Playing in the Bolton League with Little Lever in his fifties he won the league bowling prize in 1980, 1981, and 1982. He took 572 wickets in his career in the Bolton League.<sup>4</sup>

Elected to the West Indian Tobacco Sports Foundation Hall of Fame in 1985, at the age of 55, Ramadhin asked his cousin, Balroop Parmasar, who received the medal on Ramadhin’s behalf, to explore the possibility of getting a government coaching job in Trinidad.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Parmasar was certain that Ramadhin would have returned home if offered a coaching job. This prospect did not materialise, but there were other times when Ramadhin and his wife considered returning to Trinidad. In 1990, the town council embarked on restructuring the public houses in Oldham and decided to put up for sale the White Lion pub. The Ramadhins were given preference to buy the building, but they

confessed that they had put all the money they earned over the long years back into the pub, and did not even take a holiday for ten years. They could not buy the building and so “our home and our living were being taken from us and there was nothing we could do.” Sonny and June were still glad to receive a council apartment as their pension years approached. Not one to be depressed for long, abiding interest in cricket helped him to assume his enduring assertive self. On another visit to Trinidad in 1995, he was quick to offer the opinion that the current West Indies team was not as good as the great teams of the past. An elder statesman of cricket now, Ramadhin could be excused for suggesting that Brian Lara was not yet in the class of Everton Weekes, and that Australian leg-spinner, Shane Warne, considered by many the greatest of contemporary spinners, was not as good as Subash Gupte.<sup>6</sup>

Sonny and June had a daughter, Sharon, and a son, Craig. Craig Ramadhin played for Friarmere club in the Saddleworth League as a fast bowler. Sharon married Lancashire fast bowler Willie Hogg. Their son Kyle has had a phenomenal rise to prominence. The apple of his grandparents’ eyes, Kyle Hogg has displayed great ability and promise as an allrounder since he was 11. A right-arm fast bowler and useful left-handed batsman, he started playing for Greenfield Cricket Club, Oldham when he was young. As Ramadhin sang the praises of his 12 year-old grandson in 1995 in Trinidad, the reporter asked him whether he would support England or the West Indies in the future if the West Indies were playing England with Kyle in their team. We do not know if Sonny was speaking with his tongue in his cheek when he said that “he would like his boy to do well but he would support the West Indies.”

Making his debut for Lancashire at 19 in 2002, Kyle Hogg took 45 wickets and is considered a prize because of “his ability to stay calm under pressure.”<sup>7</sup> Another cricket correspondent, Ted Corbett, described Kyle as “tomorrow’s star”: “Hogg is the grandson of Sonny Ramadhin and son of Willie Hogg, a fastish bowler for Lancashire and Warwickshire in the 1980s. He is 19 in his slim body, 30 years old in his head and between the two, capable of outwitting most batsmen.”<sup>8</sup> Selection for England’s Under 19 team led to high hopes that Kyle was an excellent prospect for the senior England team. A left-handed batsman and right-armed medium fast bowler for Lancashire County team, Kyle displayed great promise, together with others in the Lancashire team, James Anderson and Sajjid Mahmoud. As it turned out, it was James Anderson who caught the eye of the selectors. Anderson now has confirmed his place in the Test team by many outstanding performances. Urged to develop his game for the shorter versions of 20/20, and single day cricket, Kyle, fully fit again, has indeed developed into a very good allrounder. It was certainly with gushing pride that his grandparents, Sonny and June, sent me a copy of a 2009 Lancashire’s cricket magazine with a large picture of Kyle on its cover. With England’s opening bowler James Anderson returning to County cricket in May, 2010, and the controversial inclusion of the Jamaican fast bowler Darren Powell, Kyle has been in and out of Lancashire’s team, despite playing 13 out of 16 Championship matches in 2009. But Kyle’s determination and love for the game always seemed to overcome disappointment. He grasped opportunities to show his worth and mettle whenever they came. Drafted for Lancashire’s match against Somerset in early May, 2010, Kyle captured the headlines with 3 wickets, including the prized wicket of in-form Marcus Trescothick. Even more happily, in the contentious annual Roses match

against Yorkshire on at the end of June 2010, Kyle scored 88 in the first innings, missing his maiden first-class century. The Manchester Guardian correspondent, Andy Wilson, wrote from Old Trafford: “Hogg’s 88 from 139 balls was the highest score of a Lancashire career that began in 2001 but has still to yield a county cap for the 26- year-old from the Saddleworth hills where his grandfather, the great West Indies spinner Sonny Ramadhin, settled to run a number of pubs after coming to play league cricket in the 1950s.” Of Kyle’s eight-wicket stand with Stephen Croft on the last day’s play which ended in a draw, Wilson wrote, “showed a more effective combination of technique and temperament than the established batsmen.

If the achievements of his grandson Kyle has kept his fame as a West Indies bowler alive, Ramadhin has also found favour among Trinidadians. In celebrations to honour great national achievements, the Trinidad and Tobago government gave him an award while the cricket board named a road after him, *Sonny Ramadhin Turn*, which led to the National Cricket Centre. Ramadhin expressed his gratitude for the awards, but confessed that he was saddened that many of his colleagues of the 1950s team had passed away, like Jeffrey Stollmeyer, Gerry Gomez, and Prior Jones. Sonny and his wife June were shocked when they learned that his “pal” Alf Valentine died at his home in Miami, Florida, on May 11, 2004 at the age of 74. They expressed concern for Val’s wife, Jackie, especially because “you could not get Val to go anywhere unless Jackie went with him.”

The death of his wife June in January 2010 brought great sadness to Sonny. In an inquiry to the Saddleworth and District Cricket league about June Ramadhin’s obituary in February 2011, Craig Ramadhin, Sonny’s son, answered the request with two reassuring



messages. The first said that his mother had died peacefully in January 2010 and that his father was coping well with the shattering loss that they had suffered; the second message was upbeat. He said that Kyle got married in Antigua in August 2010. In this way the connection to the West Indies continued. The 2011 season was his most successful as a bowler and batsman. In the County Championship, Kyle took 50 wickets as a bowler and batsman. His exploits played a great part in Lancashire winning the County Championship for the first time since 1950. Plagued by illness and injury throughout his cricket career, Kyle decided to retire from cricket in 2014 due to a serious back injury.

Acknowledging that the Lord's Test in 1950 and the tied first Test in Australia in 1961 were his happiest moments in cricket, Ramadhin lamented that the end of his Test cricket days in 1961 "virtually ended my ties in the Caribbean, something which bothers me from time to time."<sup>9</sup> Ramadhin may not have achieved material riches from cricket, but he gained honour and respect for himself, his family, and all West Indians, and enriched the world with his bowling genius.

## CHAPTER 11

### THE ROMANTIC TRADITION OF CRICKET AND ITS MODERN FATE?

The romantic tradition of the culture of cricket was built not only by its players, but also by its writers who painted the image of an England of social hierarchy and yet harmony, where there was a cricket field in every village. The game of cricket was played with abiding values of hard work and fair play. Great writers of cricket like C.L.R. James, Ashis Nandy, Neville Cardus, John Arlott, Jim Swanton, Mihir Bose, Ramachandra Guha, Michael Manley, Richie Benaud, and Tony Cozier have written glowingly of the traditions of cricket; others like Mike Marqusee, an American who came to love cricket, saw the so-called golden age traditions of cricket as more about a world of deference and hierarchy, as if cricket was played “without awareness of commerce, cheating, or social tension.”

Growing up in Trinidad in the 1950s, the traditions of cricket were real to me. Inspired by the victorious West Indies team in England in 1950 and the exploits of Ramadhin and Valentine, I frequented the public library in my hometown of San Fernando to borrow books on cricket. I got up early with my father on mornings of Test matches in England to listen to the commentary by John Arlott and Rex Alston. Visiting Lords cricket ground in London, some 60 years after, for the first time in 2010 brought tears to my eyes. This initial interest in cricket, born in the early 1950s in the West Indies, has not diminished despite living in America since 1968. One of the joys in the past 40 years in New York, has been sharing conversations on cricket with my friends from Sri Lanka, Barbados, and Australia. As players and lovers of cricket, we give cricket credit for developing many of the humane values that we contribute to our

communities and the world. Of course, cricket has changed, changed utterly, as cultures and societies have changed everywhere. Social scientists have described our world sometimes as postmodern, and at other times as postcolonial. They have argued that the notion of modernity that was shaped by the enlightenment values of reason, knowledge, and science no longer fits our world. From the perspective of a West Indian, this discussion on tradition, modernity, and postmodernism is of great significance because it helps those of us who come from developing countries to understand our own development towards esteem, respect, and achievement, and, in the context of cricket in the West Indies, the part that cricket has played in our maturity. Perhaps it can be useful culturally, not just historically, to sketch our view of the romantic tradition of cricket and throw some light on why we loved cricket then by offering a collage of narratives of important works about cricket. The excellence of the West Indies teams of the 1950's, culminating in the glorious series against Australia in 1960/61 under the captaincy of Frank Worrell, has often been presented as the prologue to the rise to supremacy of the great West Indies teams from the 1970s to the early 1990s. But it has been a difficult march to return to the top of the hill since that time, although it can be said that we are getting close, speaking as a West Indian.

### ***CLR JAMES: BEYOND A BOUNDARY***

The eminent Caribbean intellectual, C.L.R. James, wrote, arguably, the finest work on cricket in *Beyond a Boundary*, linking the development of West Indian cricket to the larger context of colonialism and the struggle for independence.<sup>1</sup> He described thoughtfully the significance of race in the colonies and the difficulties that coloured cricketers had to overcome in order to be recognized and selected to represent the

colonial British West Indies. Established as an imperial game, cricket was carried throughout the British colonies. It was part and parcel of the British Empire, its power and sensibility; it placed also boundaries and restrictions on the colonized.

In telling his story and the story of cricket, James narrated how he and his people struggled to reach beyond boundaries towards freedom and dignity. His grandfather “raised himself above the mass of poverty” and became a pan boiler on a sugar estate, a job usually reserved for whites; his father went into teaching after receiving his teaching diploma; his mother, brought up by Wesleyan non-conformists, loved to read the novels of Sir Walter Scott and Thackeray. When his father brought home magazines that had stories about cricket, James pored over the articles about W. G. Grace, Prince Ranjitsinghi, and others. Admitted to Queen’s Royal College in 1911, the premier secondary school in Trinidad, he studied Latin, Greek, and English literature. He remembered his school days as affording him opportunities to read books and play cricket, and confessed that the English public school code of behaviour was drummed into him, “playing with the team,” “playing with a straight bat” “obey the umpire’s decision without question.” He learned early not to denounce others who failed but to respond “well tried!” “hard luck.” They were taught to be generous to opponents. This attitude was, of course, a far cry from today where “sledging” the opponent is accepted. Here is how James described the discipline he acquired “whose only name was Puritan. I never cheated. I took defeats and disappointments stoically...This code became the moral framework of my existence. It has never left me.” To acquire this code, he was driven to “evasions, disobedience, and open rebelliousness.” He said that it was much later that he became aware of the limitations on spirit, vision, and self-respect which was

imposed on us by the fact that our masters, curriculum, and code of morals, everything, began from the basis that Britain was the source of all light and our business was to admire, wonder, imitate, learn; our criteria of success was to have succeeded in approaching that distant ideal – to attain it was, of course, impossible.”<sup>2</sup> Of all the educational theories, James said that he had an affinity only to the classical Greek which combined poetry, gymnastics and music. From QRC he developed “an inexhaustible passion” for cricket and literature: “ I did not merely play cricket, I studied it, I analyzed strokes, I studied types, I read its history, its beginnings, how and when it changed from period to period.”<sup>3</sup> He was aware that he was educated to be a member of the British middle class. While reticence and self-discipline endured, he knew that the West Indian masses did not care about this. “They shouted and stamped and yelled in anger and joy to this day in Bridgetown and Birmingham, but they expected us, the educated, to live up to the code which they knew. James’ seed idea in this great work was without doubt his narrative of the character of Shannon Club in the cricket competition in Port of Spain. Acknowledging that race, culture, and class were factors in the composition and ethos of cricket clubs, he stated that while light-skinned educated Blacks favored Maple club, Blacks from the lower middle class joined Shannon. Aware that their club represented the Black masses, Shannon players prepared and played with pride, confident that all people were equal in dignity. Their self-discipline, concentration, and ambition were amazing. They played with spirit and fire. Learie Constantine was the supreme example of this spirit. He played joyfully and freely without inhibitions. The truth was that he was a cricketer of “concentrated passion” and a thinker. James declared that Shannonism represented the dynamic forces of West Indies cricket. Concluding his hymn of praise to

the values of Shannon, James declared that if cricket had been wiped from the face of the earth by a catastrophe, “Shannon club would have preserved cricket’s accumulated skills, its historical traditions and its virtues, uncontaminated by any vice and endowed with sufficient vitality to ensure re-conquest of the world.”<sup>4</sup> But what about racialism, James asked. It was James who led the movement to persuade the West Indies Cricket Board to select Sir Frank Worrell as the first Black captain of the West Indies team for the magnificent tour of Australia in 1960/61. The persistence of racism in cricket had to be acknowledged, in his lights, but he did not think that it hurt West Indies cricket. Indeed, it added another incentive for West Indies cricketers to improve their performance and give their best. As he pointedly remarked, “the cricket field was a stage in which selected individuals played representative roles which were charged with social significance.”<sup>5</sup>

In describing his commitment to certain moral values as Puritan and his intellectual foundation as British, James wanted to show that cricket in the West Indies was connected to the imperial project to make cricket the moral foundation of Victorian Britain. James cited W.G. Grace, Thomas Arnold, the headmaster of Rugby Public School, and Thomas Hughes, author of *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*, as the three main architects of designing the system of Victorian values, placing cricket as the center for building British character. The feats of W.G. Grace (1848-1914) remained a legend in England and wherever cricket is played. He was considered the person who made batting and, indeed, cricket generally, a science. His stupendous batting and bowling achievements were the fruit of his deep study. For James, the originality of Grace was his ability to include in his repertoire the pre-industrial character of cricket, say, before 1778 where cricketers were less troubled by morals and ate, drank, and played for money.

He studied at the Bristol medical school to become a physician, and graduated in 1879, practicing medicine while playing cricket. His batting scores were simply phenomenal. In 1878 he scored 344 runs in a single innings for the MCC; By 1895 he had scored 120 centuries in first class cricket. He captained England in 1880 against Australia. At the age of 60, he retired from first class cricket having completed 126 centuries but continued to play minor league cricket until he was 66. James asserted unequivocally that through W.G. Grace, cricket, the most complete expression of popular life in pre-industrial England, was incorporated into the life of the nation.<sup>6</sup> He saw him as the creator of modern batting, whose genius was “in his head.” Grace was given credit for the imposing structure of cricket that was established. Crowds flocked to see him play. He introduced technique to cricket, batting off the front and back foot. James saw him as pre-Victorian, though he confessed that such a genius could not be fitted into a category. He summed up the life of WG Grace in this way: He seemed to have been one of those men whom the characteristics of life as lived by many generations seemed to meet for the last in a complete and perfect blended whole. His personality was sufficiently wide and firm to include a strong Victorian stream without being inhibited.”<sup>7</sup>

The Victorian middle class made cricket a national institution. Having won a political victory with the 1832 Reform Bill and the repeal of the corn laws in 1842, they sought to replace the old aristocratic elite with its liberal and questionable values with an ideology that James called “moral unctiousness.” James credited Thomas Arnold and Thomas Hughes with building the structure of the new moral values and the establishment of the centrality of sport, especially cricket.

As principal of Rugby School, Thomas Arnold wanted to create a new elite class that would not be seduced by the greed and vulgarity of the industrialist class nor by the socialist slogans of the oppressed classes of his day. He was a stern principal who instilled in the students at Rugby respect for self-discipline, self-reliance, and a deep respect for church and state leaders and institutions. Those who did not work hard or fit the Rugby values were advised to leave or be expelled. That was his way to build a great public school. He believed in religion and the building of character. Soon the public school system of England followed his system at Rugby. In Arnold's mind, moral and intellectual excellence went together. The ruling classes accepted his aims and methods but replaced the cultivation of the intellect with organized sport in the curriculum, privileging cricket. What interested the Victorians was not so much intellectual excellence as moral values and character training. James keenly perceived that this was how the ruling elites prepared and disciplined themselves for the exercise of power. Cricket became compulsory at school and was elevated to a moral discipline. People respected competence in cricket and such respect and meaning spread through imperial Britain and its colonies. Organized sports and games thus became a significant part of modern culture.

Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, captured the *ethos* of Thomas Arnold's Rugby school spirit and discipline. What Arnold hoped to produce was a class of responsible, God-fearing men who would guide British civilization between "ruthless industrialism and rebellious labour."<sup>8</sup> For the masses, Arnold expected vocational schools and workers' associations would provide basic education. In describing Tom's father's village life and his nostalgia for the old ways, "the rough, kindly, simple life,"



James called Hughes a “a Dickensian without the social passion.” Hughes recognized that the old England had gone and a new discipline was required, and Thomas Arnold’s Rugby Public School was the model for the new age. James felt that Hughes was deeply aware of the transition from one age to another and that “his feeling for what was or should be transitory and what was permanent in English life was sure and strong.”<sup>9</sup>

### **NEVILLE CARDUS: AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

As Learie Constantine was leaving for England to play cricket for Nelson in the Lancashire League, he invited his friend James to come and stay with him as they were both writing books. In 1932 James left for England. Constantine already had a great reputation in Nelson. Constantine completed his work, *Cricket and I*, and James, *The Life of Captain Arthur Cipriani*. They both were invited to give lectures on cricket and the West Indies. After witnessing a match where Sydney Barnes was playing, James was so impressed by his bowling that he wrote a 1500 word essay. He showed it to Constantine who encouraged him to send it to Neville Cardus, the eminent music critic and cricket reporter for the prestigious Manchester Guardian.<sup>10</sup> Not only did Cardus publish his article, but he invited him to come for an interview and gave him the job of deputising for him as cricket reporter. James was ecstatic. He now had a job in England and no longer had to depend on Constantine to support him. A committed Marxist and Trotskyite, he was asked to give a lecture tour in the USA in 1938. Fascinated by the “immense vitality, generosity, and audacity of these strange people,” James stayed for 15 years. He broke with Trotsky in 1940. In America he wrote original interpretations of the novelist Herman Melville and a study of American civilization.

The association developed by James, Constantine, and Cardus presents a good opportunity to include a brief discourse on the contribution Neville Cardus made to the romantic tradition and the golden age of cricket. The life of Neville Cardus (1888- 1975) in itself is a remarkable story of achievement.<sup>11</sup> Born in Rusholme, Manchester, in a slum as he himself said, illegitimate, brought up by his mother, Ada, and her parents, Robert and Ann Cardus (he never knew who his father was), he dropped out of school at 13 after 5 years of school, taught himself literature, the arts, and philosophy at the local library, and rose to such eminence that he was the senior music critic and cricket correspondent at the famed Manchester Guardian. He said that his interest in music was inspired by the German merchants in Manchester who brought European classical music with them. As for cricket, he played cricket when young, and was the assistant coach at Shrewsbury school in Shropshire where he was influenced by the headmaster, Cyril Alington. But it was the cricketers of the golden age like W.G. Grace, Ranji, C.B. Fry, and the great players for Lancashire like Spooner and Bill Tyldesley who inspired his love for cricket. As illustration of his love for cricket, Cardus cited his wedding in 1921. He said he saw a few overs of the Lancashire against Yorkshire match, hurried to attend the wedding ceremony, and then returned to the ground for the pre-lunch overs.

What drew a large number of readers of his music and cricket essays was his unique sensibility and approach. His style was personal, subjective, and romantic. He wrote of his twin loves: “To be paid to watch cricket at Lords in the afternoon, and hear Lotte Lehmann sing as Marschallin in the evening was nothing less than an act of providence.”<sup>12</sup> At his memorial, the famous cricket commentator, John Arlott, said: “Before him, cricket was reported. With him, it was for the first time appreciated, felt,

and imaginatively described.” Although he was untrained in music, his approach was intuitive and personal, rather than academic and technical. Compared to Ernest Newman, another great music critic of whom it was said he was more cerebral in his interpretation, fans of Cardus said that he reclined his head on Music’s bosom and listened to her heart.

Revisiting the England of his youth, wondering how an uneducated boy from a poor family could be reasonably instructed in the arts and an expert in one, he felt that the world was everybody’s oyster to be opened, although he was aware that the times were sometimes “disgraceful in a city which was one of the wealthiest in an empire rich as any the world has known.” It was by chance that he became interested in cricket. He had never shown any interest in golf or horse racing. He remembered that he found himself outside the hallowed Old Trafford cricket ground one day and saw A.C. Maclaren open the batting for Lancashire. He drove a ball straight to the boundary. He felt that that stroke had aroused in his youth the romantic interest in cricket which never left him as he got older. That summer of 1902 he remembered as the year he “lived free as the wind watching and playing cricket.” He saw Victor Trumper make a century before lunch. These were the players that fired the imagination of all England. As for his interest in music, he praised the impact of German merchants in Manchester before World War I, who, attracted by the industrial wealth of Manchester, brought their music with them. He remembered Richter playing on the staircase one Christmas morning; Brodsky, the principal of the Royal Manchester School of Music, was a friend of Tchaikovsky and Brahms. He said that he saw Brodsky, Richter, and Strauss going to the Continental restaurant together. He remembered a week in Manchester where on Monday there was a play by Galsworthy; on Tuesday, a Brodsky quartet concert; on Thursday, a Halle concert

with Richter and Busoni; and on Friday, a play, Ibsen's Ghosts. His scholarly interests were cultivated while attending the free lectures at Manchester University and he recalled especially a discourse on Hegel. It was between his 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> year that he developed his knowledge of music but could not account for his awakening: "this grace descended on me without a conscious seeking of it."<sup>13</sup> What was this grace? An atheist, he could not argue for some religious force outside himself. He felt that it might have been the power of music itself. In conclusion, he remembered the effect of understanding Beethoven's final quartets, so beautiful and moving that they made him question his rationalism, quoting another music critic, Samuel Langford, [the Quartets] were removed by their ideality from every contamination of the world."<sup>14</sup> The awareness of this grace he felt was linked to the art of listening which he said was an art in itself and involved "a special training of a special faculty...an imaginative and non-egotistical reception of music."

In 1912 he started his first full-time job as assistant cricket coach to Shrewsbury school in Shropshire where the headmaster was Rev. Cyril Alington. He spent five summers here, continuing his self-education in the school's library and developing a warm relationship with Rev. Alington who made Cardus his secretary. His admiration for Alington gave him confidence and respect for authority. He said this of the Rev. Alington as a teacher, as he did of the great musicians and cricketers: "I saw him as an artist who would be readier to interest himself in a boy's temperament than in the most successfully negotiated examination paper. He was for me an influence that inspired and corrected at one and the same time; not by precept but by example." The happy relation at Shrewsbury school was broken when Rev. Alington was made headmaster of Eton

College in 1916. Invited to come to Eton, he was happy to be associated with Alington, but he was also sad to leave Shrewsbury because he was leaving a place where “he was happy for five summers.” Although he was initially exempted from service in the war because he was shortsighted, the military authorities began to re-examine the rejected men, and his status was undecided. This meant that he could not take up the position at Eton College. He was unemployed again. He tried his hand at part-time positions at the first Labor Party newspaper, the Daily Citizen, at an Insurance company for a burial society and then applied to the Director of the Manchester Guardian, C.P. Scott, for a position as a writer. Sent for an interview with its Theatre critic, Haslam Mills, Cardus was hired and started work on March 26, 1917 as an all-round journalist.

How he came to be the cricket correspondent was in his mind purely by chance. Having suffered a nervous breakdown in 1919, he was advised when he returned to his job to spend a day or two in the open air at Old Trafford covering cricket which had resumed after the war. The following year, 1920 he was asked to cover cricket almost every day over the length and breadth of Britain. He said that his style developed from “over writing” to one where he had confidence in his observation and experience. He looked back on those days with joy and affection on the days he spent “in the fresh air and sunshine... and I have found both art and richness of nature on the cricket field.” “Cricket opened my door wide at last: and I could walk henceforward in my proper direction – to music.” He said that cricket saved him as a human being. The circumstances of his life from boyhood hardly gave him time beyond educating himself. There was little time for the enjoyment of everyday folks. He now met unlettered people with no pretences, good craftsmen with bat and ball on the field. More significantly,

cricket taught him important lessons about life, as Rev. Alington had taught him:

“Cricket in time proved my salvation from exclusiveness.” His two responsibilities as music and cricket correspondent brought him in touch with a wider range of humanity than I think can be thrown any man’s way.”<sup>15</sup> He said that he found more interesting characters among cricketers than among musicians. Writing of players as if they were heroes, he also showed their fads and weaknesses that made them human. Take his description of C.B. Fry, for example. Cardus said that he was the most remarkable cricketer he knew. A close friend of Ranjitsinghi, his book on batting, Cardus argued, might have been written by Aristotle. “He walked the field half Greek, half Malvolio. He taught himself to bat by logic and analysis. He worked out an anatomy of stroke-play, and transformed himself from a player of ordinary talents into the most prolific scorer of his period, apart from Ranji.” Later, he added that if Fry had not squandered his talents at games and other such practices, he could have distinguished himself in politics, the theatre, the law, or literature.<sup>16</sup> Cardus was able to capture that quintessential aspect of cricket, the persistence of change by recalling the cyclical rhythm of nature. For twenty years, he attended cricket matches. He saw the blossoms come upon orchards in Gloucestershire, midsummer in full blaze at Canterbury, and torrents of rain too; he saw the autumn leaves falling in Eastbourne, and shivered to the bone on the spring time blast at Oxford. Following the Great War, he felt that cricket still had its old spark, but that the general disillusionment and contraction of the economy of the period was beginning to affect the spirit of the game. This was how he explained why the change took place:

“When Manchester was wealthy and the mills of Lancashire were busy nights and days, cricket at Old Trafford was luxuriant with Maclaren, Spooner, and Tyldesley squandering

runs right and left. It was soon, as the country's shoe began to pinch and mill after mill closed, that Lancashire cricket obtained its reputation for suspicious thriftiness; care and want batted visibly at both ends of the wicket – not that the players consciously expressed anything; of course, they didn't.”<sup>17</sup> Read his description of Wilfred Rhodes whom he considered the greatest spin bowler of the golden age. Cardus confessed that a piece that he wrote of Rhodes was “one of the best bits of prose of my life.”

I quote the paragraph in full because it communicates perfectly the timeless attractiveness of the essence of spin bowling in cricket, a description that could apply to the great spinners of the 1950s up to recent times about Shane Warne, Murali Muralitharam, and Anil Kumble: “Flight was his secret; flight and the curving line, now higher, now lower, tempting, inimical; every ball like every other ball, yet somewhat unlike; each over in collision with the others, part of a plot. Every ball a decoy, the spy sent out to get the lie of the land; some balls simple, some complex, some easy, some difficult; and of them –oh, which- the master ball:”<sup>18</sup>

### **ASHIS NANDY: THE *TAO* OF CRICKET**

Having won the World Cup of cricket in 2011, India has become the center of world cricket. At a match in Delhi during the 2011 World cup, I was amazed to witness the boisterous participation of the crowded stadium. Tassa drumming blasted away between overs; there was singing and dancing in the isles when a boundary was scored or a wicket taken. The match was between the West Indies and South Africa. The cricket was serious but the crowd participation was more like carnival than the cricket I knew when I was growing up in Trinidad. It was in 1993 also that the eminent scholar and

friend, Prof. Ashis Nandy, then director of the Center for the Study of Developing Societies, gave me a copy of his work, *The Tao of Cricket*, which in many ways was similar in theme to the works of CLR James and Neville Cardus.<sup>19</sup>

Writing in 1989 as a political and cultural psychologist, he said that he loved the game for its “culture of anarchic individualism.” Cricket introduced into Indian society a unique form of cultural expression. He argued that between the World War I and II there developed a consensus about the meaning of cricket and the part it played in sustaining certain cultural values. In addition, he intended to show that the traditional view of cricket was being undermined by a modernity that was trying to make the game more “scientific, faster, more professional, more thrilling, combative, and decisive”, but the growing fit between cricket and modern life was destroying the essence of the game. As British imperial power spread globally, the British gentry and the Victorian middle classes promoted the spread of cricket as an important part of the mission to civilize the colonies. Cricket had emphasized certain values of the British elite. Before the introduction of Test cricket, the annual match between the amateur gentlemen and professional players was the most prestigious match. The sense of fairness in the rules of cricket served to give imperial power the veneer of justice. Nandy and James, however, saw cricket in the Third World as a mode of “self expression” and resistance.

The heart of Ashis Nandy’s discourse on cricket in India was his analysis of the grand figure of Prince Ranjitsinhji (1872-1933), who with W.G. Grace were the greatest cricketers of the golden age. The first recorded cricket match in India was 1804 between two English teams in Calcutta, then capital of British India. That the Calcutta Cricket Club, founded in 1792, banned Indians from membership illustrated well the character of



cricket in imperial India. The career of Ranji fitted well as an example of the connection between colonialism, cricket, and the princely states of India of which there were some 594, who were granted small autonomy under British imperial rule. Cardus had said that Ranji was “entirely original” and there was nothing to compare with him in the history of batsmanship, a view echoed by Grace in 1908. Though Indians claimed him with pride as the father of Indian cricket, he was throughout his life an apologist for British imperial rule and Western culture. Ranji was born to a Rajput family in the small princely state of Nawanagar in the Kathiawad region of Gujarat, not far from the place of birth of Mohandas K. Gandhi and Mohammed Ali Jinnah. His early years were spent in the village of Jamnagar, about 40 miles from Nawanagar where the ruling prince was Vibhaji. Ranji was made heir apparent to Vibhaji in 1879. The princely state of Nawanagar remained loyal to British rule in the face of local rebellions. In 1880 he was sent to Rajkumar college at Rajkot which trained children of princely families and the elites in modern knowledge and Western culture. He stayed at the college for eight years and came under the influence of the principal, who encouraged him to focus on cricket. One of Ranji’s fellow students at Rajkumar college was M.K. Gandhi but it does not seem that they knew each other. In 1889 Ranji left for England to study at Trinity college, Cambridge University, the same year that Gandhi went to London to study law. Gandhi clumsily tried to fit into Western culture by taking dancing lessons but he lived modestly. Ranji fitted in easily. He bought the first car in the university town, organized lavish parties, and hired servants. He did not enter Trinity college until 1892. He caught the eyes of cricket experts. It was said that he hired professional bowlers to develop his batting skills. In 1893 he got into the Cambridge University team and the county team.

Playing for the MCC in 1894, he scored 200 runs in two hours. Selected for England in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Test at Old Trafford against Australia, he made 154 in the second innings.

Ranji had an unorthodox style of batting that excited cricket enthusiasts. Many searched for the meaning and cultural sources of his style.<sup>20</sup> He himself said that a delicate leg-glance was more enriching than a bash for six.. Cardus wrote that Ranji belonged “to the land of Indian jugglers.” “A strange light of the kind not seen in English cricket fields shone when he batted.” Others described his style as “oriental calm”, or “oriental magic.”<sup>21</sup> Nandy wondered at this description of Ranji . Ranji was slender and delicate and prone to illnesses. In the popular imagination, he seemed weaker than he actually was. Remember that this was the age of the emphasis on masculinity and even muscular Christianity, appropriate perhaps for an imperial mission. Ranji’s style of batting emphasized artistry rather than power. Nandy suggested that this style was preserved from an older tradition of cricket, “born of insufficient training, physical vulnerability, and effeminacy.”<sup>22</sup> Returning to the comparison with Gandhi, Nandy felt that both Ranji and Gandhi had a similar appeal. What was surprising was that Ranji did not share the view that it was his Indian self that was the source of his distinctive batting style. The attraction of Western civilization, science, utilitarianism, discipline, and Victorian manliness was too ingrained in him that it dominated his manner of seeing the world even when he left cricket and returned home to India.

In 1896, Wisden named Ranji as one of the five cricketers of the year and called him a genius, scoring 2780 runs in a single season in domestic cricket, breaking the record of Grace. In 1897, selected for the MCC tour to Australia, in the second test ill, he rose from his bed and scored 175 runs. Ranji remained modest and humble at his

achievements in cricket. The Australian public loved Ranji. There were Ranji bats, Ranji bars, and Ranji sandwiches. When he saved England from defeat at Trent Bridge in England in 1899, scoring a defiant 93, the Manchester Guardian reported that, as he walked back to the pavilion, with the crowd cheering, he had tears in his eyes.<sup>23</sup> He suffered many illnesses. It must have been a difficult decision when he retired from first class cricket in 1905 at the age of 33 to return to India as JamSaheb of Nawanagar because he was loved in England. He served on the Western front in World War I but returned after an asthma attack.

A modernist and lover of English culture, Ranji ruled Jamnagar effectively, building a port, extending railways, and made primary and secondary education free. He hired architect, Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944), the builder of modern Delhi, to reconstruct Jamnagar as a city of lakes and gardens. Faithful to his belief in the 19<sup>th</sup> century notion of progress, he built a solarium and a dyke. He hosted his friends, Grace and Fry, at Jamnagar, and he had the reputation of being generous and kind. It was a different story when it came to assisting Indian cricket institutions. He responded that “Prince]Duleepsinhji and I are English cricketers.” Given this perspective, it was not surprising that he had little sympathy for the Gandhian movement for independence or his social causes. Ranji was dedicated to British imperial rule and way of life. Nandy argued that it was not the case that he was unpatriotic but that his nationalism viewed Indian traditional cultures through Western eyes. India was given Test match status in 1932 and began to play against strong international teams. While India could boast excellent individuals players, team-work was generally weak. This was clearly a legacy

of its early cricket traditions which were dominated by the princes, Parsees, and other elites.

Ashis Nandy's specialization as a cultural psychologist made him a credible interpreter of the many changes in the contemporary culture of cricket. The changes are taking place with such frequency and speed that they challenge the wisdom that understanding, indeed learning generally, is cumulative. Since the *Tao of Cricket* was published in 1989, the innovations and changes have arisen so quickly that it is extremely difficult to reflect on their meaning and usefulness. The broad strokes of Nandy's conclusion remain, however, insightful. Quoting Konrad Lorenz that "sport is an expression of one of the most dangerous forms of human aggression - collective, militant enthusiasm," he warned of the consequences that faced cricket culture since it was incorporated into the global economy and, worse, the construction of nationalism. Take for instance the significance of the pre-eminence of Brazil and Spain in soccer. The character and quality of their football have given their nations and people a positive image of pride and self-esteem. In cricket, India is currently considered the leading cricket nation, replacing Australia and, earlier, the West Indies. Cricket in India, Pakistan, and the West Indies have historically been important institutions of national self-expression. Nandy stated that for a billion Indians, how well the Indian team performed was of serious concern for their self-esteem. They expect with victory "personal and collective dignity." Cricket has become "a channel of mobility and a vision of the world which allows more equality or balanced competition than does the real world." Nandy cautions the cricketer of the danger of seeing and selling himself as a commodity in a world where it seems that money is everything and the road to

happiness. He sided with James in asking for the de-expertization of cricket, pleading for a return to adventure and creativity. Both demanded that “the cricketer be returned to the community and not be turned into an expert, a paid entertainer.” “As a commodity today, sport is advertised, sold, purchased, consumed and covered for the media by specialists. Consumable sport presumed an absence of ethics, that sportsmanship was an exercise in public relations, not an inner directed sense of fair play. Consumable sport emphasizes winning at all costs for the sake of money, career, and status.” Continuing, Nandy distinguished between hyper-competitive sport typical of professional sport and playful sport which was “a reassertion of the essential relationship with nature and others.” He felt tht organized, professional sport was “too dependent on techniques and technologies, too much under the influence of market forces to serve the basic function of play.” If cricket continues in this direction, it would become a cultural instrument rather than a creative feature of the cricketer’s humanity and thus liberating. He warned that cricket and sport generally “cannot be brought within the ambit of modern science.” “Cricket, if it is to remain cricket, has to remain a game of doubt, a game of what might be or should have been, and may still be. Therein lies the greatness of the game.”<sup>24</sup>

### ***Mike Marqusee, Anyone But England: Cricket and the National Malaise***

When asked by friends how could an American write a book on cricket, Mike Marqusee answered that he was a “deracinated Marxist.” An American student at an English university for some twenty years since 1971, he grew to love cricket, attracted by West Indies team under Clive Lloyd and the writings on cricket by CLR James. He said

that he studied many changes in English culture and cricket from the 1970s and its so-called golden age.<sup>25</sup>

He admitted that his perspective was as a modernist. He came to love cricket although, as an American, cricket was not in his blood. What particularly attracted him was the excellence of the West Indies teams of the 1970 to the 1990s. Also, it was the first time that he saw an all-Black team play an all-white team, and he saw the anguish the victory of the West Indies team caused in England. His interest in writing this book was to understand how cricket, an eighteenth century sport which became a dominant part of British culture, responded to the evolving industrial civilization of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Marqusee's narrative, however, did not lament the sense of loss of the past. He debunked the association of cricket, moral values, and the social harmony of imperial England, declaring that it was more accurate to speak of social hierarchy where all knew their place. He reminded readers that the administration that dominated international cricket from 1787 to the 1990s, the MCC, was established to preserve the dominance of the British elite, and the sacred cricket ground of Lords was founded as a business interest. He brought down W.G. Grace from his pedestal calling him "a shamateur", and not an amateur gentleman. His family was "middle class and professional" seeking respectability by his association with the aristocracy. He described Grace as "unkempt, unwashed, gluttonous, exuberantly competitive, and a notorious cheat."<sup>26</sup> However, he preserved Ranji's reputation as a master of elegance and style, and used the figure of Ranji to illustrate the Victorian association of moral values with the aesthetic. For him, Ranji was a master batsman who combined "timing, power, grace and aggression"

adding, like James, that his leg-glance showed the “delicacy, ease, and elegance of the golden age.” The high period of the golden age of cricket was between 1895 and 1914.

Generally critical of the aristocratic period of cricket where the class of so-called gentlemen and amateurs held the highest esteem, Marqusee saw a radical change after the Reform Act of 1832.<sup>27</sup> In 1846 William Clarke, a bricklayer, sought to create an alternative cricket culture. He bought a cricket pitch and nearby fields in Nottingham and organized the best cricketers as professionals into an all-England team which played matches in major cities in England. The cricketers were paid with the gate money. Captains for the Test and County teams were selected from amateurs and gentlemen, not from professional players. Professionals were paid 4 pounds for a county match and if selected for the gentlemen versus players match, 10 pounds. They had to pay for their expenses when they traveled, bed and breakfast, third class rail fare, meals and drinks. There was therefore little money to be made from cricket. That was why James praised the professional Lancashire League Cricket in England, single day matches, because it gave the best players of the colonies the opportunity to earn a living for their family by playing in England and at the same time to enhance their skills and gain experience.

World War I and II, and the great depression, badly disrupted cricket. The heady days of joyful cricket were replaced by a culture of “safety first”. The terrible wars and destructiveness, the great depression, revolutionary movements, perhaps, created the climate of anxiety, even in sport. Don Bradman, the great Australian batsman and captain, West Indian batsman, George Headley, and all-rounder, Learie Constantine, were among the giants of this period. Cricket writers commented that dull and defensive

cricket had become the dominant character of cricket and it survived into the 1950s.

Caution in batting seemed to overcome adventure.

One of the main objectives of his book was to analyze the encounter between traditional cricket and modernity which he located in the early 1960s, and how the character of cricket changed radically in the 1970s, a topic that interested me. I grew up playing cricket in the 1950's as captain of Presentation College team and later for San Fernando Cricket Club. The highlight of my cricket story was being selected to play for a Trinidad team against the touring Pakistan team in 1958. I was a promising leg-spinner then. I used to listen with my father to the commentary of the Test matches between England and the West Indies on the radio. The successful West Indies series against England in 1950 inspired me as a player and my love for cricket. As a leg-spinner, I developed an interest in Ramadhin and Valentine, spinners who played a great part in the West Indies victory. But it was the entire West Indies team that was the source of this love that developed into a lifelong passion for the game to this day. The batting of the three W's, Weekes, Worrell and Walcott, the opening batsmen, Jeffrey Stollmeyer and Alan Rae, and captain John Goddard excited my imagination. There was no TV in our home then. It was the radio that filled our imagination with the wonderful descriptive commentaries by radio journalists like John Arlott, Rex Alston, Jim Swanton, and others. That 1950 tour to England transformed the dull cricket of the earlier period. One can call it a transitional period, say, from the 1950 series to the glorious 1960/61 series between the West Indies and Australia in Australia, especially the tied first test. It was the West Indies team and its disciplined attractive cricket that lifted cricket from its earlier decline. I was a second year student at the University of Dublin, Ireland. I



remember well the cold January morning in 1961 in Dublin when I read that thousands of Australians came out to thank the captain, Frank Worrell, and his team for the exciting cricket during that series. It drew tears to my eyes. West Indies lost that series but, more than anything else, Frank Worrell and his team showed that the grand ideal of cricket, namely, that winning or losing was not the purpose of the game but how you played the game, was real. More significantly, the 1960/61 series revealed the lie about the natives of the colonies, descendants of slaves from Africa and indentured laborers from India, working class men, and others, that they have natural ability but not discipline or deep thinking. For CLR James, that series showed that the West Indies colonies were ready for independence. My own perspective placed the West Indies team and its captain, Frank Worrell, within the traditional age of cricket and at the beginning of modern cricket.

Mike Marqusee did not treat at all the West Indies cricket of the 1950s but stressed the importance of Rowland Bowen, a cricket historian, who drew attention to the need for changes in the governance and system of cricket in *Cricket: A History of its Growth and Development throughout the World*, published in 1970.<sup>28</sup> He recalled that in the 1950s Bowen had written a memorandum arguing that the consequences of the projected economic changes in Britain would not suit the current structure of cricket and suggested radical changes.<sup>29</sup> He recommended that county cricket be played on two days on weekends and a two-division championship system. In his 1970 work he pointed out that the domination of the MCC in world cricket would decline, like the Empire. He felt that cricket was outmoded and its ideals and values were too tied to social division and the moneyed class which did not appeal to the general outlook of Britain. Insisting that

both the quality of batting and bowling had declined, he blamed the defensive cricket of county cricket for that situation. He called it “over-professionalism” and proposed that cricketers should go back to the amateur ideal in order to restore its “aesthetic quality.” On social relations, he advised that upper classes should aspire to treat others with equal respect. They should “grow up,” he said. In 1962, two of the old vestiges of aristocratic cricket, the distinction between professionals and amateurs were ended and the last game between gentlemen and players was played. In 1968 the MCC created the Cricket Council with its constituents, the Test and County Cricket Board, responsible for the first class game and the National Cricket Association.. That year at the annual general meeting of the Professional Cricketers’ Association, one third of the professional members agreed to form a union to advance their interests. Eventually, later, 100 percent of players joined their union. They were able to win a group retirement scheme, a minimum wage , and representation on the Test and County cricket registration and disciplinary committees.

The one-day format of cricket was introduced in 1963 with the Gillette Cup and the John Player League in 1969. The BBC2 signed a deal with John Player which paid 75,000 pounds to sponsor the 40 over competition. Sponsorship had arrived. With TV exposure assured, cricket clubs began selling advertising space on their grounds. As Marqusee asserted, “cricket was now learning to live in the modern world.”<sup>30</sup> The first one-day international was played in 1971 in Australia and the following year a third one-day competition was added, the Benson and Hedges competition. Bookmakers were admitted to Lords in 1974 and the first Prudential World Cup of cricket was held in England in 1975.

## **THE 1977 KERRY PACKER REVOLUTION**

In 1977 arose what cricket scholars called the Kerry Packer revolution, an appropriate term to describe the radical changes that took place in cricket.<sup>31</sup> The changes in the 1960s and in TV technology played an important role in creating interest in sport, especially cricket, among business tycoons and corporations. Color TV and satellite technology were introduced in Australia in the early 1970s. When rain brought an abrupt end to play in the Test match in Melbourne in 1970/71 between England and Australia, a 40 over (eight ball over) match was organized which drew high TV ratings and a crowd of some 46,000. The exciting World Cup final in 1975 between Australia and the West Indies made business aware of the economic potential of cricket. Kerry Packer assumed control of channel 9 of Australian TV on the death of his father in 1974 and aggressively invested in sport to increase the ratings of channel 9. He bid for the rights to televise the Test series between Australia and England in 1976, offering to pay eight times the contract that the Australian Broadcasting Corporation paid for their previous contract. The Australian Cricket Board chose to be loyal to the ABC who had broadcast the game for some 20 years, and rejected Packer's bid. Packer received the same answer when he applied to the Test and County Cricket Board to televise the Australian tour to England in 1977. He doubled his offer and won the rights but the negotiations made him angry. He began to organize exhibition matches and signed up most of the Australian and West Indies team to join his initiative. Tony Greig, the captain of England's Test team, and Richie Benaud, a former captain of Australia, were hired as consultants and personnel managers to make practical what was still vague in conception, and to organize matches between an Australian team and the Rest of the World team. Some fifty players were

given contracts. The International Cricket Committee and the Test and County Cricket Board decided to ban the players from international matches and to persuade them to break their contracts.

Supported by Packer, Tony Greig, Mike Procter, and John Snow took their case to court. It was presented on September 26, 1977 before Justice Sir Christopher Slade. The cricket administrators argued that cricket was now part of the world's heritage and they were protecting and preserving the ideals of the game and that the honor of playing for one's country could not be surpassed by considerations of money. Mr. Robert Alexander, advocate for the players, charged that "the cricket authorities were acting like feudal landlords who expected loyalty but offered no contract or adequate remuneration."<sup>32</sup>. After deliberations that lasted for 32 days, Justice Slade voted for the players and made the ICC and TCCB pay costs and damages.<sup>33</sup>

Packer then proceeded with his plans for World Series Cricket. Prevented from playing his matches at traditional cricket grounds, he leased two Australian football grounds, and introduced drop-in pitches. The first "super Test" between Australia and the West Indies took place at Melbourne on Dec. 2, 1977. The match was presented as a gladiatorial game. When the Australian opening batsman, David Hookes, was hit by a bouncer from fast bowler, Andy Roberts, and broke his jaw, the crowd and TV audience were convinced now that it was cricket, not a show. World Series cricket became popular when the one day, limited overs, and day/night games were played. Packer targeted families, men, women, and children, and projected the game of cricket as entertainment. In this version of cricket, players wore colored uniforms and a white ball was used. The promise and excitement of the shortened cricket match led the authorities of traditional

cricket grounds to withdraw their objection to limited overs cricket. Lights were installed for night cricket. The first day/night match between Australia and the West Indies on Nov. 28, 1978, drew an attendance of 44,000 men and women. Cricket writers were high in their praise of the quality of the cricket. Cricketing Boards everywhere began to soften their attitude to Packer. In 1979 Packer initiated a series of meetings with the Australian Cricket Board. On May 9, 1979, Bob Parish, Chairman of the Australian Cricket Board, announced that Channel 9 won the exclusive rights to telecast Australian cricket for ten years and to promote and market the game. For the authorities, Packer's openness to corporate sponsorship and marketing was the way to finance and support cricket. There were others like the noted cricket writer, E.W. Swanton who criticized their capitulation to money. Kerry Packer was interested in cricket as a business project and he got what he wanted. He gave great support to the shorter versions of cricket and helped to create cricket as entertainment. Players received greater remuneration for their performances, and this was a great achievement. Sponsorship has certainly become the means to finance the development of youth and women's cricket and there is no doubt that Packer's World Series Cricket paved the way for the establishment of very popular and lucrative international competitions in the shortened versions of cricket, like the IPL in India, Big Bash in Australia, in England, Sri Lanka, and South Africa. Does this mean that the dynamism of capitalist modernity has again conquered another traditional cultural institution?

Cricket scholars have not yet concluded that modern cricket has destroyed traditional Test cricket which remains the measure of the meaning of cricket. There seems to be enough room for all the versions of cricket, with excellence in Test matches

as the center of prestige for teams and individuals. A big hit for six makes the crowd roar with delight, but Ranji's statement that a delicate leg-glance or a cover-drive – style-is still the pre-eminent yardstick of the love for cricket.

The narrative of the transformation of the traditional international Test matches to the modern versions of cricket will be familiar to enthusiasts of the current versions of cricket today, but it is legitimate to ask whether the form and values of traditional Test cricket have a future today? If one looks at the long view of history, the transitions to new epochs are never simple nor easy to define. The old and the new are often interwoven. To end this discourse I re-turn the clock back to the 1950s West Indies team and to the seminal match of the tied Test between Australia and the West Indies, captained by Frank Worrell<sup>34</sup> In John Arlott's edited work of a collection of articles on great captains, the final piece is on Frank Worrell and was written by CLR James. It was James more than anyone else who argued for the selection of Worrell as captain of the West Indies team in 1961/62.

James selected three as the great captains of cricket: Pelham "Plum" Warner, captain of England in the 1903/04 tour to Australia, and later to South Africa, the West Indies, and America, and made cricket an international game. Don Bradman, captain of Australia after World War I, considered by many the greatest batsman of cricket who viewed cricket as a science and technology to be understood and mastered to achieve excellence. He was also a conservative representative of the "safety first", not taking risks ideology of cricket in the period between the World wars: and the third, Frank Worrell, who as captain of the West Indies team returned cricket to what it was in the time of Grace, Ranji, Headley, and Constantine. What was more insightful historically,

James said that when looked at as a man of passion, flesh and blood, Worrell sought to show that colored cricketers were as good Test players as any other, “technically, aesthetically, disciplined, and morally.” James recalled how strongly his friend Learie Constantine felt that the West Indies team should have a colored captain. Thanks principally to James’ activism, Frank Worrell was appointed the first Black captain of the West Indies team. James asserted that the principle behind the struggle was not racial but moral. It was the captaincy of Worrell that built a group of individuals from the different islands into a team of responsible players who had mutual respect and pride in each other. Worrell understood that this was more important than winning. West Indians to a person understood this also, and I dare to say that the hundreds of thousands of Australians who came out to say goodbye to the West Indies cricketers felt their own humanity enhanced by the cricket of this series. James concluded his piece on Worrell and his players with this comment: “When the time came to say goodbye some of the toughest players could only shake the captain’s hands and look away, not trusting themselves to speak. We have gone far beyond a game.” I end this essay on the Romantic tradition of cricket with a selection from a poem on Worrell’s passing by Frank Clarke, from his book of poems,

*Chaconias:*

A part of each of us  
Is gone with him,  
Our very own.  
The greatness we enjoy  
is a reflection  
Of the greatness he had known.  
And he brought glory  
To the games he played –  
The game of cricket  
And the game of life.

## NOTES

### CHAPTER 1:

<sup>1</sup> See Paul Theroux, *V.S. Naipaul: An Introduction to His Work*, London: Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1972; David M. Troubetzkoy, "V.S. Naipaul and The Third World," *Community Review*, vol XVI (2000) pp. 66-74.

<sup>2</sup> V.S. Naipaul, "Our Universal Civilization," *New York Times*, November 5, 1990.

<sup>3</sup> I am indebted to L.N. Curtis, Head of Special Collections and Archives at the McFarlin Library at the University of Tulsa, Oklahoma, for sending me a copy of the two photos and article which are located in the V.S. Naipaul Collection. See also V.S. Naipaul, *Between Father and Son*, New York: A.A. Knopf, 1999, p. 17, p.27.

<sup>4</sup> See Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, NY: Vintage, 1993, p. 335. ; Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of The Other*, NY: Harper Perennial, 1992, p. 250.

<sup>5</sup> See Horace Harragin, "Legends of West Indies Cricket," *Trinidad Guardian*, April 27, 1997, pp. 16-18.

<sup>6</sup> See the excellent article by Baldwin Mootoo, "Sonny Ramadhin: Forgotten Hero of West Indian Cricket," *Tapia*, March 23, 1973.

<sup>7</sup> See *The Sunday Express*, Sept. 10, 2000.

<sup>8</sup> I interviewed Mr. Ramlogan Supersad on August 18, 1998 at his home in Rambert Village, not far from Esperance. He did not know why he was called "Goat" but remembered that Mr. Mansingh who had a parlour in the village started calling him with the nickname, "Goat." He was then about ten years.

<sup>9</sup> See Anthony DeVerteuil, *Great Estates of Trinidad*, Port of Spain: Litho Press, 2000, pp. 179-196; see also *The Trinidad Guardian*, January 2, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> The park was acquired by the Trinidad Government with the hope of developing it as a National Park.

<sup>11</sup> "Friendly" matches simply mean games played outside of any formal competition.

<sup>12</sup> See Eric Williams, *From Columbus to Castro*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1971.

<sup>13</sup> See John Gaffar LaGuerre, ed., *From Calcutta to Caroni*, London: Longmans, 1974.

<sup>14</sup> See Hugh Tinker, *A New Form of Slavery*, London: Oxford University press, 1974; See Bridget Brereton, *Race Relations in Colonial Trinidad, 1870-1900*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

<sup>15</sup> See Dennison Moore, *Origins and Development of Racial Ideology in Trinidad. The Black View of East Indians*, Tunapuna: Chakra, 1995.

<sup>16</sup> Mr. T. Jaggernauth allowed me to use Mr. Latchan Jaggernauth's *Scrapbook* when I interviewed him on August 18, 1998. The *Scrapbook* is a mine of information, and I am indebted to it for this section.

### CHAPTER 2:

<sup>1</sup> See the beautiful article by Ralph Narine, *Sonny Ramadhin*. No date, pp. 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Wisden*, London, 1951, p. 226.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>4</sup> Ralph Narine, *Letter to the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago*. Unpublished, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> See Samuel M. Wilson, "Cricket in the Blood," *Natural History*, 5(1995) pp. 58-64.

<sup>6</sup> Ashis Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket. On Games of Destiny and the Destiny of Games*, New Delhi: Viking, 1989.

<sup>7</sup> See the magisterial work of Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, especially the chapters on resistance where he analysed the works of C.L.R. James and Aime Cesaire, among others; see also Niall Ferguson, *Empire. The Rise and Fall of The British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*, London: Penguin, 2002, pp. 258-259.

<sup>8</sup> Samuel M. Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>9</sup> *The London Times*, June 30, 1950.

<sup>10</sup> *The Trinidad Guardian*, June 30, 1950.

<sup>11</sup> J. Stollmeyer, *Everything Under the Sun. My Life in West Indies Cricket*, foreword by E.W. Swanton, London: Stanley Paul and Co., Ltd., 1983, p. 110.

<sup>12</sup> See Ralph Narine, *Sonny Ramadhin*, unpublished article.

<sup>13</sup> Stollmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>14</sup> *Wisden*, London, 1951, p. 72.

<sup>15</sup> See Horace Harragin, "Legends of West Indies Cricket," *Trinidad Guardian*, April 27, 1999, 18.



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- <sup>16</sup> *Wisden*, London, 1951, p. 78.
- <sup>17</sup> Stollmeyer, *op.cit.*, p. 112.
- <sup>18</sup> See Clyde Walcott, *Island Cricketers*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1958, pp. 187-189.
- <sup>19</sup> Michael Manley, *A History of West Indian Cricket*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1988, pp. 67-80.
- <sup>20</sup> See Jeffrey Stollmeyer, *op.cit.*; Frank Worrell, *Cricket Punch*, London: Stanley Paul, 1966.
- <sup>21</sup> Jeffrey Stollmeyer, *The West Indies in India (1948-1949). Jeffrey Stollmeyer's Diary 1949*, edited by Kenneth Ramchand with Yvonne Teelucksingh, Port of Spain: Royard Publishing Co., 2004, pp. 174-175, 204, 210.
- <sup>22</sup> *The Trinidad Express*, June 19, 1985; *The Sunday Express*, April 28, 1991.
- <sup>23</sup> *The Trinidad Guardian*, Dec. 14, Dec. 31, 1950.
- <sup>24</sup> *The Trinidad Guardian*, Dec. 6, 1950.

### CHAPTER 3:

- <sup>1</sup> See John Rickard, *Australia: A Cultural History*, NY: Longmans, 1988, pp. 3-40.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 171-195..
- <sup>3</sup> Michael Manley, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
- <sup>4</sup> See Frank Birbalsingh, *The Rise of West Indian Cricket: From Colony to Nation*, St. John's, Antigua: Hansib, 1996, pp. 69-71.
- <sup>5</sup> *Trinidad Guardian*, Nov. 29, 1951.
- <sup>6</sup> *Trinidad Guardian*, Feb. 12, 1952.
- <sup>7</sup> *Trinidad Guardian*, Jan. 5, 6, 1953.
- <sup>8</sup> *Trinidad Guardian*, Jan. 7, 1953.

### CHAPTER 4

- <sup>1</sup> *Trinidad Guardian*, Jan. 5, 1953.
- <sup>2</sup> See Mihir Bose, *A History of Indian Cricket*, London: Andre Deutsch, UK., 1990, p. 195.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196. See Ramachandra Guha, *Spin and Other Things. India's Cricket Coming of Age*, Delhi, India: Penguin books, 1994, pp. 30-45.
- <sup>4</sup> Subash Gupte was known to practice his bowling skills by bowling to his friend Vijay Manjrekar in what is known as Sandip Patil Gully. See Mihir Bose, pp. 189-125.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 201.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 222,223.
- <sup>8</sup> See Rahul Bhattaracharya, "The Romantic: Subash Gupte," *India Abroad*, May 10, 2002.
- <sup>9</sup> Mihir Bose, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-197.
- <sup>10</sup> See Cheddi Jagan, *My Fight for Guyana's Freedom. With Reflections on Our Father* by Nadira Jagan Brancier, Ontario, Canada, 1998, pp. 159-194.
- <sup>11</sup> Nelson Mandela, "Gandhi: The Sacred Warrior," *Time Magazine*, December, 1999; see also Nelson Mandela, "Gandhi, the Prisoner. A Comparison," in B.R. Nanda, *Remembering Gandhi, 125 Years*, New Delhi, 1995.
- <sup>12</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, NY: Harper and Row, 1958, pp.84-107.
- <sup>13</sup> S. Kanpur, *Raising Up a Prophet: The African American Encounter with Gandhi*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.
- <sup>14</sup> See Ashis Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket*, New Delhi, India: Penguin, 1989.

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CHAPTER 5:

<sup>1</sup> See Eric Wolf, *Europe and the Peoples without History*, Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1982; Hugh Trevor Roper, *The Rise of Christian Europe*, NY, 1974, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> See Hilary McD. Beckles, *The Development of West Indian Cricket. Vol.1: The Age of Nationalism*, London: Pluto Press, 1998, pp. 1-78; also, Beckles, ed., *An Area of Conquest: Popular Democracy and West Indies Cricket Supremacy*, Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1994; Hilary McD. Beckles and Brian Stoddart, eds., *Liberation Cricket; West Indies Cricket Culture*, London: Manchester University Press, 1995; Michael Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricket*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1988, pp. 1-170; C.L.R. James, *Cricket*, edited by Anna Grimshaw, London, 1986; Frank Birbalsingh, *The Rise of West Indian Cricket: From Colony to Nation*, St. John's, Antigua: Hansib, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Manley, *op.cit.*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>4</sup> Beckles, *The Development of West Indian Cricket. Vol.1*, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> F. Birbalsingh, *op. cit.*, p.65.

<sup>6</sup> Manley, *op.cit.*, p.22.

<sup>7</sup> Beckles, *op. cit.*, p. p. 35.

<sup>8</sup> Keith Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, London: Scholar Press, 1994, p. 150.

<sup>9</sup> See Hilary McD. Beckles, *op. cit.*, p.74; See Gerald Howat, *Learie Constantine*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1975.

<sup>10</sup> Gerald Howat, *op.cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>15</sup> M. Manley, *op.cit.*, pp. 31-73.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>17</sup> C.L.R. James, *Cricket*, ed. By Anna Grimshaw, pp. 190-202.

<sup>18</sup> See M. Manley, *op.cit.*, p.51.

<sup>19</sup> James, *op.cit.*, p. 194.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>21</sup> Manley, *op.cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>23</sup> Jack Grant, *Jack Grant's Story*, London: Butler and Tanner Ltd., 1980, p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69-76.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.111. The closing of Adams College was also the occasion when their close family broke up as their son and daughter went their own way. George, influenced by Alan Paton, went to Oxford University and then the University of Toronto where he married Bernice Katz. Madeleine went to the University of Toronto and got an advanced degree in library science and history. See pp. 111-112.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*,p. 179.

<sup>29</sup> See forward to Jack Grant's book, p. ix.

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CHAPTER 6:

<sup>1</sup> See Phillip Sherlock, *Norman Manley*, London: MacMillan, 1980, pp. 158-159.

<sup>2</sup> See Cheddi Jagan, *My Fight for Freedom*, With Reflections on Our Father by Nadira Jagan Brancier, Ontario, Canada, pp. 71-81.

<sup>3</sup> See Hilary Mc. D. Beckles, *The Development of West Indian Cricket*. Vol. 1. The Age of Nationalism, London: Pluto Press, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup> See Michael Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricket*, pp. 102-106.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 104.

<sup>6</sup> See Alex Bannister, *Cricket Cauldron: With Hutton in the Caribbean*, London: Stanley Paul and Co., 1954, p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* , p. 95.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* ,pp. 96, 97.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

<sup>12</sup> See Pat Landsberg, *The Kangaroo Conquers*, London: Museum Press, 1955, p. 40.

<sup>13</sup> See Richie Benaud, *Anything But An Autobiography*, London: Hoddard and Stoughton, 1998, p. 100.

<sup>14</sup> See Pat Landsberg, *op.cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p.92.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

CHAPTER 7:

<sup>1</sup> See Keith Sinclair, ed., *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2<sup>nd</sup>.ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 21-48.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>4</sup> See C.J. Bartlett, *A History of Postwar Britain*, pp. 194-197.

<sup>5</sup> See Peter May, *A Game Enjoyed. An Autobiography*, London: Stanley Paul and Co., 1985.

<sup>6</sup> See “Ramadhin, The Central Figure,” *The Times* of London, May 30, 1957.

<sup>7</sup> See Michael Manley, *op.cit.*, pp. 113-118; Frank Birbalsingh, *The Rise of West Indian Cricket. From Colony to Nation*, St. John’s, Antigua, 1996, pp. 96-98; Bruce Harris, *West Indies Cricket Challenge, 1957*, London: Stanley Paul and Co., 1957, pp. 47-72; Tony Cozier, *The West Indies: Fifty Years of Test Cricket*, Brighton: Angus and Robertson, 1978, pp. 34-37.,

<sup>8</sup> “England Batsmen Helpless in Facing Ramadhin,” in *The Times* of London, May 31, 1957.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, June 1, 1957.

<sup>10</sup> *The Times* of London, June 4, 1957.-

<sup>11</sup> Michael Manley, *op.cit.*, p. 114.

<sup>12</sup> See Frank Worrell, *Cricket Punch*, Stanley Paul and Co., 1966, pp. 169-191.

<sup>13</sup> See Michael Manley, *op.cit.*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>14</sup> See Clyde Walcott, *On The Backfoot: The Cricket Life of Sir Clyde Walcott*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1999, p. 44.

<sup>15</sup> See Alan Hill, *Jim Laker*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1998, pp. 16-26.

<sup>16</sup> See G.A.R. Lock, *For Surrey and England*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1957.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* , p. 115.

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## CHAPTER 8:

<sup>1</sup> See Ian Talbot, *India and Pakistan*, London: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 166-222.

<sup>2</sup> See Mihir Bose, *A History of Indian Cricket*, p. 208; Tony Cozier, *The West Indies: Fifty Years of Test Cricket*, Sussex: Angus and Robinson, 1978, pp. 164-166.

<sup>3</sup> Mihir Bose quotes West Indies player Willie Rodriguez. See Bose, *op.cit.*, p. 209.

<sup>4</sup> See Roy Gilchrist, *Hit Me for Six*, London: Stanley Paul and Co., 1963.

<sup>5</sup> See Tony Cozier, *op.cit.*, pp. 37-40.

<sup>6</sup> See Sir Garfield Sobers, *Sobers: Twenty Years at the Top*, London: MacMillan, 1988, p. 70.

## CHAPTER 9:

<sup>1</sup> See R.R. Roberts, *The Fight for The Ashes. 1961*, Sydney: George G. Harrap, 1961; Tony Cozier, *op.cit.*, pp. 90-105; Richie Benaud, *A Tale of Two Tests*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1962, pp. 19-46; J.S. Barker, "The Tied Test," in *Cricket in The Sun*, ed. By G. Sobers and J.S. Barker, London: Arthur Barker, 1962.

<sup>2</sup> See G. Bolton, *The Oxford History of Australia*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990; John Rickard, *Australia: A Cultural History*, New York: Longman, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> R.R. Roberts, *The Fight for The Ashes. 1961*, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> See Ernest Eytel, *Frank Worrell*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963, pp. 14-15.

<sup>6</sup> See Richie Benaud, *Anything But An Autobiography*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, p. 218.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84-86.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>9</sup> *Kanhai-Gibbs Benefit committee*, ed. By Michael Gibbes and Gordon Rohlehr, Port of Spain, 1974, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> See Vijay Kumar, *Cricket, Lovely Cricket*, Leicester, Eng.: Polar Print Group Ltd., 2000, pp. 215-216.

## CHAPTER 10:

<sup>1</sup> See David Edmundson, *See the Conquering Hero. The Story of The Lancashire League, 1892-1992*, Altham, Lancashire: Mike McLeod Litho. Ltd., 1992, pp. 2-21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.manchester2002-uk.com/history/victorian/mills.html>

<sup>4</sup> Here are the statistics, remarkable for a bowler in his fifties: 1980: 245 overs, 32 maidens, 882 runs, 69 wickets at an average of 12.78; 1981: 168 overs, 47 maidens, 404 runs, 50 wickets at an average of 8.08; and in 1982: 187.3 overs, 31 maidens, 511 runs, 42 wickets at an average of 12.16.

<sup>5</sup> *Trinidad Express*, June 19, 1985.

<sup>6</sup> *Trinidad Guardian*, May 9, 1995.

<sup>7</sup> See [http://news.bbc.co.uk/sportacademy/hi/sa/cricket/features/newsid\\_2621000/2621899.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/sportacademy/hi/sa/cricket/features/newsid_2621000/2621899.stm)

<sup>8</sup> See Ted Corbett, "The Voting for Tomorrow's Star," in *Sportstar*,

<http://www.sportstaronnet.com/tss2533/25330370.htm>

<sup>9</sup> *Trinidad Guardian*, August 26, 2000.

## CHAPTER 11:

<sup>1</sup> CLR James, *Beyond a Boundary*. N.C.: Duke University Press, 1983. See the thoughtful article of Alexis Tadie, "Is Cricket a Fictional Sport," in *India and the Diasporic Imagination*, ed. By Rita Christian and Judith Misrahi-Barak, Presses Universitaires de La Mediteranee, 2011, pp. 313-327.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> James, *op.cit.*, p. 171ff.

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- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 177.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 167.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 169.
- <sup>10</sup> Neville Cardus, *An Autobiography*, London: Readers Union with Collins, 1949.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-10.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 139-167, 279-281.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 52.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 281.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 141.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 149-150.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 152.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 158.
- <sup>19</sup> Ashis Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket: On Games of Destiny and the Destiny of Games*, New Delhi, India: Viking, 1989.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 62.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 63.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 68.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid. See Nandy's forceful conclusion and critique of modernity in cricket, pp. 79-82.
- <sup>25</sup> Mike Marqusee, *Anyone But England: Cricket and the National Malaise*, London: verso, 1994.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 76-77.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 55-95.
- <sup>28</sup> See Rowland Bowen, *Cricket: A History of its Growth and Development Throughout the World*, London, 1970.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 96-99.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 103.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 96-136; see also Richie Benaud, *My Spin on Cricket*.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 107-108.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 198.
- <sup>34</sup> Sir Frank Worrell (1924-1967) was born in Barbados and showed promise as a student at Combermere College. His first international match was against England in 1947/48. After a stint in Trinidad and Jamaica, he took up a position as a professional cricketer with Radcliffe in the Central Lacashire League. He entered Manchester University and studied for a degree in Economics. A member of the victorious West Indies team in England in 1950, he scored 261 in the Third Test at Trent Bridge. He was selected by Wisden as one of the cricketers of the year in 1951. Following a campaign by CLR James and supporters, he was selected as captain for the 1960/61 series against Australia, the first Black captain of the West Indies for an entire series. On Feb. 13, 1962 Nari Contractor, the captain of the Indian touring team, was hit on the head by a bouncer and doctors feared for his life. Frank Worrell was the first to donate blood to Contractor, followed by others. This kindness helped save Contractor's life. In remembrance of this, the cricket association of West Bengal organized a blood donation every February 3<sup>rd</sup>. The day is commemorated as Sir Frank Worrell Day in the state of West Bengal. Worrell retired from cricket in 1963, and was made warden of the University of the West Indies. He was appointed a senator in the Jamaican parliament, and was knighted in 1964. He was manager of the West Indies team in Australia and accompanied the team to India in 1966/67 where he was diagnosed with leukemia. He died in 1967 at the age of 42.