

CRICKET AND PAN-AFRICANIST PROTESTS IN BARBADOS, 1966-1992

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From the commencement of the chattel slavery in the Caribbean, the enslaved and their descendants recognised that they faced similar problems: enslavement, denial of their humanity, racial discrimination, brutal exploitation and oppression. They felt that it would be in their best interest to unite and link up their struggles for their own survival and the advancement of their social, economic, political and psychological circumstance. This gave rise to the evolution and the development of a Pan-African consciousness. After the demise of enslavement, the Pan-African outlook continued to flourish in response to how African-Caribbean peoples were oppressed and exploited under the racist colonial system. A number of West Indians and their counterparts in North America migrated to Liberia and Sierra Leone on the African continent to escape the racism that was practised in these territories. Many of the leading proponents of Pan-Africanism like Edward Wilmot Blyden, who came from the Virgin Islands, were strong advocates of the 'Back to Africa' idea. A strong African consciousness was present in the thoughts of the African descendants. This awareness was crystallized in 1900, when Henry Sylvester Williams, a Trinidadian, and the African Association called the First Pan-African conference in London to protest against the savaging of the African continent and African people during the imperialist onslaught of the last fifteen years of the 19th Century. This conference was a clear manifestation that African descendant peoples in Britain, the Caribbean and North America were very disturbed with how the European imperial project was devastating Africans on the continent. This meeting was also alarmed at how African-Americans were being brutalized under the racist 'Jim Crow' system in the United States. The First Pan-African Conference signalled the unity in the struggle and Pan-African solidarity among all black people.

In the wake of the First World War, Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association sought to work for the betterment of all African people globally and helped to further concretize the idea that what happened to Black people in one part of the world was of great concern to all Black people worldwide. The Garveyites on the island played a critical role in raising the level of African awareness given the very strong emigrationist strand in their rhetoric with their slogan 'Africa for the Africans.' Many of them constantly referred to the great history of Africa and expressed the desire to physically relocate to Liberia. In October, 1935 when the fascist Italians, led by Benito Mussolini, invaded Abyssinia/Ethiopia, Africans worldwide came to the defence of Ethiopia and further reinforced the bonds of Pan-African solidarity. Ethiopia held a special place in the hearts and minds of most black people because: i) it had a long history going back into antiquity; ii) it was mentioned in the Bible; iii) it had defeated the Italians in 1896 and turned back the tide of European colonialism; and iv) it was the only truly independent African territory on the continent. Barbadians, like their counterparts worldwide, sought to assist the Ethiopians by giving financial and moral support. A number of prayer vigils were held on the island for the 'peace and independence of Ethiopia,' and funds were collected for the Ethiopian Red Cross and the Abyssinia Welfare League Fund. In 1936, over 3000 Barbadians attended a public meeting in Queens Park, where a resolution was passed against the decision by Britain to lift the sanctions that she had imposed on Italy for occupying Ethiopia.¹ The historian David Browne argues that the intensity of the local protest by UNIA and the Working Men's

¹Colonial Office 318.421.5.

Association against Ethiopia was so acute that it became difficult for the colonial authorities to ignore the feelings of the black population on any racial or political issue (6).

While the Italian-Ethiopia struggle represented the best manifestation of Pan-African solidarity in the first half of the twentieth century, the struggle against apartheid in South Africa was the best demonstration in the second half of the twentieth century. South Africa from the beginning of European colonial rule was founded on racism. In 1948, the South African government began the process of legally institutionalizing the racist Apartheid System. All areas of life in South Africa were based on racial segregation. The ruling class in South Africa was very repressive and committed atrocities against black people on a daily basis. Africans in South Africa, on the African continent and worldwide were outraged at the acts of violence that were being committed against Black people under this system. Black people in South Africa were the most oppressed section of the population and arguably the most oppressed black people in the world. They had no political power, no economic power and their basic human rights were denied. No person of African ancestry could accept the idea that white people were superior to black people and black people were inferior to white people. In response to the developments inside South Africa, African people worldwide felt that they had a duty and an obligation to assist blacks in South Africa to defeat the evil Apartheid System.

Between 1966 and 1992, cricket in Barbados was used as a site of anti-apartheid protest and an occasion to demonstrate Pan-African unity in the struggle and solidarity with the oppressed masses of African people of South Africa to a large extent and to Rhodesia to a lesser extent by Pan-Africanists groups and Pan-Africanists within Barbados. Barbadians are very passionate about cricket - this sport is very popular among large sections of the population. However, cricket was more than entertainment, as pointed out by CLR James in his excellent study *Beyond the Boundary*. Tim Hector, argued that cricket is: i) part of the process by which West Indians overcame or sought to overcome the racism, and the consequent sense of racial inferiority and racial self-contempt in which the great majority of us were born; ii) part and parcel of the nationalist movement; and iii) part of the process of national liberation in the Caribbean (113). The Pan-Africanists in this paper sought to show their brothers and sisters in Southern Africa that they were cognizant of their tribulations and they would do everything in their power to assist them in their struggles against their oppressors. They felt that they could contribute actively to the struggle by ensuring that the international isolation of South Africa in cricket was maintained as a strategy to assist in defeating the racist regime. It was evident that cricket was one sport that was being exploited by the South Africans to circumvent the isolation strategy.

This paper examines the actions of the Peoples Progressive Movement in fighting against two South Africans and one Rhodesian playing cricket in Barbados in 1967. It looks at the role of the Southern African Liberation Committee in supporting Forbes Burnham for prohibiting Robin Jackman from playing cricket in Guyana and leading a boycott against the playing of the test match in Barbados in 1981. The paper also explores the reaction of the Pan-Africanists to the rebel West Indian cricketers going to South Africa in 1983. Additionally, it looks at protests against the English cricket team playing in Barbados in 1986 because of the presence of cricketers who had played in South Africa. Finally, the paper examines the reaction by the Pan-Africanists to the South Africa tour of the Caribbean in 1992.

The Struggle to Prevent Two South Africans and One Rhodesian from Playing in the Rest of the World versus Barbados Match

As part of its independence celebrations, the Barbadian cricket team was slated to play against a Rest of the World Cricket team, in March 1967. The match was designed to: i) headline Barbados throughout the world in terms of tourist promotion; ii) to give the cricket-loving local public a treat to remember all their lives, and iii) to focus attention on our national abilities in the enthusiastic atmosphere of independence.¹ The selectors chose Peter Pollock and Graeme Pollock from South Africa and Colin Bland from Rhodesia, to be part of the Rest of the World team. While the members of the selection panel sought to pick the best cricketers for the Rest of the World team, the selection of the above cricketers had political overtones that transcended 'the boundary.' C. L. R. James in *Beyond a Boundary* explored the "intimate connection between cricket and West Indian social and political life" (297). In this work he demonstrated that cricket was not just a sport played on the cricket field but it had social and political overtones that impacted on the wider society. At this time, South Africa practised a system of apartheid where the legal, political and economic systems were based on racial discrimination and a minority white government which brutally oppressed and repressed the majority black population. This form of government was offensive to nearly every person of African descent because it was based on the notion that Africans were inferior to Whites. On the 21st March 1960, the repressive arm of the South African state slaughtered over 169 unarmed Blacks at Sharpeville. This led to sanctions being imposed upon South Africa by the Commonwealth and by United Nations. The Sharpeville massacre brought international interest to the daily atrocities that were being carried out in this territory and led to the flowering and the growth of anti-apartheid movements globally.

Rhodesia also had a similar racist system, where a white minority ruled over a black majority. However, what incensed many persons within Rhodesia and outside of that territory was when Ian Smith, the Rhodesian leader, declared that Rhodesia was independent from Britain in November 1965. Many Rhodesians and keen observers of developments inside that territory felt that Smith's Unilateral Declaration would ruin any prospect of the Rhodesian people attaining their full civil and human rights. In response to Smith's action Britain applied limited sanctions on Rhodesia, and the United Nations Security Council called for an economic embargo on Rhodesia. The resolution condemned the usurpation of power by a racist settler minority and called on member states not to recognise the illegal government of Rhodesia and to do their utmost in order to break all economic relations with Rhodesia including an embargo on oil and petroleum products (Nkrumah 93). In December 1965, Kwame Nkrumah, the President of Ghana and the leading Pan-Africanist, broke diplomatic ties with Britain because of the "failure on the part of the United Kingdom to use all possible means, including the use of force, to oppose a unilateral declaration of independence by the Southern Rhodesian settlers" (121).

In light of the prevailing political environment in the above territories, the selection of the Pollock brothers and Bland was quite contentious. Banks Breweries, the major sponsors of the match, claimed that it had been guaranteed by the Barbados Government that anyone selected would be able to play. Jeffrey Stollmeyer, the former West Indies cricket captain, and one of the selectors felt that the "presence of the South African players in Barbados could be the first step towards improving relations between South Africa and the Caribbean area."² Garfield Sobers, the Barbadian captain believed that the "Pollocks and Bland would be accepted by the vast majority of the public in our country for what they were – world class

¹"Match Will Definitely Not Be Cancelled," *Barbados Advocate* October 5, 1966.

²"South Africans For Barbados Backed," *Barbados Advocate* May 28, 1966.

players."³ Peter Short, a white Barbadian cricket official with the Barbados Cricket Association, supported the inclusion of the South Africans and Rhodesian on the grounds that "they would be able to see how whites and blacks lived in harmony in Barbados" (Mottley 2). The editorial writer of the *Barbados Advocate*, the leading newspaper on the island at this time, also endorsed the match and noted that "on our attainment of nationhood, we can show the world that in the realm of sport we do not practise segregation and the South Africans are free to come, and participate in our games if they are free to do so."⁴

However, Sir Learie Constantine, the former West Indian cricketer expressed some reservation about the players from South Africa and Rhodesia being welcomed in the Caribbean. He argued that "you cannot improve relations between countries when one country has taken a categorical stand against sportsmen going to their country."⁵ Constantine firmly believed that no "country should accept what is happening in South Africa and say that sports men are a different calibre."⁶ The idea of allowing South Africans to come to Barbados was infuriating too because white South Africans had killed a black Barbadian seaman by the name of Milton King in Cape Town, in March 1951 (Mottley 3). As a result of King's murder, the Barbadian government had severed all relations with South Africa. Moreover, it led to one of the largest demonstrations to have taken place on the island. The massive protest march against this outrage was led by the Barbados Workers Union, the largest trade union in the country.⁷

The Role of the Peoples Progressive Movement

The Peoples Progressive Party (PPM), a Marxist-Pan-Africanist political organization that was formed in Barbados in 1965, was diametrically opposed to Bland and the Pollock brothers playing cricket in Barbados. The PPM saw its mission as fighting: i) to establish the unquestioned dignity of the black man; ii) against the dictatorship of capitalism, and against capitalist exploitation by international capitalism, and iii) for the redistribution of the national resources for the benefit of the masses.⁸ Some of the leading members of the PPM (Calvin Alleyne, John Connell and Bobby Clarke) had been educated in Britain where they were exposed to Marxism and to Pan-Africanism. According to W.Ofutaey-Kodjoe, Pan-Africanism "existed as a body of ideas that led to the formation of a political movement containing many different political organizations" (qtd. in Walters, 48). These entities comprised two major features: "i) the acceptance of the oneness of all African people and ii) a commitment to the betterment of all people of African descent" (48). It is generally accepted by all Pan-Africanists that all African people share a history of exploitation, discrimination and degradation under European colonialism. Therefore, Pan-Africanism is an ideology and a movement of resistance of African peoples, and it expresses itself in the solidarity of Africans in the struggle against colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism and the apartheid system. As a Marxist-Pan-African formation, the members of the PPM felt that they had a duty and an obligation to do everything in their power to prevent these cricketers from playing in Barbados; to show their solidarity with their oppressed brothers and sisters in Southern Africa,

³Ibid.

⁴Editorial, "Keep Colour Out Of It," *Barbados Advocate* September 10, 1966.

⁵"South Africans for Barbados Backed," *Barbados Advocate* May 28, 1966.

⁶Ibid.

⁷"10,000 Joined Protest March," *Barbados Advocate* August 26, 1951.

⁸Calvin Alleyne, "The Nature of the Struggle," *Black Star* November 4, 1967.

and to contribute to the ongoing sanctions which were called for by the United Nations and anti-apartheid groups.

The PPM held several political meetings throughout the island where they attacked the racist apartheid system and condemned the inclusion of Southern African cricketers in the proposed cricket match. John Connell, the Public Relations Officer of the PPM, informed the public that they treated the inclusion of these three players as a national issue.⁹ Clyde Walcott, the former West Indian cricketer confirmed that the “recently formed People’s Progressive Movement has been campaigning vigorously against the inclusion of the three members of the team.”¹⁰ Indeed, the PPM was in the vanguard of opposition to Bland and the Pollock brothers playing on Barbadian soil. The PPM argued that it “would be considered a pernicious and treacherous act to allow South Africans to be included in the Rest of the World versus Barbados Independence match.”¹¹

The PPM took issue with a section of the Barbadian public that believed too much attention was being made to the inclusion of the Southern African cricketers on the grounds that it was just a cricket match. However, the PPM recognized that cricket was intimately linked with politics in South Africa and was clear that apartheid was a cruel and depraved system similar to the racist policies of Germany under the Nazis. The PPM stressed that Barbadians should use every opportunity “to record our disapproval of apartheid.”¹² The PPM also pointed out that Garfield Sobers would not be permitted to play against the South Africans that were selected in South Africa because he would be viewed as a member of an ‘inferior race.’ Therefore, the PPM maintained that to allow the South Africans to play in Barbados would be seen “as an approval of the South African Government’s ruthless pursuit of its policy of apartheid and the suppression of some 11,000,000 Africans because of their race.”¹³

The debate surrounding the participation of the South Africans in the proposed match became very intense and widespread; some Barbadians yearned for the cricketers to play while others supported the position of the PPM. The section of the populace who wanted the cricketers to play suggested that politics should be kept out of sports and there was no harm in the cricketers coming from Southern Africa. This body of thought seemed quite unaware, as Jon Gemmel argues, that “sport is moulded by political and economic factors in order to recreate the value system of those in authority” (Gemmel 33). A letter writer to the *Barbados Advocate* newspaper by the name of Patrick Tudor was of the view that the selectors “have shown a callous disregard and undisguised contempt for the struggle of the oppressed coloured people in South Africa in their heart-breaking fight to secure fundamental rights.”¹⁴ He further contended that “unless the Government of Barbados has taken complete leave of its senses, I failed to see how those who practise apartheid can be given permission to play at Kensington Oval.”¹⁵ Indeed Tudor was “shocked and dismayed” that such an idea could even be contemplated. An editorial in the *Barbados Advocate* stated that the Barbadian government abhorred the apartheid policy of South Africa as was seen in the legislation banning imports from that country. However, the writer proffered that the Barbadian

⁹“PPM Outlines 1967 Political Education Program,” *Barbados Advocate* January 1, 1967.

¹⁰“Invitations Withdrawn – S. Africans Not Coming,” *Barbados Advocate*, January 31, 1967.

¹¹“PPM Deplores Inclusion of S. Africans,” *Barbados Advocate* August 31, 1966.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴“We Don’t Want These Men In Our Midst,” *Barbados Advocate* September 12, 1966.

¹⁵Ibid.

government regarded the selection as outside of government policies.¹⁶ The silence of the Barbadian government was quite deafening as this issue was being widely discussed throughout the island. Moreover, it was causing Barbadians to look at some of the racist practices that were still present in its own society.

Revoking of the Invitation

The invitation to the Pollock brothers and Bland was subsequently withdrawn in January 1967 by Banks Breweries, the sponsors of the match. The reason given for this development was because the South Africa's interior minister, P. M. K. Le Roux, had stated that Basil D'Oliveira, a mixed blood naturalized British citizen would not be allowed to play in South Africa if he were selected for the English team "because we won't allow mixed teams to play against our midst."¹⁷ Although the Basil D'Oliveira issue was the official reason given for the withdrawal of the invitation to the Pollock's and Bland, it was strongly believed the adverse reaction from the public was the real reason why the organizers were forced to take the above action. The PPM played a key role in mobilizing unfavourable public feedback to the presence of these cricketers. Boon Wallace, president of the South African Cricket Association stated that he "regretted a decision that affected only the individuals concerned."¹⁸ Alwyn Ppichanick, convenor of the Rhodesian Cricket Selection Committee, felt that the Barbadian decision was unfortunate. He believed that "so much good could have come from here paying a visit to the West Indies."¹⁹

Some Barbadians were opposed to the Black Radical philosophy that came from the PPM platform and they held the view that the organization was stirring up trouble because of their intense criticism of the policies of South Africa and Rhodesia. Ken Davis wrote a letter to the *Barbados Advocate* newspaper stating that the members of the PPM have "formed themselves into a party just to create confusion in our midst."²⁰ However, the editorial writer of the *Black Star* newspaper, the organ of the PPM, refuted this charge and insisted that "the PPM saved Barbados from slipping into the cesspool of international relations by celebrating our independence with an invitation to apartheid."²¹ Many Black Nationalists/Pan-Africanists, Marxists, trade unionists, intellectuals and other progressives credited the PPM for their contribution in preventing the cricketers from playing in Barbados and for raising the consciousness of Barbadians about the evil apartheid system.

The Robin Jackman Affair

In 1981, during the English cricket tour of the West Indies, Forbes Burnham, the then President of Guyana expelled the English cricketer Robin Jackman from Guyana because he had played cricket and coached in South Africa. This led to the cancellation of the second test match that was scheduled to be played in Guyana and it placed the remainder of the cricket tour in jeopardy. Burnham's action was not the most popular one, given that the cricket-loving Caribbean public wanted the test match to be played in Guyana and the cricket tour to

¹⁶Editorial, "Keep Colour Out of Sport," *Barbados Advocate* September 10, 1966.

¹⁷Editorial, *Black Star*, May 11, 1968.

¹⁸"S.A. Cricket Officials Attack Decision," *Barbados Advocate* February 11, 1967.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰"We Have Apartheid Too!" *Barbados Advocate* September 12, 1966.

²¹Editorial, "Barbados, South Africa and the Olympic Games," *Black Star* May 11, 1968.

continue. At this time, Burnham was viewed as a repressive dictator by some sections of the Guyanese and Caribbean people. The assassination of Walter Rodney, the Marxist Pan-Africanist historian in June 1980, led to a further erosion of Burnham's approval ratings. Tim Hector, the leader of the Antigua and the Caribbean Liberation Movement, one of the leading anti-apartheid voices in the region, described Burnham's actions as "grand standing and posturing of the worst kind."²²

However, Burnham's credentials in the anti-apartheid and liberation struggles in Africa were beyond question. He established a diplomatic embassy in Zambia to be more closely connected with the African liberation struggles. The Burnham government inaugurated African Solidarity Week in order to make Guyanese more aware of developments in the liberation struggles. During this week, the Guyanese government invited many of the leading lights of the African liberation movements to come to Guyana and educate Guyanese about the unfolding struggles in Africa. In addition, Burnham launched a campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela. Burnham also gave diplomatic passports to some of the leaders of the liberation movement from Southern Africa so as to enable their mobilization of international support that they required. He also allowed the Cuban aircraft carrying troops to Angola to re-fuel in Guyana after the Barbadian government prohibited the Cubans from landing in Barbados.²³

As a champion of the anti-apartheid struggle, Burnham justified his action against Robin Jackman based on his interpretation of the Gleneagles Agreement on Sporting Contracts with South Africa. Rashleigh Jackson, the Guyanese Minister of Foreign Affairs stressed that the Gleneagles Agreement on the issue was absolutely clear that sporting contacts between Guyanese "and the nationals of countries practising apartheid in sport tend to encourage the belief that they are prepared to condone this abhorrent policy."²⁴ Michael Manley, the former Jamaican Prime Minister and cricket writer, argued that the action of the Guyanese government was completely within their rights as a sovereign entity. According to Manley, "they acted on conscience rather than in accordance with the actual terms of the agreement" (Manley 294).

Support for Burnham by the Southern African Liberation Committee

The Southern African Liberation Committee (SALC), a Pan-Africanist organization in Barbados supported the decision taken by the Forbes Burnham government. This organization was founded in 1978 to: i) carry out educational work in solidarity with the struggles of the liberation fighters of Southern Africa; ii) organize and coordinate activist campaigning in support of the liberation movement, and iii) in any other way, render material or moral support and solidarity with the oppressed people of Southern Africa (Worrell 75-76). The SALC spent considerable time and resources trying to educate the Barbadian public about the apartheid system because they felt that once the people had this knowledge they would support the masses of oppressed people in South Africa. The SALC felt that the other Caribbean governments should follow Guyana's example. Moreover, given that the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the leading Pan-African organization on the African continent, supported Burnham's position as "eloquent testimony of solidarity with the

²²Hector Hits at Burnham on Jackman Decision," *Barbados Advocate* February 28, 1981.

²³L. F. S. Burnham – His Contribution to the Liberation of South Africa." *Kaieteur News Online* [<http://www.kaieteurnews.com>]. Retrieved June 13, 2011.

²⁴Jackson Explains Guyana's Stand," *The Nation* March 2, 1981.

oppressed people in South Africa and Namibia" and strengthened the SALC's belief that Burnham's stance should be supported.²⁵

Burnham's Anti-Apartheid Stance Against Cricketers in the Past

Jackman was not the first cricketer to suffer at the hands of the Guyanese government. Garfield Sobers, the most famous cricketer to emerge from the West Indies had to write an apology to the Burnham government in order to be allowed to play cricket in Guyana because he toured Rhodesia in 1970. Sobers' actions were widely denounced by all sections of the West Indian society, including the Barbados Workers Union, who felt that Sobers by playing in Rhodesia had given the apartheid system some respectability and acceptability.²⁶ In 1976, the white Barbadian and Surrey opening batsmen Geoffrey Greenidge was prevented from entering Guyana because he had played cricket in South Africa. The Barbados cricket team stood in solidarity with Greenidge and returned to Barbados without playing the Shell Shield cricket match. Carl Blackman, the editor of the *Chronicle* newspaper, posited that "We will not play against a team including Greenidge if a million dollars is at stake."²⁷ He added that "just to show our uncompromising position, we should concede the 12 points to Barbados to let it be recorded in the cricket books and the history books that they compromised on principle just to win a series."²⁸

Efforts to Save the Tour

The expulsion of Robin Jackman placed the cricket tour in jeopardy with three remaining test matches to be played in Barbados, Antigua and Jamaica. The foreign ministers of the above territories and Montserrat met in Barbados to determine whether the tour would continue and whether or not the Gleneagles Agreement had been breached by the inclusion of Jackman. After the deliberations, they decided that the remainder of the cricket tour should be permitted to continue as scheduled. The foreign ministers noted that the "continuation of the tour must not be interpreted to mean that the Gleneagles Agreement leaves it entirely open to national sporting authorities or individual sportsmen to engage in sporting contracts with South Africa."²⁹ They stressed that it is the "obligation of the governments under the agreement to discourage such contacts by their nationals and we expect national sportsmen to lend their support."³⁰ Manley felt that the other governments were equally within their rights to treat the Gleneagles Agreement as the proper basis for determining government action (Manley 14).

Criticisms Directed Against the Continuation of the Tour by the SALC

There was widespread reaction to the position taken by the foreign ministers. The Barbados Workers Union called for the tour to be discontinued because the cricketers involved had demonstrated three things by their actions: i) a blatant disregard for international feelings

²⁵"OAU Lauds Burnham," *The Nation* March 10, 1981.

²⁶"BWU Wants Cricket Tour Cancelled," *The Nation* March 3, 1981.

²⁷"Barbados' Pull-Out A Petulant Act," *Barbados Advocate* February 10, 1976.

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹"Statement That Saved the Tour," *Barbados Advocate* March 5, 1981.

³⁰*Ibid.*

against apartheid, ii) the plight of black people in South Africa, and iii) the Gleneagles Accord signed by Commonwealth prime ministers in 1977.³¹ The Guild of Undergraduates of the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, condemned the decision to allow the tour to continue and viewed it "as hypocrisy in the tradition of Caribbean response to apartheid."³² Tony Cozier, the leading cricket commentator in the region believed that if the foreign members had followed Guyana's lead and sent the Englishmen home it would have split international cricket along racial grounds (Cozier 1981, 10). Peter Short, the then president of the Barbados Cricket Association felt that in the event of the tour being cancelled, the whole future of West Indies cricket would have been placed in jeopardy.³³ The SALC was critical of the statement issued by the foreign ministers and suggested that any examination of the circumstances should lead them to consider the following:

- i) That by selecting Robin Jackman and any others who have played cricket in the racist Republic of South Africa since Gleneagles, the English breached both the spirit and the letter of the agreement;
- ii) That in so far as it advances the interest of isolating all sporting contacts with South Africa, Guyana's position demands some measure of support;
- iii) That the reaction of the English authorities to Guyana's decision in their statement about their right of selection and in unilaterally cancelling that leg of the tour constitutes arrogance and disrespect. The English authorities have further asserted their rights to flout the Gleneagles Agreement.³⁴

The SALC felt that the Caribbean governments should be encouraged to support the essence of Gleneagles and to advance the interest of the cause which it embodies. According to the SALC, it appeared that by appealing to the precise stipulations (rather than the spirit) of Gleneagles and the UN declaration of 1977, the foreign ministers intended to absolve themselves from treating the current issue on its own merit. The SALC felt that by ignoring the specifics they arrived at a solution which did not violate the stipulations of any international document.³⁵

The SALC asserted that it had no sympathy for the view being advanced that the government's hands were tied because of the failure of the Gleneagles declaration to guide them. Neither could they reconcile the failure of the Caribbean governments to condemn England's breach of the accord. The SALC felt that the foreign ministers and the West Indian Cricket Board should have learned something from the English cricketing officials who consistently worked to secure the re-admission of South Africa to the International Cricket Council. Moreover, the SALC contended that as the most successful team in world cricket, "the skills and efforts of our regions cricketers are not being used to advance the interest and cause of mankind and our people in particular."³⁶ The SALC recommended that the governments in the region should draw up their own policy agreement which should clearly

³¹"BWU Wants Cricket Tour Cancelled," *The Nation* March 3, 1981.

³²"Cave Hill Guild Condemns Decision on Jackman," *Barbados Advocate* March 6, 1981.

³³"Reaction-Reaction," *The Nation* March 5, 1981.

³⁴The Southern African Liberation Files (SALC): in 2000 Rick Parris, the former secretary of the Southern African Liberation Committee, gave this writer a folder containing the group's press releases, publications and newspaper clippings of articles and activities of the SALC.

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶"Action Speaks Louder Than Words: Help Set Southern Africa Free!" Press Release 7 by the SALC, March 7, 1981.

stipulate a code of conduct in sports with the objective of isolating all sporting contacts, direct or indirect, with the racist Republic of South Africa.³⁷

Protest in Solidarity with the Guyanese Government Position

In the spirit of Pan-African solidarity with the Guyanese government's position and their oppressed brothers and sisters in South Africa, the SALC led a small but very vocal demonstration in Barbados to protest against the inclusion of Robin Jackman in the English cricket team. The protest rally took place on the Saturday when the test match was being played in Barbados. The staging of the protest had been delayed because of the reluctance of the police to grant permission for the demonstration until the last minute. Additionally, the police placed all kinds of constraints on the number of people who could participate with placards. The demonstration took place in front of the office of the British High Commission. However, it was the intention of the SALC to hold this demonstration outside the office of the then Attorney General, Henry Forde. The SALC were accompanied by students from the Guild of Undergraduates of the University of the West Indies, the University of the West Indies Historical Society and other members of the public. The protesters carried placards with such messages as "Send Jackman Home," "Stop De Cricket," "Protest De Test," "ILC, SRC-Now This," and "Politics and Sports One Ball Game."³⁸ It must be mentioned that this protest had little impact on the attendance at the game given how passionate Barbadians were about cricket. However, the action of the SALC served to highlight the deceit of the Caribbean governments and draw attention to the horrors of apartheid. It also demonstrated to the Caribbean and the global anti-apartheid movement of the SALC's commitment to the struggle against apartheid, but most of all it allowed the oppressed people in South Africa to know that a section of the Barbadian people stood in solidarity with them.

The West Indian Rebel Tour to South Africa

In December 1982, the SALC was alarmed when they received a newspaper clipping of an article which appeared in the Johannesburg *Sunday Times* entitled "Cricket Mercenaries," which claimed that a number of West Indian cricketers were about to signed contracts to play in racist South Africa. Mamatho Netsianda, a member of the ANC who was living in exile in Nigeria, sent the article to the SALC and instructed them to do everything in their power to stop the tour.³⁹ The SALC felt that if the report was true it would represent a serious attempt to undermine the endeavours being made to isolate all sporting contacts with the racist, brutal Republic. From 1969, the ANC viewed the "international isolation of the apartheid regime through the widest possible solidarity movement" as one of key pillars of the liberation of the struggle (Bundy 213). The United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid had advocated the utilization of isolating contacts with South Africa as one of the strategies to utilize "in fighting racist oppression and economic exploitation in South Africa."⁴⁰ The sports boycott was "a component of a wider struggle to isolate South Africa economically and culturally" (Gemmel 123). Therefore, the SALC was quite dismayed to think that black Barbadians could "so selfishly and needlessly assist the racist" regime in South Africa by

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸"SALC Protest of British High Commission," *Barbados Advocate* March 15, 1981.

³⁹The SALC Files, August 13, 1982.

⁴⁰"Call On Gov't To Look Into Reports," *The Nation* January 5, 1983.

undermining the sanctions imposed on South Africa. The SALC called on the Barbados government to bring to bear all measures necessary to discourage Barbadian nationals or residents from violating this internationally accepted principle. They asserted that it was the task of all progressive, democratic, humane and anti-apartheid individuals and institutions in Barbados to rally their forces to convince our sportsmen and women not to contemplate touring South Africa.⁴¹

Reactions to the West Indians Rebel Tour to South Africa

While there were a lot of rumours and denials about West Indian cricketers going to play cricket in South Africa, it was finally confirmed when it was publicly announced that a 'rebel' West Indian cricket team would be going to South Africa in January 1983. The West Indian cricketers were given very lucrative contracts to play there. The actions of the cricketers were supported by a large section of the Barbadian society who argued that:

- i) Trade sanctions and sports boycotts were not having any effect on South Africa so they should be stopped;
- ii) The black states of Africa traded with South Africa;
- iii) Businessmen from around the world had daily relations with that country;
- iv) The system in South Africa could not be changed through boycotts, so perhaps sports might bring about change;
- v) The cricketers who went to South Africa would be helping the blacks and coloureds there to become better sportsmen; and
- vi) The West Indies cricketers had a short span as cricketers, so therefore they had every right to grasp the opportunity to earn these large sums of money and so secure for themselves a tidy fortune, especially in these days of recession.⁴²

The supporters also felt that there was nothing wrong with the cricketers going to earn a living, given that all of them came from working class backgrounds. Moreover, they asserted that sports should not be politicized. However, as Alan Cobley pointed out "it was South Africa which first made racial discrimination in sport an international issue" (26).

The tour was condemned by the SALC; they viewed it as the "ultimate betrayal." The members had spent the last four years seeking to sensitize Barbadians about the evil apartheid system and the ongoing atrocities that were being carried out by the South African government. It was also a major disappointment to all of the Pan-Africanists on the island, who could not fathom how black West Indies would go and play cricket in racist South Africa as 'honorary whites.' The West Indies Group of University Teachers at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus dismissed the argument of financial hardships to the cricketers as the major justification. They felt that "there were other fundamental issues, moral and political, especially that of the dignity of the black race, and therefore of the human race, which should take precedence."⁴³ The Barbados Youth Council viewed the "tour of South Africa by the West Indian cricketers as the most savage and unprincipled attack yet on the oppressed blacks of South Africa."⁴⁴ International denunciation came from Oumarou Gabon

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²T. Marshall, "What We Do Not Want To Know About SA," *Barbados Advocate* October 20, 1982.

⁴³"Groups Raps SA tour," *Barbados Advocate* January 13, 1983 and "Teachers Deplore The Rebel Action," *The Nation* January 14, 1983.

⁴⁴"CCL Criticise W.I. Rebel Cricketers Tour to S.A.," *Barbados Advocate* January 14, 1983.

Youssof, the OAU Ambassador to the UN, who lamented that "our black brothers would, because of money, go to South Africa and be given the title of honorary whites. It is beyond my understanding how a black man could degrade himself to that point."⁴⁵

In response to this development, the SALC called an anti-apartheid solidarity meeting where other groups such as the Caribbean Council of Churches, the West Indies Group of University Teachers, the Spiritual Baptist Church, the Catholic Church, the Movement for National Liberation (MONALI) and other organizations passed the following resolutions and subsequently submitted them to Prime Minister Tom Adams:

- i) that the Barbadian government urgently inquire whether immigration and security regulations were breached to facilitate the departure of a number of prominent Barbadians who from reports were on their way to play in South Africa in violation of the United Nations Resolutions against sports contact in that country;
- ii) that the Barbadian government move to take appropriate measures in the Customs Department in Barbados to make sure that no South African-made goods are brought back into the island either on the said cricketers person or through other means;
- iii) that the Barbadian government enforce the existing tax laws on the monies received by these cricketers from South African authorities and that these said collected taxes be turned over to be used in such beneficial and meaningful work as that being carried out by such organizations as the World Council of Churches and the liberation movements, themselves in Southern Africa to assist refugees fleeing from the horrors and hardships of racism and apartheid in South Africa and Namibia; and
- iv) that the Barbadian government support the plea of the SALC to the Barbados Cricket Association that the players, who to all intents and purposes have gone to South Africa to play as members of a West Indies team, be banned from playing in Barbados Club cricket for five years in addition to the already existing ban of them not playing in future test matches for the West Indies.⁴⁶

The SALC was disappointed when the National Sports Council, a government statutory corporation, decided to allow rebel players to use its sporting facilities after they returned from touring South Africa in 1983. They felt that this decision could undermine the foreign policy interests of Barbados. The United Nations Resolution 31/6 (1976) urged states not simply to persuade sportsmen of the folly of going to South Africa but to deny facilities to sports bodies or teams or sportsmen for visits to South Africa (Gemmel 136). Therefore, the SALC called on the government to immediately reverse the decision of the National Sports Council.⁴⁷ To register their concerns, the SALC wrote a letter to the National Sports Council stating that they "learned with alarm and dismay" the decision of the Executive, with the exception of David Simmons, the Chairman of the Sports Council, "to allow the Barbadian cricketers who had recently played in South Africa to play in games at pitches controlled and operated by the Council."⁴⁸ The SALC added that "this action on your part can only encourage and give succour to those viewpoints which hold that visits to South Africa by our sports people are morally or politically correct."⁴⁹ They pleaded with the National Sports Council to assess its

⁴⁵"UN Officials Rap West Indian Cricketers: It's An Outrage, They Say," *The Nation* January 12, 1983.

⁴⁶SALC Media Release, January 19, 1983.

⁴⁷SALC Media Release, April 15, 1983.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

stance on this issue and stop these "pirate players from playing on the grounds which you control or operate."⁵⁰

The SALC expressed its appreciation to the West Indian cricketers who refused to tour the racist Republic of South Africa. It commended Clive Lloyd, the West Indies captain, and fellow West Indian players, Vivian Richards, Joel Garner and Michael Holding who refused to accept South Africa's bribe money. The SALC felt that the rebel tour had done immense damage to the struggle for justice, freedom and human dignity in South Africa. The cricketers who refused to go to South had demonstrated that they were not only talented sports men but also responsible citizens of the Caribbean, sensitive to the sufferings of fellow human beings who were oppressed and exploited primarily because they are black. The SALC opined that their "refusal to accept South African contracts will be remembered and appreciated as an important contribution to the struggle of the oppressed in South Africa."⁵¹

As the debate intensified as to whether the 'rebel' West Indian cricketers would go to South Africa for a second tour, the SALC published a pamphlet, *Sports and Apartheid: Caribbean Sports People and the Boycott of South Africa* (see Faria). The main theme of this publication was that a sports boycott would help those struggling for freedom, justice and peace in Southern Africa. The pamphlet comprised three chapters, "Apartheid," "Racial Discrimination in South African Sports" and "The Need to Isolate South Africa from International Sport." The publication was in keeping with the SALC's objective of mobilising the broadest support in Barbados for solidarity activity, such as refraining from all sports contacts with South Africa. The SALC strongly believed that South Africa only used rebel tours to try to delude the world community into thinking that all is well in the racially divided society and that black, East Indian and coloured people were not treated as second class citizens.⁵²

The English 1986 Tour of the Caribbean

In 1986, the English cricket team toured the West Indies with four cricketers who had played cricket in South Africa during the English 'rebel' tour of that nation in 1982. Graham Gooch, John Emburey, Peter Willey and Les Taylor who had served their three-year ban were part of the English cricket team. Caribbean territories, with the sole exception of Guyana, gave the tour the green light. However, Gooch reportedly stated in a radio interview while promoting his book that he did not regret his decision to tour South Africa. The Caribbean Foreign ministers recognized that the position taken by Gooch would provoke sections of the West Indian society that stood in solidarity with the people of South Africa. Therefore, they wrote the English cricketing authorities for an urgent explanation on this issue (Cozier 1986, 16).

Gooch first sought to explain his stance in a British Broadcasting Corporation interview but Roderick Rainford, the CARICOM Secretary General, described it as feeble (Cozier 1986, 16). The explanation did not meet the expectations of the Caribbean governments. After some discussions with the Test and County Cricket Board, Gooch, who had captained the rebel English cricket team, issued an apology stating:

My visit to South Africa to play cricket was certainly not motivated by any intention to support apartheid and naturally, nothing I have said has been intended to be contemptuous of anti-apartheid opinion in the West Indies or anywhere else in the world. I am sorry if an opposite impression has been

⁵⁰SALC Files, March 27, 1983.

⁵¹"Cricketers Turned Down Appeal Praised," *Barbados Advocate* April 24, 1983.

⁵²"SALC: Stay Away From South Africa," *Barbados Advocate* May 28, 1983.

given. I have no intention of seeking or accepting any similar opportunity to play cricket against South Africa. (qtd. in Cozier 1986, 16)

However, while this apology satisfied the Caribbean governments it had little effect on the anti-apartheid movement in the Caribbean or the Pan-Africanists in the Caribbean. While the tour had the support of the governments, it did not have the backing of these groups who had not forgiven Gooch for playing in South Africa. Many of them felt that the cricketers who played in South Africa should be banned for life. Moreover, Gooch's mouthings added additional fodder to the contentious issue as to why the cricketers should not be accepted in the Caribbean. Long before the arrival of the English cricket team, the Caribbean anti-apartheid movement had signalled its intention to make the English team feel unwelcomed.

When the English team arrived in the West Indies, they landed in Barbados where they were met by the members of the SALC and other anti-apartheid protestors, carrying placards, chanting and reading resolutions. It was the intention of the SALC to set the tone for how the English should be treated during their tour of the Caribbean and let them get a sense of how Caribbean people felt about their actions in going to South Africa. The action also demonstrated to the people of South Africa and to the other anti-apartheid groups world-wide, their uncompromising and unwavering support in the struggle against apartheid. During the test match, though the SALC did not participate in the demonstration, it was the Guild of Undergraduates who demonstrated over the presence of the English players who had played in South Africa. On the day when the demonstration took place, the SALC was leading a protest outside of the Bionic Man shop for allegedly purchasing shirts from South Africa.⁵³

1992 Boycott of the South Africa versus West Indies Test Match

In 1992, the South Africa cricket team toured the West Indies to play a test match after they were re-admitted to test cricket. The last time they had been involved in Test Cricket was in 1970. The tour was given the blessing of Nelson Mandela, the leader of the ANC and Caribbean governments. This decision came after the South African government had voted for reforms throughout South African society and the dismantling of the apartheid system was on the horizon. Notwithstanding the consent given by Mandela, some Barbadian Pan-Africanists felt that it was premature to have this tour taking place before South Africa had multi-racial elections.

When the South Africa cricketers arrived at the airport, they were met by about twenty very vocal Pan-Africanists protesters who expressed their displeasure at seeing a South African cricket team in Barbados whilst black South Africans had not been granted the benefit of the vote. The cricketers were taken under heavy police protection to the VIP section of the airport area and then transported to the Rockley Resort Hotel, where they were staying. The protesters followed the cricketers and continued to protest outside the hotel.⁵⁴

The test match was played under a cloud of controversy after the Barbadian cricketer Anderson Cummins was not selected and there were calls to boycott the test match in order to send a message to the selectors. Barbadians stayed away from the test match in large numbers and some of them protested outside of Kensington against the non-selection of

⁵³Personal Interview with Michael Cummins, the former Chairman of the SALC, March 5, 2016.

⁵⁴Personal Interview with Lloyd Jones, former Chairman of the Marcus Garvey Hundredth Anniversary Committee and member of the Pan-African Movement of Barbados, March 6, 2016.

Cummins. However, some of them boycotted the match not because of the Cummins issue but because of the re-admission of South Africa before the apartheid system was completely dismantled. The *Barbados Advocate* newspaper carried the views of about nine persons on the historic yet controversial test match West Indies versus South Africa. Dario Cave's comments were very instructive: "There has been no constitutional change in South Africa and I see no reason why the South Africa team is down here, until we see any kind of real change in South Africa, I don't see why we should play South African teams."⁵⁵ Pan-Africanists Lloyd Jones, David Denny, Viola Davis and Joy Workman who took part in the protest at the airport held the view that the Pan-Africanists boycotted the test match not because of the non-selection of Cummins but because they felt it was the principled thing to do because South Africa's readmission was premature.⁵⁶ Hilary Beckles revealed that only one headline in the Caribbean newspapers saw the boycott as being in solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle and not on the non-selection of Cummins and it was a letter by James Millette which called upon readers to "Praise Barbadians for South African Boycott" (120).

Conclusion

The Pan-Africanists' protest coincided with the playing of cricket in the Caribbean between 1966 and 1992. It was clear that cricket was being used to undermine the international sports boycott that was adopted as a strategy to fight apartheid. The Pan-Africanists felt that the sports boycott was one avenue that would have contributed towards the defeat of the racist apartheid system. Therefore, they saw it as their duty to concretely contribute to the struggle by fighting to ensure the boycott remained in place. This was one tangible indicator of Pan-African unity and solidarity. They were vilified for trying to stop cricket, the favourite sport of the people, from being played and abused on the grounds that they were trying to prevent the rebel West Indian cricketers from earning a living. Only a small section of the population respected the uncompromising position of the Pan-Africanists and supported them in their efforts in highlighting the evils of the apartheid system at the expense of cricket. The Pan-Africanists, while being cricket fans, recognised that the struggle against apartheid was more important to them than watching a cricket match. They were firm in their conviction that the apartheid system must be defeated and they were prepared to do everything in their power to assist their brothers and sisters in the struggle against this evil system.

⁵⁵"The People's View," *Barbados Advocate* April 19, 1992.

⁵⁶Personal Interviews with David Denny on February 8, 2016, with Viola Davis on February 8, 2016, and with Lloyd Jones on March 6, 2016.

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