



# Calypso, Literature and West Indian Cricket: Era of Dominance

ESSAY

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Calypsos from the late 1970's to the mid-1990's, years when West Indies teams captained by Lloyd then Richards and later Richardson dominated Test cricket, grew more self-consciously protective and more ideologically aware of the inner politics of the game and the contexts within which it was being played. These calypsos included Sparrow's "Kerry Packer" (1978), Allrounder's "Kerry Packer Cricketers" (1978), Tobago Crusoe's "South Africa" (1983), Commenter's "Blood Money" (1986), David Rudder's anthem "Rally Round the West Indies" (1987), "Here Come the West Indies" (1994), "Legacy" (1995) and MBA's "Beyond a Boundary" (1993).

In "Kerry Packer," the narrator assumes the voice of the West Indies' cricketing directorate which at the time had joined the cricketing officialdom of the rest of the world in identifying Australian TV magnate Kerry Packer as a major threat to world cricket and in banning players who signed contracts to play in the Packer League in Australia. Packer, to be sure, had his own axe to grind; but the West Indies' Board couldn't satisfactorily explain how his organization of the core players in the West Indies and Australian Test teams, along with professional players from the rest of the world's teams—including the then banned South Africa—could be to the detriment of world cricket. Packer's fixtures were being carefully time-tabled not to coincide with official cricket tours.

Nor could the West Indies Cricket Board satisfactorily explain their objection to West Indian players, who habitually played as professionals in the English counties and leagues, where their colleagues sometimes included players from South Africa, signing more lucrative contracts with Packer. Why should players who had been forced to play against sixth-rate teams in British leagues or to coach in India and Australia; or to play league or State cricket in Australia not sign up with Packer? Besides, the threat to ban those players who signed contracts with Packer was coming from a West Indies Board that was locked in industrial disputes with its own players, who were seeking higher remuneration and better conditions than the Board claimed to be able to afford.

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The Packer dispute split the West Indies team in the middle of the 1977 Australian tour when, indeed, Australia arrived with a virtual second eleven, after having banned its own Packer players: the Chappell brothers, Max Walker, Dennis Lillee etc. Sparrow's "Kerry Packer" turns back the years as it represents the West Indian Cricket Board as still being the instrument of an old landed and commercial oligarchy. The gist of this calypso is that nothing has changed back on the ranch, where Errol John's Savannah Club can still dictate the professional fates of any number of Charlie Adamses. Thus it is the authoritarian voice of Savannah and country clubs that reads the law to Clive Lloyd, Viv Richards, Lawrence Rowe, Desmond Haynes, Gordon Greenidge, Colin Croft, Joel Garner, Andy Roberts, Michael Holding and Deryck Murray.

"Kerry Packer"

Ah say ban dem immediately  
I'm the man in authority  
If ah say you play, you play  
If ah tell you nay, is nay  
Anytime ah drop you, you flop  
Good form could never bring you back up  
I remain cricket Lord and its master

Ah go fire all dem Packer players  
Cause de public is so apathetic  
Dey go talk but won't do nuthin about it  
Captain Lloyd and Murray musn't be spared  
But it's a pity to lose Viv Richards

But they went and sign for money with Kerry Packer  
And no one makes a fool of Stollmeyer

British Court say Packer is right  
But in sport we have grudge and spite  
Tell Packer when I am sore  
I ain't obeying no law  
He hire some ah mih best men  
And ah goh victimize all ah dem

Cricket fans never more will see  
Holding Desmond Haynes, Gordon Greenidge and Austin  
We doh need Andy Roberts, Croft and Garner  
When we have Super Star Vanburn Holder  
The selectors obey me like children  
That is why they didn't pick Bernard Julien  
They have fame but they want money like me and Gerry  
So they won't play again in this country

Policy? – I alone know that  
Just agree – to field, bowl and bat  
Human right ehn in cricket  
That is just for politics  
I am Stollmeyer, cricket Sir  
Controlling the Empire

I ehn negotiating ah told them  
If they get money we can't control them  
A West Indian cricketer must always be broke  
Is then he does bowl fast and make pretty stroke  
Packer players showing off under floodlight  
Using white ball and playing cricket in the night  
Packer refuse to treat them like wild animals  
And we ent going to rent dem de Oval

In my days  
Cricket was bright bright  
Ah make plays  
To the crowd's delight  
Even though I am a snob  
Ah always did a perfect job  
Ah used to bat and bowl strong  
Not like all dem Packer clown

I suggest that they all break the contract  
Only so ah might take some ah dem back  
An' even so, dey must all get down flat on they knees  
Beg me please let them play for West Indies  
Sobers, Worrell and Learie get title  
But money, we give them very little  
When they dead write a book say how good they used to play  
My tradition is all cricket, no pay.

More than any other, this calypso places West Indian cricket in its historical context of class. For the old plantocracy, represented here by the voice of the Stollmeyer-persona, cricket is one of the ornaments that crowned their aristocracy. Their tradition is all cricket, no pay. For cricketers sprung from the less privileged sectors of society, cricket was work and a chosen means of subsistence. For the old plantocracy, and indeed, the aspiring colonial civil servant, a title or honours of some sort from King or Queen, was fitting climax to a life of public service. In the post-independence era, such honours, accepted with gratitude by Constantine, Worrell and Sobers, had themselves come under critical scrutiny from the calypsonian. Chalkdust declared in "Ah Put On Meh Guns Again" (1976) that one of the things that convinced him that it was still necessary for him to continue singing his satirical songs was Sobers' acceptance of a British knighthood:

But when King Sobers kneel down  
Before the Queen in Bridgetown  
A King by right  
Can't be a knight.

Sobers, then, according to Chalkdust, had diminished his own true kingship by accepting a colonial knighthood.

The tough uncompromising post-colonial contempt for colonial-style honours revealed in Chalkdust's calypso enables us to place in context the persona's cynical observation that Sobers, Worrell and Constantine had received and had been content receiving titles and no monetary reward for their revitalization of what Roach termed "the great Empire game" (Roach "To Learie"). Such sentiments reveal the persona of Sparrow's "Kerry Packer" to be a man mired in a feudal conception of social and economic relations shaped by an aristocratic past and persisting into the post-colonial present. Controlling the Queen's Park Test venue as a private fiefdom, he seeks to maintain a similar tradition of control over West Indian cricket. He thus becomes an embarrassing

anachronism in the democratic age of human rights, freedom of speech, association and conscience. The calypso implies the need for public concern with the deeper social issues, but is disappointed with a public that is “all talk and no action.”

This portrait of “Stollmeyer,” accurate or unfair, is an example of how the colonial ruling class had become a fixed stereotype in the eyes of black Trinidadians who, following Eric Williams’s lead, classified them as “a recalcitrant minority,” and by the late eighties viewed with near hysterical alarm the apparent political resurgence of this class. Stollmeyer’s conservative stance on the Packer affair was probably the reason why Chalkdust in “My Grandfather’s Backpay” (1985) lumped Stollmeyer, of German-American ancestry, with “dem French Creoles” as patriarch of an exploitative landed and commercial elite, whose wealth had been ensured through their payment of subsistence wages to laborers on their plantations or in their businesses. According to Chalkdust’s “My Grandfather’s Backpay,” the ruling class had relayed its wealth to its grandchildren, today’s proprietors; the laboring class has bequeathed its poverty. When Stollmeyer was tragically murdered in 1989, there were those who felt that he had been unfairly converted by the calypsonians into a target for race and class hatred.

After the Packer affair shook and challenged the authority of some of the major cricket boards in the world, cricketing establishments in the Caribbean and England were both confronted in 1982/1983 by ‘rebel’ teams which visited South Africa in defiance of the sanctions that had since 1971 declared the Apartheid nation out of bounds to athletes and sports people from the free world. Led by Test opener Graham Gooch, the English mercenaries included former Test players Geoff Boycott and Dennis Amis and current Test players John Emburey, Peter Willey, Les Taylor and Greg Thomas. Their West Indian counterparts included Alvin Kallachiran, Colin Croft, Lawrence Rowe, Bernard Julien, Test players of the 1970’s and Collis King, Richard Austin, Everton Matthis and Ezra Moseley. Collis King, a dynamic batsman and better-than-average medium pacer, performed with distinction in Lloyd’s victorious 1979 World Cup team.

The repercussions faced by the two sets of rebels were significantly different. England imposed a three year ban on its rebels who were free to play cricket at all levels after the three years had expired. The West Indies Cricket Board of Control (WICBC) banned its rebels for life from representing the West Indies at any level. The Trinidad Cricket Board went further and banned Bernard Julien, one of the heroes of the 1973 revival under Kanhai, from playing even at club level, effectively condemning him to unemployment and poverty, since cricket, he said, was all he knew and his chosen profession (Brewster 25). Barbados, on the other hand, allowed her rebels to play club cricket, but upheld the WICBC’s sanctions against them representing the West Indies.

This situation of unequal sanctions received formal approbation via the Gleneagles Agreement that, despite the protests of Nigeria and blacks in Zimbabwe and South Africa, allowed individual nation states to impose whatever penalties they saw fit on athletes and sports people who violated the UN sanctions against Apartheid. More extreme than even Trinidad, whose External Affairs Minister, Errol Mahabir, strongly promoted the life-time ban on rebel players in the United Nations, was the attitude of Guyana where, as in Pakistan, both local and foreign violators of the sanctions against South Africa were forbidden to play cricket. On the other hand, Michael Manley, Prime Minister of Jamaica, cricket enthusiast and historian and democratic socialist felt that the nations of the West Indies should be guided by the Gleneagles Agreement and allow other sovereign nations to impose whatever penalties they deemed fit on their own sanction-violators. West Indian nations had no right to stipulate what penalties any other nation should impose, nor should these West Indian territories debar foreign sportsmen who had served out the period of their own ban, from playing in their islands (Manley “Let’s Play” 11).

The situation of Bernard Julien, Lawrence Rowe and the other West Indian mercenaries of 1982/1983 was explored that year in a clever and ambiguous calypso by Tobago Crusoe: “South Africa.” Narrated in the first person, “South Africa” first presents the listener with what seems to be the complaining voice of Bernard Julien:

I am a sportsman, I'm an all rounder  
I'm a slave of that great West Indian cricketer  
I played in England, in the Caribbean  
New Zealand, India, Pakistan and Australia  
The records can show you my ability  
Ah build the scoreboard with century after century  
But because I make a duck one day  
And drop three men in mid-on  
They throw me outa the team and declare I done.

The first chorus, however, presents us with a different voice; not the voice of Julien who yielded to necessity and went to South Africa for \$100,000, but that of a struggling but proud black athlete who resists all temptation to accept the bribe of Apartheid because he knows that to do so is to betray his "own black brothers" in South Africa:

But today although I am rejected  
By the West Indian Cricket Board of Control  
I can raise meh hand high and be respected  
Ah doh see now why I have to sell meh soul  
I know that I'm broke but I eh scrunting  
And I eh begging anybody so far  
So then why should I betray my race  
For one hundred thousand dollars?  
Ah say "to hell with South Africa."

This second voice represents Julien as he might have acted, struggling, stoical and ever-righteous; the perfect hero in spite of overwhelming hardship at home and powerful temptation dangled in front his eyes from abroad. Crusoe Kid employs this ideal moral hero to criticize and even condemn the West Indian mercenaries, even though his real objective is to win sympathetic understanding for them. The calypso poses the question of whether loyalty to race ought to transcend the necessity to survive; whether indeed the law of survival does not inevitably bear with it the corollary of "by any means necessary." Caribbean and New World trickster-heroes such as Anancy, Brer Rabbit, Haitian Bouki who is simultaneously bumpkin and trickster, the Guyanese "Bill," the Hindu Sakchulee, or the Ti Jean Lopez of Paramin in Trinidad survive and triumph over adverse circumstances "by any means necessary." Vidia Naipaul and Kamau Brathwaite both identify the prominent presence of the picaroon in the novels and short stories of West Indian writers of the 1950's, while that figure made an early appearance in narrative or 'ballad' calypsos since the 1930's. So that Tobago Crusoe can assume that there would be wide public sympathy with the fallen hero, who places survival of the individual over loyalty to the race.

Thus, while the second and third stanzas and choruses are a harsh moral sermon condemning his own black brother, the mercenary, for making himself an honorary white man and thereby "dragging down [his] dignity" and becoming a Judas betraying his own race, the final stanza seeks to shift the blame from the individual to the government:

The governments of the Region  
Are the ones I am going to give the blame  
Consideration was never given  
To the men who spend their lives playing the game  
The Board discard them then you disregard them  
They have to live, they have family problem  
And as the calypsonian explain to us in his '83 calypso  
We should never treat our heroes so.

The Hero is widely acclaimed; his performance liberates, energizes and lifts up his public. But then the Hero fails and he is contemptuously and ignominiously discarded; first by the Board, then the Government then by the public. Blame then, is ultimately deflected from “the heroes” and redirected to the Government and the calypsonian’s final admonition is directed towards the Government—that absentee father-figure who in the Caribbean is the scapegoat of last resort:

The last ball is in your court now  
To do something for the man who plays the game  
So that more cricketers would not be bought now  
To continue making all black people shame  
It is time to demonstrate some incentive  
And do something for our sporting ambassadors  
If you don’t do that now, well remember  
Other men who can’t take the pressure  
Going to head for South Africa.

The rebel issue still simmered a year later when poet and journalist Wayne Brown visited Jamaica and discovered that according to a poll conducted by UWI Professor Carl Stone the rebels were condemned by the government and the opposition, capitalists, Marxists, representatives of business, the professions, labor, academia and the civil service—in short, the massed legions of the good, the bad and the ugly—uniting unrighteous condemnation of the players (Brown 9). But, as the poll revealed, the poor viewed the issue as “one more hustle in the hunger stakes” and reacted to the West Indies’ cricketers’ lucrative pilgrimage to South Africa with the philosophical understanding of seasoned survivalists: “Man mus live.”

This mini-drama was prelude to the major theatrics of 1986 when England toured the Caribbean with all five of her 1982 rebels who had served out their three-year ban. The issue of ‘Apartheid and Cricket’ marked the boundary between the ending of the Clive Lloyd era of captaincy and the beginning of the eight years of Viv Richards’s militant and totally successful leadership of a rampant, much-praised, much-maligned—(by certain resentful journalists from vanquished nations)—West Indies team. Lloyd’s exit was marred by the West Indies’ spectacular surrender of the World Cup to India at the finals of the third Cricket World Cup at Lords, one murky summer day in 1983. So ashamed and disappointed was Lloyd at what he lamented was his team’s lack of professionalism, that he announced his retirement after the finals.

The WICB, however, asked him to remain for a little while longer in order to effect a smooth transition into another era of West Indies’ cricket. Leadership, as all had learned from Worrell’s captaincy between 1961 and 1963, was a crucial factor in achieving the coherence and the effective performance of any West Indies team. The underlying divisions and bitter controversies throughout the Archipelago of differences were as powerful as ever, the task of transcending several intersecting insularities as difficult. Lloyd had proved to be as gifted a leader as Worrell and the WICBC recognized the necessity for him to end on a high note, rather than with a sense of ultimate failure. They got their wish and Lloyd got his in the West Indies’ 1984 tour to England which Lloyd’s team won 5–0 delivering what was spontaneously termed by the jubilant migrant West Indian community, the West Indies’ first “blackwash” of all the Queen’s horses and all the Queen’s men. The very term “blackwash” indicated the ethno-nationalist contestation for which the game was but a living metaphor. The scenes of celebration across Lords’ cherished turf matched those of 1950 and song and rhythm were, of course, part of that festivity. The team, indeed, full of self-confidence despite the previous years World Cup loss and anticipating a good performance in the Test series, had arrived in England with their own signature calypso “West Indies Touring Team – West Indians Are Back in Town,” which they rendered to the melody of “Jamaica Farewell:”

Down the way where the skies are grey  
And the rain falls daily on the umpire’s head  
We’ve arrived under Captain Clive

The cricket team Englishmen fear and dread  
But we're glad to say we're in the UK  
West Indian batsmen can bat all day  
And if your stumps are found half way down the ground  
That means the West Indians are back in town

“West Indians Are Back in Town” goes on to comment that the team bats to win and to point out Viv Richards’ six-hitting power, and the spectacular catching of them in the slips cordon. All these boasts were true as was the observation that the Englishmen feared and dreaded the West Indies. The epic convention of the boasting-speech demands that the hero boast before the fight and then fulfill his boast by winning the fight. Lloyd’s team did just that in 1984. In Trinidad, Rootsman sang “Blackwash” in celebration of the team’s historic performance.

The blackwash created enormous consternation in the camp of the Brits. They complained about the four-pronged pace attack, short-pitched bowling and slow West Indian over rates, though the overall English over rate proved to be slower than that of the West Indies. West Indians in their hubris boasted that if they were to bowl the overs any faster, the Test matches would end even sooner: in three rather than four days, which would mean a considerable loss of revenue in an already impoverished sport. E.W. Swanton called for the outlawing of the bumper. One didn’t recall him making such a call in the heyday of Trueman and Tyson. John Woodcock, editor of the *Wisden Cricketer’s Almanac* and cricket correspondent of the *Times* wrote: “the viciousness of much of today’s fast bowling is changing the very nature of the game and a day’s play in the West Indies may be expected to consist of as many as 250 bouncers” (qtd. in Nurse). The writers were running more scared than the players, or rather, journalistic nastiness was their way of demoralizing the opposition; boasting-talk and calypso picing were the Caribbean method of achieving the same effect.

Tony Lewis, a former and quite undistinguished England captain, found not elation and energy, flexibility, athleticism and power in typical West Indies performance, but rather anticipated that the West Indian fast bowlers would reduce the English batting performance to an exercise in tedium and drudgery. He opined that, “Clive Lloyd’s army is a weary bunch of mercenaries who yet have the ammunition to destroy the world.” (qtd. in Nurse). Robin Marlar of *The Sunday Times* wrote about fast bowlers “[Killing Cricket a Fast Way](#).” The curiously mean-spirited usage of a word like “mercenaries” is evidence of the residual animosity against Australian Television magnate Kerry Packer and the cricketers who profited financially from Packer’s memorable and revolutionary intervention ten years earlier into the frozen sanctuary of established cricket.

By far the meanest and most xenophobic of these attacks on West Indian performance was the one attributed to David Frith who, writing out of the humiliation and pain caused by the blackwash, condemned West Indian cricket as being:

Founded on vengeance and violence and fringed by arrogance... Even the umpires seem to be scared that the devilish looking Richards might put a voodoo sign on them.<sup>1</sup>

If harsh insults or vile racial profiling could take wickets or make runs, England’s writers would have won the Test series for that green and pleasant land. The calypso answer to the sort of verbal attack unleashed by English commentators in 1984 would have been deeply triumphant or aggressively defiant boasting. Years before the 1984 blackwash, Maestro had celebrated Michael Holding’s amazing performance in the Fifth Test in August 1976 against England at Kensington Oval, with the calypso “Knock Dem Down.” Operating on a reportedly lifeless pitch, Holding, bowling with the sort of pace that mesmerizes both mediocre batsmen and chauvinistic journalists ended with match figures of 53.4 Overs, 15 Maidens, 149 Runs, 14 Wickets. Six of the eight wickets taken by him in the first innings were bowled and the other two LBW, a clear sign that Holding’s strength in this performance lay not in short-pitched bowling, but in well pitched-up deliveries.

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<sup>1</sup> Quote taken from a review of Mike Marquese’s *Anyone but England: Cricket and the National Malaise* <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,21024066-5001505,00.html>.

Interviewed thirty years later, Holding provided this response to a question of whether or not the West Indian fast bowlers of his time had really been indiscriminate in their use of bouncers:

They say that because they couldn't handle the four-pronged pace attack. When they introduced the bouncer rule, we were still effective because we never bowled bouncers over people's heads. What's the point of bowling a bouncer over someone's shoulder? Up by his chest or by his neck, that's when a batsman sometimes has to play.

*Batsmen often complained that they never got to play any balls and that that was negative*

They never got to play because they couldn't deal with it. When England used four fast bowlers to beat Australia, and Ricky Ponting was hit on the face, people lauded it. It was all a matter of sour grapes. Those who didn't have it [fast bowlers] said it was unfair. As soon as they get it, they use it. (Premachandran)

Understanding the hypocrisy with which cricket journalism was riddled, Kitchener with his chorus "Bow! Griffith" (The Cricket Song, 1964) and Maestro with his instruction: "Ah say to knock dem down! I tell Michael Holding" (Knock Dem Down, 1977) demonstrated from the start that the emerging criticism of the West Indian fast bowlers was a matter of "sour grapes." Maestro answers the English critics by reminding them of the era of Trueman their own fast-bowling hero of the fifties and sixties:

Fred Trueman Never had a spear in hand  
He used to push bouncer  
One after the other  
And when we fall  
West Indians don't bawl at all

Now is to hear England  
Rip off the West Indians  
A man like Tony Greig  
Kneel down and start to beg  
The turban man [i.e. Bedi] eh nice  
Declare in one match twice.

Ah say to knock dem down!  
I tell Michael Holding  
Ah say to knock dem down!  
They needed a scolding  
Ah say to knock dem down!  
Their stumps ah talking 'bout  
Ah say to knock dem down!  
Doh care who cry and shout  
Knock dem down!

In July 1983, soon after the West Indies lost the third World Cup finals, the University of Manchester honoured Clive Lloyd with the degree of Master of Arts. In mid-1984, during the Fifth Test of the Australian tour to the West Indies, Joel Garner, acting as spokesman for the team, painted a portrait of the retiring Clive Lloyd at a ceremony in Sabina Park, Kingston, Jamaica. According to Garner:

Lloyd was father-like, a counselor and a brother to all West Indian Players...like a big brother who is also a best friend. He instituted honour, dignity and inspiration among his players. ("Insularity" 32)



Lloyd in his turn spoke about “a marvelous run” of ten years and commended the team for its “sheer dedication” (“Insularity” 32). The team was in transition he said, but it had maintained its balance by gradually introducing younger players to blend in with its experienced core. Michael Manley wrote of Lloyd’s “fortitude;” called him a natural leader, “warm human being” and lauded him for his courage, sensitivity, “calmness of spirit” under pressure, judgment and modesty. According to Manley, “He sets the example in personal discipline, in personal integrity, in personal performance, in personal dignity, in personal courtesy” (“An Innings” 9).

On Saturday, November 16, 1985, Lloyd became the first athlete to be awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of the West Indies. He had already received the Order of Australia, Order of Jamaica, Order of Roraima, the Chaconia Gold medal of Trinidad and Tobago and the aforementioned Master of Arts of the Universities of Hulland Manchester, but University of the West Indies orator, Professor Edward Baugh still savored the specialness of the honour UWI was bestowing on Lloyd:

The gesture is doubly historic because it symbolizes the idea of West Indianness and the potential of the West Indian people. In honoring Clive Lloyd, we honour West Indian cricket and the men whom he led. No one is more seized than he of the awesome significance and responsibility of the position which he has held,

he says:

The pattern of my captaincy of the West Indies team was to a great extent dictated by the fact that the game is so terribly important for us in the Caribbean. It’s much more than a game. It carries with it all sorts of aspirations and hopes of West Indian people. (“That Man” 30)

The University of the West Indies and the West Indies cricket team were equally representative of a West Indian identity that had once seemed tangible during the short-lived West Indian Federation (1958–1961). The team had, under Lloyd, renewed that dream and ghost of regionalism that had continued to exist beneath the reality of the West Indies as a cluster of fragmented, individual, sovereign micro-states. Led by Lloyd, who was father, brother, friend and counselor, the West Indies cricket team had come to symbolize a consolidation of national, regional and beneath these ethnic identities. By recognizing and honoring Lloyd, the University of the West Indies was recognizing and applauding itself, and identifying and savoring a moment of meaning, wholeness and self-affirmation; an oasis and meeting-place in the region’s long history of blood, sand and salt.

On the cricket team fell the burden of symbolizing and continuously representing Caribbean identity and Caribbean masculinity. For many, identity and masculinity were both being read as African-Caribbean or diasporan African identity and masculinity. For many others, to define Caribbean identity as essentially diasporan African was to ‘other,’ alienate and marginalize all ethnicities that were not African-ancestored: ethnicities such as the Asiatic and Euro-Caucasian cohorts of Trinidad and Guyana. The identity issue would arise with a vengeance in Trinidad over Black Stalin’s calypso “Caribbean Unity”. It would also surface in many different ways and contexts between the mid-1980’s and the early 1990’s, the seven stern years of Viv Richards’s captaincy of the iconic West Indies cricket team.

The first severe testing of both Caribbean and ethnic black diasporan identities as embodied in the performance of the West Indies cricket team arose in late 1985. Lloyd had retired on the high note of successive victorious tours against Australia in the West Indies March – May 1984, 3–0; England in England June – August 1984, 5–0; Australia in Australia November 1984 – January 1985, 3–1. Richards’ first series as captain was when New Zealand toured the West Indies and played four Tests between late March and early May 1985. West Indies won 2–0. What I called above the testing of the team’s Caribbean and ethnic black identity occurred with the proposed visit of England to the West Indies, scheduled to run between February and April 1986. This tour was a test of identity because it reopened the vexed and raging issue of Apartheid and cricket. Five

members of the English touring squad were the very rebels who had toured South Africa in 1982–1983. They had served their three-year bans and were available for selection. Their counterparts in the West Indian rebel group had been banned for life from representing the West Indies.

While the region braced itself for the protests that were sure to come, a report was circulated out of South Africa that former captain and anointed icon of regional identity, Clive Lloyd, had said in Sharjah that if invited, he would be willing to go to South Africa to help ease racial tension there. The South African Council of Sport warned Lloyd that he would be used by the Pretoria government for their own propaganda purposes and that his visit would be an embarrassment to the very black Africans that he wanted to help. If Lloyd came to South Africa “the white cricket establishment and the white regime would only ‘window dress and sugar coat apartheid’ for him.”

Lloyd denied that he had promised to visit South Africa, though he admitted to having spoken with the South African Ali Bacher while in Sharjah. Perhaps remembering the pressure to which Sobers had been subjected after he had visited Southern Rhodesia in 1968, Lloyd condemned South Africa’s apartheid state in the strongest terms:

Not until South Africa becomes a fully integrated state in which blacks as well as whites are given a say on equal grounds, would I ever contemplate going there. No amount of money can influence my judgment as far as South Africa is concerned...They chose to defy the feelings of world opinion and continue to unleash that horrible system on black people in South Africa. (“South Africa” 1)

The 1986 MCC tour to the West Indies was a severe test not only of the regional and ethnic nationalisms that the West Indies cricket team had come to represent, but for the viability of the Gleneagles Agreement. Guyana was clear on the issue, announcing early that the English team would not be allowed to play any cricket there. That is, Guyana simply ignored the Gleneagles Agreement which allowed individual countries to impose whatever sanctions they saw fit on their rebel sports people who had performed in South Africa. The fixtures originally carded for Guyana were transferred by the WICBC to Trinidad, which therefore ended up having to host two Test matches, two One-Day Internationals and the three-Day Trinidad versus England match. This was ironic because of all the territories in the cricket-playing Caribbean Trinidad had made the greatest effort via calypso and its Anti-Apartheid Organization to project the plight of black South Africans to the forefront of the nation’s imagination. The Committee in Defence of West Indian Cricket (CIDWIC) which had eight years previously vigorously protested against Jeffrey Stollmeyer and the Queen’s Park Oval hierarchy with respect to the threatened disintegration of Lloyd’s team over the Packer issue, now arose from hibernation to organize protest against the unrepentant Gooch and the four other 1982 English mercenaries.

The CIDWIC stand gained moral strength from External Affairs Minister Errol Mahabir’s declaration early in November 1985 that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago “would support the decision of the West Indies Cricket Board of Control (WICBC) in maintaining the life-ban on West Indian cricketers who played in South Africa” (“Mahabir” 19). Mahabir further stated that he thought that: “All countries in the world should emulate what we have done in the Caribbean by banning all players for life” (19). While recognizing that the West Indies could not dictate to other nations what they should do:

Mahabir said the situation had gone beyond the terms of the Gleneagles Agreement. He said there was a tremendous amount of emotions at what was taking place in South Africa. He said this had increased with the banning by the South African authorities of television and press coverage of strife-torn areas in that troubled land. (19)

Mahabir also reiterated what Prime Minister George Chambers had said at a recent PNM party convention: that “a lot might happen within the next few months prior to the tour” (19).

Mahabir’s statements, some clear, others obscure and ominous, provided the atmosphere of moral ambivalence within which protest against apartheid and the English rebels would be conducted in Trinidad during the visit of the 1986 MCC team. What he had said about the “tremendous amount

of emotions” becoming a reality of their own that would radically challenge and override the Gleneagles Agreement, reinforced and seemed to justify the uncompromising stand taken in the next few weeks by the CIDWIC/AAOTT (Anti-Apartheid Organization of Trinidad and Tobago). The PNM Youth League, led by Morris Marshall, soon to be a candidate for the Laventille seat, declared its support for the protest, and in late January 1986, the normally diffident and ultra-cautious Chambers declared that though he was a great lover of Test cricket, he would not be attending either of the two matches at the Oval (“PM”). Prime Minister Chambers’ declaration was closely followed by President Mr. Ellis Clarke’s:

He will not be meeting any of the players, as he usually does prior to the start of the first day’s play at the Oval, neither will he be hosting the traditional reception at President’s House in honour of the visitors, five of whom have sporting links with South Africa. (1)

President Clarke declared his “abhorrence of the South African government’s Apartheid policy, and his own unwillingness to be in any way associated with anybody or any group with South African ties” (1).

The “tremendous amount of emotions” which according to External Affairs Minister Mahabir were being generated by the issue of Apartheid, had been partially nurtured by calypsoes such as the Mighty Duke’s militant-sounding “Apartheid” (1985) and his plaintive lament “How Many More Must Die” (1986), the latter of which was adopted by the CIDWIC/AAOTT protestors as their main campaign-song during the protest of February and March 1986. Black Stalin’s “More Come” (1986) provided the militancy and defiance that the protestors needed especially after they were attacked by the Tactical Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police. Tobago Crusoe’s “South Africa” (1983) had opened up the imagination of the Trinidadians to the slavery conditions alive in South Africa:

A South African who is a black man,  
Man, he live like a dog on to his grave  
Forces of evil still have him shackled  
He just born and die a natural slave  
Ah can’t understand why meh own brother  
Should just join with the evil forces just so  
Forget principles and accept the dollar  
To go and exploit yuh own black brother  
How low can a black man go?

Sparrow’s “Isolate South Africa” (1985) and to a lesser extent Black Stalin’s “Isms Schisms” (1985) and Johnny King’s “Nature’s Plan” (1984) had kept the terrible liberation struggle taking place in South Africa foremost in Trinidadian minds. Calypso was in the midst of both the apartheid and the cricket issues of the mid-1980’s and would provide passionate and cogent reflection on that fateful incident where the Police attacked the people.

Not all Trinidadians, of course, supported the protestors on their agenda of boycotting the five matches carded for the Oval. Hard-headed and pragmatic correspondents articulated the position of the Queen’s Park Cricket Board, the WICBC and the apolitical cricket-loving public. Lance Murray, the Trinidad and Tobago representative on the WICBC in an extensive interview with the Express provided a balanced account of the WICBC’s position on the general issue of Apartheid and on the particular one of the impending English tour of the West Indies. Describing apartheid as “one of the most dehumanizing of institutionalized systems that exist in the world today,” Murray said that:

We are absolutely against apartheid, or we should be, for good reason. Our roots, our thinking, our desire for freedom and airplay are all characteristics that are common to the West Indian and it is because of this that we approach the matter in the way we weave.  
 (“Cricket” 11)

The WICBC’s approach had been, since 1971, to impose a lifetime ban on any player who played or coached in South Africa. Murray thought the measure had been partially successful in deterring

West Indian cricketers from going to South Africa, but that about fifteen players, several of whom were on the decline and only one or two of whom were “possibly of current Test standard level,” had been lured by agencies in the apartheid nation. The WICBC had been proactive in the discussions that back in 1977 resulted in the Gleneagles Agreement which inadequate as it now seemed to be, was as far as the cricket-playing nations of the world had been able to progress towards a common standard. The British three-year ban had been arrived at in that country after the courts there, pronouncing on the litigation that arose out of the Packer issue, applied a principle of ‘restraint of trade’ and ruled that three years was as long as allayer could be debarred from pursuing his legitimate profession: in this case, playing cricket at the highest level. The freedom of the individual to pursue legitimate trade was for the English a higher principle than the merely moral necessity to impose pressure on the racist, unfree and undemocratic Pretoria régime. Australia had imposed a three-year ban but was in the process of increasing that period to ten years. Sri Lanka had stipulated a twenty-five year ban, while Pakistan had banned their only rebel so far for life.

With respect to the current tour, Murray felt that the real issue that was motivating people to protest was not apartheid per se, but the absurd disparity between the lifetime ban imposed by the WICBC on West Indian players and the relatively negligible three-year restriction placed by England on its players who committed the same misdemeanor. Murray did not, however, support the idea of a boycott of the current tour, which would, he believed, have the ironic effect of preventing those West Indian players “who had resisted the offer of blood money from South Africa” from pursuing their profession at home. Would those who now sympathized with Bernard Julien who knew what the penalty would be when he accepted the South African blood money, also sympathize with the players who had resisted temptation but were also being penalized through a boycotted tour?

Any effective boycott, Murray felt, would hurt West Indies cricket much more than it would hurt South Africa. It would hurt the WICBC financially, particularly since so many games had been carded for the Queen’s Park Oval. If the WICBC officially where to support such a boycott, it could lead to erosion of the already fragile ground of accord between cricketing nations, that had been gained at Gleneagles and might possibly lead in turn to retaliatory measures being taken by cricketing nations who did not accept the extreme stand taken by the WICBC. In short, while the public was free to support or not to support the England vs. West Indies tour, to boycott or attend the matches at the Oval, the West Indies Cricket Board of Control was not free to act in the same way.

Michael Gibbes, sports columnist for the *Trinidad Guardian*, was more concerned about the protestors than their reasons for protesting. He termed them “hypocrites masquerading under the guise of humanitarians who profess to champion the cause of freedom and human dignity” (Gibbes). He reported that at a meeting of the Anti-Apartheid Organization of Trinidad and Tobago, one speaker “advocated naked violence... inciting the public to harass the visitors” (Gibbes). Noting that the AAOTT contained a number of “usually level-headed gentlemen like AAOTT chairman Eustace Seignoret and Clive Pantin,” he surmised agitators were using them for their own political purposes. He urged Trinidadians to follow the example of Jamaica, Barbados and Antigua, and indeed the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and honour the Gleneagles Agreement. The protestors, members of “the lunatic fringe,” constituted only “a pathetic minority” whose campaign to disrupt the tour would, if successful divide the cricket- playing nations into antagonistic black and white factions and thus achieve, ironically, a kind of segregation that was quite similar to the scourge of Apartheid itself.

Gibbes’ influential column disclosed rumors of “a planned refusal to handle cricket luggage” of the tourists at Piarco Airport and of vandals, hooligans and culprits who intended to dig up the turf at the Oval. In anticipation of the latter threat, Gibbes advocated tight security; and to protect the tourists from possible physical harm or any harassment or molestation, he recommended beefing up the security at hotels. Vandals, declared this Judge Dread, should be given a sentence of ten years in jail. Thus, even before the tourists arrived, both the protestors and their protest had been suitably profiled and set up for castigation.

The Police had manhandled, arrested and beaten Black Power demonstrators in 1970, and Trade Union protestors marching from San Fernando to Port of Spain in what came to be called the

“Bloody Tuesday” march of 1975. So that by 1986 they had developed a methodology for treating black and working class protest as a breach of public order. In the case of the 1986 anti- Apartheid protest, they came out expecting violence or disorderly conduct of some sort. From the moment the tourists’ flight touched down at Piarco at 12:45 a.m. on Thursday 27, February, the security police whisked the English team “out of the airport through the Caricargo entrance on Piarco Road without following the same immigration procedure as their fellow travelers” (*Express* 1 March 1986). The English party was loaded on to buses parked on the tarmac and heavily guarded by policemen who kept them away from the one hundred or so demonstrators gathered to meet them at both the normal exit and that of the VIP lounge.

On the three days—Friday, February 30 to Sunday, March 2, 1986—of the MCC versus Trinidad match, three hundred demonstrators, “supported by the Committee in Defense of West Indian Cricket [CIDWIC] the Anti-Apartheid Organization of Trinidad and Tobago [AAOTT] and the Group of Concerned Trade Unions, blew whistles, beat pieces of iron and clapped while chanting slogans” (*Express* 2 March 1986). This, apart from invective hurled at Lance Murray, Trinidad and Tobago’s representative on the WICBC and Allan Rae its President, together with picong directed at the Police, who, hired by the Queen’s Park Cricket Club, had turned out in their numbers, was the sum total of the protest on those three days.

The Police from the first morning cleared protestors from all of the entrances to the Oval and confined them behind barricades that they had erected across the road opposite the gate. The estimated total attendance over the three days was only five hundred spectators, which the leaders of the protest mistook for a sign that the recommended boycott had been successful. Though on the first day demonstrators had been “manhandled” and “forcibly removed” from the gates, nothing could have prepared them for what the Police did on the morning of the One Day International, Thursday, March 4th. Three hundred demonstrators

were chanting and clapping opposite to the main gates of the Queen’s Park Oval when the incident occurred. The demonstrators were standing behind the barricades provided by the police when suddenly members of the Tactical Squad jumped over the barricades and began beating demonstrators and pushing them into a police van. By the time they were finished, 16 people, including three journalists, had been shoved into the Black Maria and arrested. ([Hollingsworth 1](#))

An eyewitness said that the protestors had been “peacefully demonstrating” “in the area designated for them” “when the police climbed on the rails and delivered blows, following those who attempted to escape by climbing over into Trintoc Invaders’ panyard.” “They followed us all in the pan yard and down the side streets,” one said. He added that an inspector told officers to “ride the horses” and that the horses were ridden beyond the rail “as a way of blocking people from escape” (*Express* 5 March 1986).

Despite efforts by the Police to destroy film footage of their atrocious attack, photographs in the *Express* did show policemen scaling the barriers to get at the demonstrators. The arrested sixteen were charged with “taking part in a march called without permission of the Commissioner of Police and failing to disperse when called upon to do so” (*Express* 5 March 1986). Organizers of the demonstration, Trade Unionists Clive Nunez, David Abdullah, Gregory Rousseau and Lyle Townsend were granted bail at \$1,500 each. Mere demonstrators: Eden Shand, Brian Honoré, Dennis Singh, Dennis Harley, Irma Inwanyilga, Miguel Jiminez, Curtis Dillard, Glenis Hagley and fourteen-year-old David Cox, were granted bail in the sum of \$1,000.

Journalists Keith Sheppard, Charmaine Baboolal and Noel Saldenah, photographer with the *Trinidad Guardian* were charged, presumably for being on the scene and doing their respective jobs. Saldenah was knocked to the ground and his camera damaged. A number of prominent attorneys offered the accused their services free of charge. In Parliament during the two following sessions the Opposition without success demanded debate of the incident and a commission of inquiry. The Acting Deputy Commissioner of Police Lionel De Chi explained that: “They broke the laws of the land and action was taken.” The laws that the demonstrators were accused of having violated were those pertaining to the Summary Offences Act: Offences in the Street and Other Public Places:

Any person who blows any horn or uses any other noisy instrument for the purpose of calling persons together, or of announcing any show or entertainment, or for the purpose of hawking or distributing any article whatever, or of obtaining money or alms, or which is calculated to frighten any horse or cattle is liable to a fine of \$200 or to imprisonment for one month. No person shall, except during the public festival of Carnival, without license under the hand of a police officer not below the rank of a corporal in charge of a Police Station, beat any drum or play any noisy instrument in any street or public place, and any person who contravenes this sub-section is liable to a fine of \$150.

The police evidently could not find or invent a convincing explanation for why they had acted in the way they did. Old people and children who happened to be behind the barricades received blow and rough treatment along with the selected victims.

Inside the Oval the 15,000 spectators witnessed an exciting match that was won on the final ball. Richards scored 82 runs off 37 balls, hitting two sixes, one of which went out of the ground, off his bosom pal and Somerset colleague Ian Botham, in rehearsal for the Antigua Test when he would score a century in 56 balls. Graham Gooch batting through the English innings scored 129 in 118 balls, reducing the West Indian pace attack to ineffectiveness, as one journalist put it. "Amazing" and "thrilling" were two of the epithets applied to Gooch's innings, and many left with the feeling that cricket had won in an issue where dreary politics had overwhelmed all other possible meaning or preoccupation.

For the next two weeks commentators strove in vain for an explanation of the behaviour of the Police who had, in a sense, performed the very violence and thuggery that it had been anticipated the agitators would have perpetrated against the Queen's Park Oval and the English team. This was a startling illustration of Girard's notion of "the monstrous double" in which antagonists come to recognize their own grotesque and violent image in the face of the hated Other. All commentators wanted to know who gave the Police the order to attack peacefully picketing citizens. On whose behalf did they imagine themselves to be acting?

Eden Shand's reflective and sardonic commentary "England Won – Inside and Out" provides a clue as to the epiphanic behavior of the Police (8). Shand records that just before the beatings began; "Abu Bakr and a beautiful band of Muslims" appeared and marched around the Oval.

They marched around the Oval, in the road, without permission from the Commissioner of Police and without interference from the awe-struck policemen. The regular picketers were energized by this unexpected show of solidarity and followed the Muslims down Havelock Street and across Tragarete Road where the police stopped the traffic to allow the passage of the picketers on their way to the barricaded positions provided for them by the self-same Police. (8)

This, said Shand, is when all hell broke loose, inside the Oval where Haynes had started to punish the English bowling, and outside the Oval behind the barricades where the picketers "could not believe their eyes as Tactical Police batons cracked the skulls of peacefully assembled men, women and children."

The beatings had nothing to do with Gooch and the fantastic four, or with the Queen's Park massas, who could scarcely have wanted to be associated with such amazing dotishness. No. The beatings were meant to be a message sent by the security forces to their newest and most dangerous antagonists: the Muslimeen. Unable or afraid to manhandle this group who weren't made by the Police to confine their movement to behind the barricades, the Police pounced on surrogate "enemies," the demonstrators, in a macho show of force that was meant to warn Bakr and his cohorts, that the security forces were well in place and fully capable of sharing the licks for which they had become renowned. Indeed, as the events of July 27, 1990 were to prove, the battle between the Police and the Muslimeen for ownership and control of town and country had only just started.

A spontaneous reaction to this most recent atrocity, in which as many observed black policemen had bludgeoned black people demonstrating against similar types of atrocity in South Africa, was a poem penned by Lasana Kwesi on March 4, 1986 entitled "Apartheid Hallucination." Kwesi was a veteran of the Black Power movement of 1970, and had seen the police in action a few times before:

"Apartheid Hallucination"

Today

I'm sure I was

in cruel Johannesburg  
trapped in a krugerrand –  
gilded cricket ground

And there were TWENTY THOUSAND voices  
cheering,  
shouting,  
Gooch!  
Gooch!  
oooch!

\* \* \*

Today,

My mind shot a bolt  
and I swear I saw  
Tragarete Road become  
The bloodied streets of Soweto;  
No use being mellow.

Today,

I am jet streams of anger  
I feel violated, I feel ashamed as  
I remember Nelson Mandela

\* \* \*

Today,

Through tear-filled eyes  
transfixed,  
I saw a smiling umpire Botha  
atop the pavilion clock,  
and below apartheid  
tickered, ticked, tocked  
as two township figures  
hugged and smooched  
a collaborator century  
maker

\* \* \*

Today,

For all my country I felt numbed  
I felt like five-cents asa-  
foetida for  
Today,

when England beat West Indies  
I felt the pain of a beaten  
twelve-year-old  
Outside the Oval,  
the humiliation of a defenceless  
trampled woman

\* \* \*

I see selfish interest,  
narrower than ever,  
Rejoicing As we lower them  
coffins down

*(Express 11 March 1986: 9).*

Like Lasana Kwesi, the calypsonian Commentor, Brian Honoré, who was one of the arrested sixteen, and who later became known for his role in keeping alive the traditional Carnival masquerade, the Midnight Robber, penned his calypso “Blood Money” to do what the griot has always done: chronicle his anguish, bewilderment and rage as one who was there, who witnessed, and who as a shaper of words felt and bore the responsibility to shape and distil the community’s anger and shame at this truly shameful thing that had happened; this unspeakable act, this gross national disgrace that, in John Figueroa’s moving phrase about his grandmother’s death, filled the eyes with wonder and with salt:

“Blood Money”

You talk ‘bout licks outside o’ de  
Oval Demonstrators beaten savagely  
For protesting against the entry  
Of English cricket mercenaries  
It reminded me of Pretoria  
So I went to see the foreign minister  
“Is it illegal, would you tell me,  
To fight Apartheid in T&T?”

The man turn and tell me  
“We truly abhor Apartheid  
The world know that’s our policy  
We truly abhor Apartheid  
In the UN we said recently  
It’s obnoxious Most obstreperous

Overtly odious oligarchy.  
But if you feel we banning Gooch,  
You going off yuh pooch.  
We prefer the blood money  
Them gate receipts have more value  
Than liberty for them Zulu.  
We prefer the blood money.”

This calypso declares its intention in the first stanza: to clarify the paradox of how Port of Spain seemed so suddenly to have resembled Pretoria. So the narrator seeks clarification from Errol Mahabir, the External Affairs Minister, who had indeed declared to the UN assembly of nations



Trinidad and Tobago's abhorrence of Apartheid. The Minister's reply reveals an absolute chasm between word and deed, policy and enactment. Commentor's request for clarification plunges him into deeper confusion as the honorable Minister unmask his and his Government's true position: "We prefer the blood money."

The calypso continues with an examination of how the State's ambiguous, and perhaps hypocritical stance on Apartheid has affected its goons: the none-too-bright robots of the Police Special Branch:

They beat we like a carnival Road March  
They didn't spare man, woman or child  
Lionel De Chi, they say, gave the signal  
To pass baton like dey wild  
Ah next Sergeant, nickname Lucifer  
Say to loss them in jail like Mandela  
They grab Saldehna camera, he tell them,  
"Stop" He get kick up like if was World Cup.

"We truly abhor Apartheid,  
From constable to commissioner.  
We truly abhor Apartheid  
We'll do nothing to see it prosper.  
It's degrading Demeaning  
Deleterious to democracy.  
But when yuh demonstrate and row  
And yuh disturb a horse or cow,  
We prefer the blood money  
For a free one-day ticket  
We'll take we own granny wicket.  
We prefer the blood money."

This second 'movement' of "Blood Money" uncovers the startling congruence between the State's hypocrisy and that of its humble servants. The Minister of External Affairs and the Acting Deputy Commissioner of Police demonstrate the same ambivalence and mouth the same robber talk at the dead centre of their depositions. Compare the rhetoric of each official's adjectival declamation against Apartheid: The Minister says: "It's obnoxious/Most obstreperous/Overtly odious oligarchy." The Acting Deputy Commissioner echoes: "It's degrading/Demeaning/Deleterious to democracy." Unmasked, the Police are revealed to be mercenaries working for the Queen's Park Club authorities who hired them. For a free One-day—i.e. the bribe money will not last beyond a single day—these macho anti-heroes would be prepared to rape their grandmothers; a metaphor for ultimate violation of all that's sacred.

Commentor in this second movement turns a harsh searchlight into the shamefaced attempt by the Police Association to explain to the public how they had arrived at such a strange interpretation of their stated mission: "To protect and serve." In a statement to the Press made three days after the beatings Acting President of the Police Association, Trevor Bailey—who coincidentally bore the same name as one of England's senior cricket officials and former Test players—and General Secretary, Peter John, came out with the fantastic claim that it was the Police who were being made into scapegoats, rather than the victims of police brutality ("Police" 1). These two spokespersons for the Police Association blamed "the powers that be" for "the chaos and conflict" which occurred outside the Queen's Park Oval. Without identifying whom they were redefining as "the powers that be" Bailey and John declared that "the failure to give clear and concise directions to the population on such a sensitive and emotional matter like apartheid was the root cause of the incident" ("Police" 1).

Were "the powers that be" here the State itself? The Prime Minister and the President who seemed to have supported a boycott of the cricket match? Were the "powers that be" the Minister of External Affairs, or those PNM parliamentarians, Laquis, Francis and others who had come out

in support of the PNM Youth League's involvement in the demonstration? Were they the upper middle class members of the Anti-Apartheid Organization of Trinidad and Tobago?

What directions did the Police Association envisage the powers that be giving the population? The Police Association did not say. They did not say either whether the Police had received clear and precise instructions about how to act, whom to caution, whom to beat, whom to arrest, whom to bar from escaping the space behind the barricades where the Police had penned them. It was the responsibility of the Police, said Bailey and John, to protect both "defaulters like Gooch and others" and those "who wished to demonstrate within the framework of the law" ("Police" 1). On March 4, 1986, Gooch & Co. didn't need, and legitimate demonstrators did not receive any protection from the Police.

The third movement examines the weakness of the United Nations sanctions and the Gleneagles Agreement, and is in effect, Commentor's commentary on the Lance Murray interview that had explained in some detail the delicacy of the process of negotiation, and the fragility and legal indefiniteness of the compromises that had been arrived at thus far:

Kallicharan sorry too.  
We prefer the blood money.  
Stokely Carmichael we could ban  
But not the Queen's opening batsman  
We prefer the blood money  
This joker doh want see Gooch face  
But allow him in the place  
We prefer the blood money

This third movement focuses on the universal confusion surrounding the discourse on Apartheid; the incongruence between the morality and the legality of applying sanctions, and the amorality that resides at the centre of a world order where commerce both transcends and determines law. The cases of Gooch and Julien are examined with the same withering sarcasm. Gooch emerged from his three-year ban defiant and utterly unapologetic, beginning his book, *Out of the Wilderness* with the fighting assertion that:

'No regrets' might now be my motto, because in truth I do not think the sentence has harmed me... I cannot open this account with a statement of remorse, because I feel none.

A merchant, the man had, like Julien or Kallicharan of the West Indies, simply sold his skills in the most lucrative market. That was all there was to it. John Euburey would indeed return to South Africa in 1990 in a fated one-month tour aborted because of the turbulent politics of that time. He would serve another three-year ban and be accepted again into the English Test squad. Trade was at the centre. Money talked and absolute money talked absolutely.

Commentor takes a quick thrust at journalist Mike Gibbes, propagandist against protest, journalistic rumor-monger and creator of negative profiles that might have prompted the police brutality of March 4th. He mentions Geoff Boycott, another English mercenary who, with his test-playing career over, had reincarnated into a cricket journalist and broadcaster. When Boycott and Matthew Engel of *The Guardian*, London, arrived at Piarco Airport on Wednesday 26 February 1986 to cover the Trinidad phase of the tour, they were initially denied entry on the ground that they needed work permits to operate in Trinidad. A fee of \$600 was eventually imposed on them (*Express 1 March 1986: 32* and *Express 2 March 1986: 48*). Trinidad-educated veteran cricket journalist Tony Cozier was made to pay an unprecedented \$200 as a CARICOM citizen. The reason for this change in procedure was not clear though many saw the issue as the State's indirect way of signaling that but for the Gleneagles Accord they would have taken a stronger stand against Gooch. Trinidad is a country of masks where the true motive behind an action may be cleverly concealed. We have argued that the Police's stated reason for attacking the demonstrators may have been a mask for an entirely different motive.

“Blood Money” ends with a coda which takes the form of a succession of bitter choruses, each one a harsh lash aimed at all those who seemed to have compromised on the issue of condemning, isolating and ostracizing Apartheid:

And like a dog after vomit  
They sell Boycott a work permit  
We prefer the blood money  
You ain't hear Mr Manely  
Inviting them company?  
We prefer the blood money  
Don't be surprised if one good day  
They bring Botha heself to play  
We prefer the blood money  
Them finance house could thief we cash  
Not a police cyah pelt lash  
We prefer the blood money  
They never ever on the scene  
They too busy stabbing Kareem  
We prefer the blood money  
We prefer the blood money  
We prefer the blood money

The final blows are reserved for the Police, whose impotence in matters of upper class commercial corruption is counter pointed by their murderous violence in dealing with the working class and their general reluctance or inability, to protect and serve. Ultimately Commentor answers one hostile stereotype by advancing another, talking back to the devil by presenting him with the grimmest and most grotesque caricature of himself.

The demonstrators, as we have seen, kept up their spirit by singing the Mighty Duke's “How Many More Must Die” and Black Stalin's “More Come.” After the beating, they returned and defiantly chanted:

The more protestors they beat  
Is the more ah we on the street  
More come, more come. ([Express 11 March 1986: 5](#))

The happenings outside the Queen's Park Oval on March 4, 1986 had relatively little impact on the solidarity of the team Richards had inherited from Lloyd. Jeffrey Dujon, speaking in an interview three days after the Police truncheon fiesta affirmed that:

The unity that exists among us has to do with a kind of spirit which never existed before. In years gone by we had talented individuals—and they were just that— individuals. We now realize how important we are as a force to maintain the identity of the Caribbean... We're the only example of Caribbean unity that exists. When the West Indies team is playing we're the only thing the entire Caribbean focuses on. We're an example of the excellence as well as the unity the Caribbean is capable of. ([Jacob 110](#))

The blackwash of England that followed the One Day “cliff-hanger” in Port of Spain, seemed to illustrate the truth of Dujon's affirmation: that the team was viewed and viewed itself as an example of Caribbean unity, identity, excellence and potential.

Rudder's “Rally Round the West Indies” (1987) also recognized the issues of cricket as going well beyond the boundary of the playing field. The calypso begins with a consciousness that had permeated political discourse of the early 1980's: that Clive Lloyd's successful West Indies team—which had in 1984 between March and December won eleven Test matches in succession including a 5-Test ‘blackwash’ of England—should be recognized as a symbol of Caribbean unity

and potential, and adopted as an example by regional politicians and statesmen, pussy-footing on or elevating local issues above common regional goals. Though Richards' teams between April 1985 against New Zealand and February to May 1986 against England had won seven Tests in succession including another blackwash of England, this time in the Caribbean, drawn three-Test series against Pakistan (October–November 1986) then New Zealand (February–March 1987) were clear indications that the team was beginning to experience the cyclic difficulties of transition. Indeed, the team had been dismissed by Imran Khan (4 for 30) and Abdul Qadir (6 for 16), for only 53 runs in the second innings of the First Test at Faisalabad in October 1986, just five months after the completion of the Caribbean backwashing of England.

Rudder's "Rally Round the West Indies," then, grew out of the recognition that in this new period of transition the team needed all the moral support that the West Indian public could give them. He also seems in 1987 to have felt that apathy or complacency that Sparrow's "Kerry Packer" had recognized was the public attitude towards the team. Emerging out of this new era of uncertainty—a political and economic crisis also existed in Trinidad, Barbados, Jamaica and Guyana—"Rally Round the West Indies" spoke and still speaks to more than Caribbean cricket, and has become the people's national anthem of the region. Antiguan D Jay's blast it as a war cry every Test match at the Packer-enhanced Recreation Park in St John's. One Trinidad Radio station, 105 FM, plays it frequently—more frequently than Gavaskar was played in 1976—during West Indies tours at home. David Rudder was visibly there in Port of Spain, Barbados and Antigua (1994), following the fortunes of the team and especially of its latest Hero, Brian Lara, at times conducting choirs of Antiguan spectators to whom he has given credit for popularizing his "Rally Round the West Indies."

"Rally Round the West Indies" is a fervent call for faith in the capacity of Caribbean people. It recognizes that the flow of energy between the team as the collective Hero it had become under Lloyd, and the society that the team represent, should not be one-way, that is, from the team/ Hero to the society; but that the society also has a duty to support the team with its fervor and faith, particularly when the team enters the doldrums.

"Rally Round the West Indies"

For ten long years  
We ruled the cricket world  
Now the rule seems coming to an end  
But down here Just a chink in the armour  
Is enough, enough to lose a friend  
Some of the old generals have retired and gone  
And the runs don't come as they did before  
But when the Toussaints go the Dessalines come  
We've lost the battle but yet we will win the war

*Chorus*

Rally,----, rally round the West Indies  
Now and forever  
Rally,----, rally round the West Indies  
Never say never

Pretty soon the runs again are going to flow like water  
Bringing so much joy to each and every son and daughter  
Say we're going to rise again like a raging fire  
As the sun shines you know we gonna take it higher  
Rally,----, rally round the West Indies

Now and forever  
Rally,----, rally round the West Indies  
Way Down Under a warrior falls  
Michael Holding falls in the heat of the battle  
“Michael shoulda left long time,”  
I heard an angry brother shout  
Caribbean man, that, that, that is the root of our trouble.  
In these tiny theatres of conflict and confusion  
Better known as the isles of the West Indies.  
We already know who brought us here  
And who created this confusion  
So I’m begging, begging my people please

*Chorus*

Now they are making restrictions and laws to spoil our beauty  
But in the end we shall prevail  
This is not just cricket, this thing goes beyond the boundary  
It’s up to you and me to make sure that they fail  
Soon we must take a side or be lost in the rubble  
In a divided world that don’t need islands no more  
Are we doomed forever to be at somebody’s mercy?  
Little keys can open up mighty doors...

*Chorus*

In “Rally Round the West Indies” the situation of the team, as the final stanza makes obvious, is a wider symbol about the need for Caribbean unity “in a divided world that don’t need islands no more.” Rudder’s last line is a statement of faith in the potential of these islands for vision and performance beyond their geophysical littleness. His global message was, however, lost on some sectors of the Caribbean public, again at a crucial transition point between the captaincies of Richards and Richardson, a point where Jeffrey Dujon, wicket-keeper for Lloyd’s team after Deryck Murray and then David Murray, was dropped from the team. Jamaicans booed Richardson in 1992 as Trinidadians had booed Lloyd in February 1981 and again in March 1983 over the dropping of Deryck Murray.

Similarly, Barbadians, incensed by the growing pressures of their own economic situation which has caused their government to institute an eight percent wage cut on the salaries of public servants; and angry at the Board’s failure to appoint Desmond Haynes, the most senior member of the team, as captain, after he had been a regular understudy to Richards; and most strangely of all, annoyed at the exclusion of just competent neophyte medium pacer Anderson Cummins from the team chosen to play in the special series against a South Africa newly liberated from UN sanctions against their participation in international sport, boycotted the historic West Indies versus South Africa Test Match at Kensington Oval in 1992.

I learned that the reasons made public in the regional press for the boycott, reasons which had received the sanction and support of an important Barbadian cricket journalist, were not the real ones. Barbadians were, apparently, deeply insulted that Barbados should have been chosen as the venue of this Test Match, because they thought that such a choice could only have been based on the assumption that Barbadians lacked black pride and consciousness, and were thus unlikely to object to the over-sudden presence at Kensington Oval of members of a recently fascist and not yet democratic State. This explanation strikes one as peculiar when one considers the apparently soft line taken by the Barbadian Government and public on the Robin Jackman issue in 1981, when Guyana insisted on upholding United Nations sanctions against anyone who had participated in

sport in South Africa. Jackman played in Barbados without any trouble while the Guyana Test had to be cancelled. When the Gooch issue arose in Trinidad and anti-apartheid demonstrators parading outside Queen's Park Oval were brutalized by the Police for making noise around a cricket ground jam-crammed with spectators making noise, there was no news of similar protest activity in Barbados, and certainly nothing like a call for a boycott of the Test Match. Nor was there loud public outcry during the 1980's when West Indian cricketers from around the region were being recruited from Barbados as an organizing centre to tour South Africa as rebel mercenaries. If there had been no boycott throughout the eighties when Apartheid was in full force, why then should there be one in 1992 when that evil system was in its death-throes and Nelson Mandela and the ANC had sanctioned the match?

It is difficult not to conclude that the real reason for the boycott was the state done: deep dissatisfaction by the Barbadian public with what looked like the growing marginalization of a country that had during the eras of the three W's and Sobers been indisputably at the centre of West Indies cricket. The insular concern was deemed to be more important than the regional good and the West Indies were literally abandoned to play in a void, the justification for which could be and is still being provided by every Barbadian, though it is comprehended by no other Caribbean person. Playing in the Kensington void visibly affected the team for whom the contest became one between the individual and space; the heroic spirit versus waste and void. For a long time they played like a team stunned, robbed of their energy of spirit in a match that had been setup specially to measure the mettle of what had recently been white supremacism, against what was recognized world-wide, and with anguish in some corners, as a continuously triumphant black team. Indian politicians in Trinidad hadn't liked it when Vivian Richards had said it, but it was a simple inescapable matter of fact, one heightened now by this politically engineered contest between the sons of Garvey and Toussaint and the descendants of Cecil Rhodes and Paul Kruger.

To their eternal credit, the West Indies team dipped deep into themselves on that evening before the final day—Ambrose, Walsh, Lara, Adams, Arthurton, Haynes, Richardson, Williams, Benjamin, Simmonds, Patterson—and found the faith and strength there. Walsh after the match spoke about the sober and the heart-searching session that the team held the evening of the fourth day. Next day the team played as one man, and as never before. Singles were hard to come by as our bowling achieved 'scrupulous meanness'<sup>2</sup> a phenomenon it has repeated on a few occasions since then. Phenomenal catches were held by Lara and Williams who, between them, assisted in ten dismissals during the match. Some of these catches might well have been dropped in our torpid first innings display. Everything came together even though the Hero was bereft of the crowd, at a crucial moment when what emerged was not the necessary regional consciousness at all, but the pervasive political divisions within the region; the worms, rooted as deeply as Rudder's "living vibration" of Calypso music, within the belly of my Caribbean.

The *Trinidad Guardian* reports that "the victory was celebrated at lunchtime...all over TT, when the tune most played on the airwaves was Rudder's 'Rally Round the West Indies'" (*Guardian 24 April 1992*). The game was far larger than the sectional protest that had so soured the circumstances in which it had been played. The nature of its importance to the West Indian public might be gauged by this news report:

Shouting and jubilation by media representatives at UWI's Cave Hill campus in Barbados twice interrupted yesterday's press briefing through a radio link-up from the Mona campus Jamaica, as the West Indies approached victory over South Africa. The first interruption came at the loss of South Africa's eighth wicket. It was repeated shortly after when the final wicket fell. Vice Chancellor Allister McIntyre was at the time addressing members of the regional media on the University's US\$456 million IDB loan agreement. (*Guardian 24 April 1992*)

The game was sufficiently important to interrupt business at the highest levels even in Barbados where the game had been boycotted! Far more than the World Cup, Down Under (1991/92), the

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2 "Scrupulous meanness:" a phrase used to describe James Joyce's prose style in *Dubliners*.

West Indies/South Africa Test Match was Richardson's true initiation ritual as captain and the team's most profound rite of passage. It made possible the team's record-breaking one-run victory against Australia in the Fourth Test at Adelaide in January 1993 when the team came from behind to equalize the Test series. It was also responsible for Ambrose's production of the finest spell of bowling in any sort of cricket: seven wickets for one run, in the final Test in Australia, 1993: a feat that has been chronicled for sure, but remains unsung. It may also have provided the groundswell of overpowering energy with which Walsh in the First Test and Ambrose in the third against England in 1994, demolished the opposition, in the latter instance for 46 runs, the lowest by that team since the late 19th century.

MBA, whose calypsonian's initials mean Maestro Born Again, in his 1993 calypso "Beyond a Boundary" examined the implications of the South Africa/West Indies series of 1992:

"Beyond a Boundary"

*Chorus*

Oh Jamaica, Oh Jamaica, Oh Jamaica!  
You really leh we down  
Oh Jamaica, Oh Jamaica, Oh Jamaica!  
You let black people down  
Oh yes Jamaica, P.N. Botha must be laugh ha ha!  
Specially when he see you booing Richie on the big TV  
And those who support Apartheid  
Must have felt so glad  
To see what you did with we heroes  
And fellow black men  
At a moment when all attention  
Was focused on the Caribbean  
You let that pass  
And instead chose to act like jackass  
For by your actions that day you not only let down  
Blacks all over  
You also proved to those white racists and them  
In South Africa  
That warriors like Mandela and Desmond Tutu  
are just failures  
Black man's struggle don't mean a thing  
You waste down a king  
I'm sure if the late Bob Marley  
Was alive he'd be so angry  
It was a sad blow  
Jamaicans, that's not the way to go  
So I can't agree  
'Cause this goes way beyond the boundary  
  
Bajans, I agree that you were angry  
I too felt sorry  
When they dropped Cummins it was a sad thing  
real disappointing  
But then in life there'll be stumbling -  
blocks along the way

And events very similar on another day  
I'm not saying you should not protest  
But why boycott the entire test  
Don't misunderstand  
The game is bigger than the man  
But I'm sure if the Queen come to visit yuh land  
You won't boycott she  
No! You goh wave yuh banner, genuflect and bow  
An' make she happy  
But because they drop one Bajan  
All you spoil a grand occasion  
The rest of the team to you didn't mean  
a blinking thing (oye yoi yoi)  
If Adams or Errol Barrow  
Was alive, they'd a cuss fuh so  
It was a sad blow  
Barbadians, that's not the way to go  
Sobers would agree  
For this goes way beyond the boundary  
  
Sweet, sweet T&T, I felt proud to be  
Born in this country  
Cause ah sure for days  
The world must have gazed at us so amazed  
And when they saw all those races together as one  
At the Oval watching cricket played under the sun  
Mr. de Klerk must be call Botha  
Saying, "That's unbelievable, sir"  
Yes we showed them all  
What's unity; don't mind that we small  
And when we welcome the teams on the fields that  
day with such ovation  
Meh blood run cold, mih pores raise,  
never in mih life I felt so much passion  
That moment is worth reliving  
The atmosphere was mind-blowing  
I'm always going to remember that day forever  
Dr Williams down in the grave  
Ah sure proud of how we behave  
Oh yes Trinbago  
We all knew that was the way to go  
So rejoice with me  
For this goes way beyond the boundary  
  
Now to you, champions, congratulations  
on a job well done  
What fantastic play on that final day  
against all odds, I say  
So I salute and pay tribute to you in my song



For the courage you all display when the chips were down  
For me it was the greatest victory  
Ever achieved in all history  
Because as I say  
At stake was much more than cricket that day

The people of the region, leh we hold on tight  
to our dream team  
But if we let pettiness make it fall apart  
we all goin' to scream  
Cause they making laws everyday  
Just to cripple we style of play  
They find we dominating the game for much too long  
That's why we must stick together  
In sun or rain, in any weather  
In joy or sorrow  
West Indians, this is the way to go  
So rejoice with me  
For this goes way beyond the boundary

*Chorus*

Oh Jamaica – Trinidad  
Oh Jamaica – Guyana  
Oh Jamaica – Antigua  
Oh Jamaica – Trinbago  
Oh Jamaica – Whooa  
Oh Jamaica – Whooa

Part lament, part sermon, part praise song of exaltation, MBA's calypso is so crystal clear that it requires little comment. Its major points are that the boycott was an insult to the founding ancestors of the Caribbean nation: to Marley, Adams, Barrow, Sobers, Williams... It was a deep dishonor, a failure in reverence towards past and present warrior hood and consciousness, to Mandela and Tutu. It was then, in MBA's eyes, the very opposite to what some of the most historically conscious Barbadians thought they meant by the boycott. MBA believes that in pursuing relatively petty parochial issues some of us failed to appreciate the larger picture: that at that crucial point in time whether we liked it or not we represented all struggling black peoples world-wide; that we were being projected on a world stage and how we represented ourselves was of historic significance. The camera was on us.

He concludes that it is crucial for us to hold on to and support our "dream team" if only because we would be unable to bear the anguish and frustration if it disintegrates. Like Rudder, he recognizes behind new cricket legislation, a politics hostile to the dominance of the West Indian game style—which is really no more than the four-pronged pace attack which we adopted from the Australians, who used it to such devastating effect against us in 1975/76.

If there is one flaw in the calypso—besides the fact that Eric Williams was not buried, but cremated and scattered in the Gulf of Paria—it is its propagation of the favourite illusion of Trinbagonians that their country is ethnically united, and conscious of the regional and international context of issues in a way that is untrue of the rest of the insular Caribbean.

Trinidad, as we noted earlier, had booed Clive Lloyd in 1981 in much the same way and for much the same reason that Jamaicans had booed Richardson in 1992. Trinidad had also substantially boycotted the final Test against Australia in 1973 after West Indies lost the Guyana Test. Then, the

reason for the boycott was not insularity, but disillusion that the team which had promised so much early in the season, had delivered so little.

Trinidad has transcended neither narrow nationalism nor the internal politics of ethnicity. The same issues that led Barbadians in 1992 to create a list of casualties whose Test careers the selectors had “wrongfully” terminated—Wayne Daniel, Thelston Payne, Ezra Moseley, Gordon Greenidge, Carlisle Best, Philo Wallace and Malcolm Marshall—have led Trinidadians to prepare their list of Trinidadians who have been or are being sidelined – Anthony Gray, David Williams, Philip Simmonds, Rajendra Dhanraj. And other territories have their lists. MBA’s calypso, then, is required listening for Trinidadians as well.

What MBA’s “Beyond a Boundary” really shows is that little has changed in fifty years. The core issues affecting West Indian cricket remain the same: insularity, racial loyalties, the perennial problems of transition; the symbiosis of the Hero/Crowd relationship; the chronic mistrust of selectors even when they continue to select teams that have managed more or less to keep us at the top of Test cricket for nearly two decades. What has changed has been the openness with which such issues are being debated by the various West Indian publics, and the depth in the consciousness of popular bards, who have between the 1920’s and now moved far beyond chronicle and celebration towards analysis and admonition.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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