Communalism to Commercialism: Study of Anti-Pentangular Movement

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Source: *Economic and Political Weekly*, Feb. 15-21, 2003, Vol. 38, No. 7 (Feb. 15-21, 2003), pp. 656-664

Published by: Economic and Political Weekly

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/4413220

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Through a study of the Bombay Pentangular tournament, this essay attempts to retrieve the wider context within which the dynamics of the game of cricket evolved and operated in the subcontinent. Much more than clashes between imperialism and nationalism, between communalism and secularism, the evolution of the game has to be understood in terms of the practices of everyday life in Indian society of the time. The emergence of salaried middle class professionals with an investment in leisure, newly structured hours of work with increased leisure opportunities for workers and the growth of a commercial culture in colonial India shaped the fortunes of our de facto national sport.

BORIA MAJUMDAR

I

This paper charts the relationship between cricket and an emerging urban society in India in the first half of the 20th century through an analysis of the Bombay Pentangular cricket tournament. The foremost tournament in pre-partition India, the Bombay Pentangular controlled by the communal Gymkhanas[1] in the city, had its inception in the Presidency matches of the 1890s.[2] These matches were initially played between the Europeans and the Parsees. In course of time, the Pentangular tournament came into existence, with the inclusion of the Hindus in 1907, the Muslims in 1912 and the 'Rest' comprising mainly Christians and Anglo-Indians in 1937. Despite considerable opposition the tournament continued till the 1940s, to be finally abolished in January 1946.[3] The eventual discontinuance, as existing studies would tell us, was the outcome of prolonged agitation against the communal organisation of the tournament. However, beneath this politically correct rhetoric, aligned with the broader vision of a secular nation state, may be found deeper politico-economic factors, which played a significant role in guiding the course of the anti-Pentangular movement. The influence of these forces of commercialisation, bureaucratisation and professionalism, components of a heightened urban consciousness in Bombay/Indian society of the early 20th century, remains obscure in any study of sport in the Indian context.

In India, 'sport', as Ram Guha (1998: 157) rightly points out, should be "viewed as a relational idiom, a sphere of activity which expresses in concentrated form, the values, prejudices, divisions and unifying symbols of society". Cricket, he contends in his essay on the history of the sport in colonial Bombay, "helps to understand the fissures and tensions of a deeply divided society... and provides valuable insights into the history of modern India, in particular about the histories of race, caste and religion in the country" [Guha 1998: 157; For similar views see also Mangan 1992]. While Guha's assertions are largely true, he too, like most historians of Indian cricket, [Docker 1976; Cashman 1979; Rodrigues 1997] has often assumed in conformity with the ideals of play that cricket, a 'gentlemanly' sport, could only serve to remedy social ills. Existing works on Indian cricket has portrayed the game in chaste terms, as being a social unifier cutting across class boundaries, a civilising agent and a cultural bond striving to overcome communal divisions.[4] Anything 'national', it is assumed in the Indian context, should be free of the vices of communalism.[5] The communal organisation of the game in Bombay, it followed, was an obstacle in the path of an emerging secular nation. This assumption has given birth to the view that the Pentangular was abolished because of its communal organisation, which went against the ideals of a secular Indian nation.[6]

I would, however, argue that much more than communal antagonism, it were the diverse forces shaping the face of Bombay society of the 1930s and 40s that influenced the course of the game's evolution, aspects of analysis neglected in existing historiography. It is recorded that in 1924, when the Muslims won the Pentangular tournament, the Hindus joined them in their victory celebrations [Guha 1998: 186-187; 2002]. This, it needs to be stated, was despite the strained relations between the two communities after the failure of the joint non-cooperation/Khilafat agitation. Muslim representation in the Indian National Congress had reached dismal proportions after Gandhi called off the non-cooperation agitation in 1922,[7] with severe communal discord culminating in riots and arson. In an ambience of growing communal contrariety in the country, Mohammed Ali Jinnah[8] had praised the brotherly feeling that was manifested between the two communities on the sporting field of the Pentangular (then the Quadrangular) in 1924. These facts make it clear that a history of the anti-Pentangular movement cannot be written simply in terms of the overarching paradigms of Indian historical scholarship on sport, nationalism and communalism. This argument is strengthened further by the following eyewitness account of the 1944 Pentangular by Vasant Raiji. The final of the 1944 tournament was a closely contested match between the Hindus and the Muslims, in which the Muslims won with less than five minutes of the match remaining:

> Unprecedented scenes of jubilation followed. Ibrahim, the hero and architect of the Muslim victory (he had carried his bat for 137) was chaired by the supporters and carried shoulder high all the way to the pavilion. Never before had the Brabourne stadium witnessed a match so thrilling and exciting as this. Communalism was nowhere in evidence and everyone, including the Hindus, cheered the Muslim team at the end of the match. Merchant, the Hindu captain, went to the Muslim dressing room and hugged Mushtaq Ali warmly with the words, 'Well played Muslims, you deserved to win. It would have been a sad day for cricket if you had lost' [Raiji and Menon 2000:93].

In this essay, I, therefore, attempt to retrieve the wider context within which the

dynamics of the game evolved and operated, through a study of the Bombay Pentangular tournament. Much more than clashes between imperialism and nationalism, between communalism and secularism, cricket has to be understood in terms of the practices of everyday life in Indian society. The emergence of salaried middle class professionals with an investment in leisure, newly structured hours of work with increased leisure opportunities for workers and the growth of a commercial culture in colonial India shaped the fortunes of our de facto[9] national sport. Yet, historians attempting to study the history of the game have failed to transcend the overarching nationalist/communal historiographical paradigm. Studies have focused on the role played by cricket, if any, in opposing colonialism, on whether its communal organisation was a hindrance to the realisation of this objective, and on the processes that led to the freeing of leisure from the vices of caste and communal politics. These studies contend that socially enlightened Indians, opposed to the forces of communalism, began protesting against the disruptive potential of Pentangular from the 1930s. The communal organisation of the tournament has also been associated with the deteriorating relations between the Hindus and Muslims during and after the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930-34 [Guha 1998:186-187; 2002]. These concerns of scholars, undoubtedly of considerable value to any study of Indian cricket history, have, however, often led them to ignore other, no less tangible, historical realities. It is my objective to fill this lacuna in existing historiography by going beyond the assumptions and prejudices that have moulded it, and study cricket as part of regular urban existence in colonial India.

The Pentangular tournament was central to Bombay urban life of the 1930s and 40s, as is evident from the extensive coverage it received in contemporary newspapers and journals.[10] Such investment in leisure was, of course, not restricted to cricket, and horse racing, boat racing and basketball also gained popularity in Bombay society of this period. In fact, in view of its popularity, a tax was imposed on the bets placed on horse racing.[11] The sporting clientele came from a wide cross section of society and were not restricted to the middle or working classes:

> In a relatively poor neighbourhood like Nagpada, the sporting facilities offered by clubs like the Mastan YMCA and the Nagpada Neighbourhood house were rare and seized upon. People realised that keeping their children on the basketball courts meant that they would be off the street and less susceptible to the various malevolent temptations on offer [Rao 2001].

Similarly, in Matunga, a relatively prosperous middle class neighbourhood, sporting activity was deemed essential for a healthy existence [Rao 2001].

Like sport, other forms of leisure like the cinema, recent researches indicate,[12] also acquired a mass base in Bombay in the 1920s and 30s.[13] It is in terms of the dynamics of such a society, where leisure was in the process of becoming structured that the anti-Pentangular movement needs to be analysed. An analysis of this movement helps demonstrate the centrality of sport in colonial India's socio-economic and political life, despite a typically Indian antipathy to recognising the truth of the matter and categorising it as mere 'leisure' or an 'entertainment' pursuit. The following sections of this essay, by undertaking an analysis of the significance of sport as a viable 'profession' in colonial India, and its worth as a commercial enterprise, raises fundamental questions regarding the understanding of leisure in the Indian context. This study also intervenes in existing historical debates on communalism by bringing into its ambit, this very important arena of Indian social life. Contrary to the conventional understanding of the impact of communalism, cricket in India, as I see it, had benefited from its communal/sectarian organisation.[14]

II

In Bombay, the first group to have taken to cricket were the Parsees [Guha; Docker; Cashman]. They started playing cricket in the mid-19th century when a British schoolteacher, Boswell, introduced the game to Parsee boys in a local city school [Homji 1986:45]. A commentary on the occasion of the centenary of Indian cricket, in August 1939 attests to this:

> It was on a similar wet evening one hundred years ago, in the month of August 1839, that Mr Boswell, an English School Master led a group of young Parsee boys to the Bombay maidan which was then a small triangular piece of ground open on all sides to the Zephrys of the western seas. This enthusiastic schoolmaster wielded in one hand a crudely fashioned club and in the other held a ball, which he occasionally tossed into the air [Fonseca 1939:494-497].

Resistance from the elders did not discourage Boswell, and he persisted in his attempts to instruct his young pupils.

The first Parsee Cricket Club was the Oriental Cricket Club established in 1848 [Roy 1945:85]. Its closure a couple of years later was followed by the establishment of the Zorastrian Club in 1850, followed by the Mars Club in 1860, the Spartan Club in 1865 and the Young Zorastrian Cricket Club in 1867 [Young Zorastrian Cricket Club (YZCC) 1992:7]. The first four clubs did not survive long and the Young Zorastrian Cricket Club was the lone survivor into the 20th century [Homji 1986:45; YZCC 1992:7]. In 1872, the Elphinstone Cricket Club was founded and initiated the practice of tours all round the country. In the late 1880s several other Parsee cricket clubs were established though only a handful of them, such as, the John Bright Cricket Club, Persian Cricket Club and Naoroz Cricket Club, survived. By 1910, the number of the Parsee clubs had increased considerably leading to the introduction of an inter-Parsee club tournament called the Shapur Spencer Cricket Challenge Cup. The Elphinstone, Baronet, Young Zorastrian, Sassanian, Marine Liberal, John Bright, Naoroz, Esplanade Liberals, Dadar Parsee Colony, Parsee Engineers, Prince Rising Star, Parsee Venus, Lancelot and Parsee Cyclists all took part in this tournament [Raiji 2002].

Following the Parsees, the Hindus started playing cricket, partly in a spirit of competitive communalism, for in Bombay they were long-standing business rivals of the Parsees. The first Hindu cricket club, the Bombay Union, was established in 1866 [Guha 1998; 2002]. Whereas Parsee clubs often derived their nomenclature from localities of the city, Hindu cricketers tended to be grouped on the lines of caste and religion of origin. This is evident from the names of their clubs established in the latter part of the 19th century: the Gowd Saraswat Cricket Club, Kshatriya Cricket Club, Gujarati Cricket Club, Maratha Cricket Club and Telegu Young Cricketers [Guha 1998; 2002]. In course of time the Hindus too, in the manner of the Parsees, started their own cricket tournament, the Purshottam Hindu Cricket Challenge Shield tournament, in 1912 with the declared intention of fostering Hindu cricket talent in the region. Initially it was played during the monsoons on a league basis.

Later it was thrown open to members of all communities.[15]

The Muslims came to cricket late. It was in the 1880s that they first established cricket clubs of their own.[16] These were later amalgamated to form the Islam Gymkhana in 1892. Muslim cricket was pioneered by M B Lukmani and B A Lukmani together with the Tyabjees, men of standing in the Muslim community [Dossa 1990]. The retarded initiation of the Muslims into the sport is attested to by the following description by J M Framjee Patel:

> The proselytising tendency of the game has not yet done much in bringing votaries to its shrine from the Mohammedan ranks though leading men like H'ble Justice Badruddin Tyabjee and the h'ble Mr. Ibrahim Rahimtulla are doing their best to make physical fitness popular among their people [Patel 1905].

During his tenure as governor of Bombay between 1890 and 95, Lord Harris used reclaimed land on the sea front of the back bay to allot plots to the cricket clubs of the Hindus, the Muslims and the Parsees. The plots were authorised by the government on September 12, 1892, for a meagre annual rent of 12 rupees each [Dossa 1990]. This simultaneous allocation to the three communities had the dual effect of placing them on equal terms with the European members of the Bombay Gymkhana and preventing unpleasantness between the communities themselves.[17]

From the very beginning, therefore, cricket in Bombay was organised along communal lines: an element that D B Deodhar [1948: 42-43] claims "came into existence only because the burra sahibs in India, in the earlier days, had an undisguised superiority complex in all their dealings with the Indians. The British therefore opened their separate exclusive clubs in the three presidency towns of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, followed closely by the establishment of other such clubs in other cities such as Poona and Bangalore. The Parsees who picked up the game also picked up the separatist tendency of the British along with it. On the one hand, the British did not admit the Parsees to their 'sanctified fortresses'. The Parsees, therefore, had perforce to have separate clubs. But they could have allowed other Indians into those clubs, which, however, they did not. Consequently, the Hindus had to follow the same path. Muslims, last in the field, followed suit."

The communal organisation of sport often resulted in ill feeling among the rival communities, as evident from a description in the *Indian Social Reformer* of 1906:

> The Hindu boys played in *dhotis*, without shoes or boots, bowled under-hand and made all the mistakes of novices. Parsee players, far more advanced by then, ridiculed the Hindus for their dress and style of play ('Hindu Cricket', *Indian Social Reformer* 1906).

This episode, the *Indian Social Reformer* asserted, resulted in the generation of bad blood between the two communities.

Despite such manifestations of the disruptive potential of the communal organisation of the sport, it was only from the 1930s that protests started in earnest against such grouping. Further, the protests were exclusively directed against the Bombay Pentangular and ignored other tournaments organised on communal lines in the city the rest of the province and in other parts of the country. It may be mentioned here that the popularity of the Pentangular and its commercial success had spawned a series of tournaments along similar lines from the second decade of the 20th century [Guha 1998; Guha 2002:163]. The Sind Quadrangular, later renamed the Karachi Pentangular, had started in 1916; a Central Provinces Pentangular had started in the 1920s; a triangular had started in Delhi in 1937; in Lahore also there was a similar communal competition [ibid]. The Sind tournament and the Sind Cricket Association were formed in 1916 to raise funds in aid of war charities. In 1919 the issue of monetary collection came up again, resulting in the initiation of yet another Pentangular.[18] Substantial money was raised from this tournament, a fact evident from the statement that the tournament was taxed to the utmost to cope with the thousands who thronged the matches. The popularity of the tournament is borne out by the fact that in 1927 over 10,000 people attended the matches played [Rubie and Shankar 1930:1].

Some historians have tried to explain the delayed nature of the anti-Pentangular movement by suggesting that it was in the 1920s and 30s that the socially disruptive potential of the communal Pentangular was perceived [Kidambi 1992: 30]. This argument follows from Gyan Pandey's contention that it was only from the 1920s that people began to think in terms of an united Indian nation. Prior to this period as Pandey states:

> The nation of Indians were visualised as a composite body, consisting of several communities, each with its own history and culture and its own special contribution to make to the common nationality. India, and the emerging Indian nation was conceived of as a collection of communities: – Hindu + Muslim + Christian + Parsi + Sikh, and so on [Pandey 1990:210].

Sometime around the 1920s this perception was transformed and India came to be seen as a nation, and not merely a body of motley individuals or communities. This change, viewed by Pandey as fundamental, has been regarded as crucial in influencing contemporary notions of the disruptive potential of communalism in the country.

Empirical data, however, shows that the sporting world was already aware of the harmful effects of communalism by the 1890s. Shapoorji Sorabjee Bengali, India's first cricket historian, had already referred to the potential dangers of communalism in the last decade of the 19th century in the following words: "To expect all political difference to disappear or all available self interest to be foregone on the institution of cricket relations is to live in a fools paradise" [Sorabjee 1897:123].

B R Kagal expresses similar sentiments in his memories of the Pentangular. He argued that the consequences of communally organised club cricket in Bombay in the first two decades of the 20th century were far from satisfactory. The crowd was always guided by divisive communal sentiments and there were cases when the police had to intervene to maintain law and order:

> I have recollections, as a small boy, of having witnessed more than one scene of this kind from the pavilion of one of the leading Gymkhanas. Of course, it must be admitted that the participants in these 'melees' came mostly from the 'mavali' or the 'goonda' class but that did not prevent more respectable classes of people getting occasionally mixed up either by accident or even through indiscreet and misplaced enthusiasm. No wonder parents forcibly kept boys away from matches, which should have proved, in most cases, a source of valuable cricket education.
>
> Looking back nearly 35 years, I distinctly recollect thoughts and reactions, which I would be ashamed to own up publicly at present. Worse still, I remember vividly how on returning home after some of these all absorbing contests, small boys would join groups of elders carrying on heated discussion on even slight incidents which almost always ended in the denunciation of the communal traits and failings of those

teams that opposed the groups favourite or communal team. It was not unusual, in the first decade of the century, to find a couple of lathis stored in the kit bag, along with the gear, as a matter of pure precaution. At least that used to be the explanation invariably advanced in answer to child like and innocent curiosity by he young enthusiastic cricketer proceeding to the "maidan". What was unfortunate, was the mistrust and the sense of insecurity that was evident from these most sincere explanations; and this while proceeding for a friendly sporting encounter, for a game and for recreation [Kagal 1940:24-32].

Kagal goes on to say that the state of things improved somewhat from the beginning of the second decade of the century. The reason, he asserts, was the proliferation of cricket at the college and university levels. The same players who played together for their college or university fought it out for their respective communities in the Pentangular. The existing camaraderie between these players had a steadying influence on the communal encounters. In the absence of malice among the players, communal passions among the audience too came to be tempered. Friends from college or university adhered to the gentlemanly norms of the game, diffusing the spirit of animosity and hatred among the crowd [Kagal 1940:24-32]. Kagal provides an interesting explanation for the unhealthy rivalry that existed between the communities. He argues that there was one very important difference in the respective characters of the European, Parsee and Hindu teams. While the European, and to a large extent the Parsee teams consisted of men from the upper rungs of society, the Hindus, barring a few exceptions, came from the middle and lower sections of society. Though the Hindu rich actively took to cricket patronage in course of time, the boys of the Hindu merchant community never showed any perceptible interest in the game. As a result, the social composition of the Hindu teams remained more plebeian in comparison to the Europeans and the Parsees, generating tensions in the arena of communally organised sport [Kagal 1940: 28-29].

The reasons for the delayed protest against the Pentangular cannot then be sought in a retarded comprehension of the impact of communalism. Rather it has to be analysed with reference to the emergence of Bombay as the leading commercial centre of the country, with a concentration of capital resources. The commercial viability and glamour associated with the Pentangular, missing from the other tournaments played in the country, made it an object of envy to rival sporting bodies. Princely figures like Vizzy who wielded great power in the cricketing circles of the country but who had no place in the Bombay tournament, soon emerged as detractors of the Pentangular. Also significant was the growing commercial viability of the sport that had, by the 1930s, made the Bombay tournament an object of envy to other cricket associations, including the Board of Control for Cricket in India. Finally, the growing viability of cricket as a career option, one that intensified after the launching of the Times of India Shield in 1931, played its part in making the Pentangular the site for a show of defiance on the part of the players towards their erstwhile princely patrons. The above factors taken together contributed to the launching of the crusade against the Pentangular in the 1930s.

Following the establishment of the Board of Control for Cricket in India in 1928 and the establishment of the Ranji Trophy in 1934 under the aegis of the Board, the movement against the Pentangular gathered momentum. Echoing the sentiments of the anti-Pentangular movement the *Bombay Chronicle,* (November 27, 1935) stated: "Communal tournaments were, perhaps, necessary at a certain stage in the history of Indian cricket. Scarcely conducive to the growth of healthy nationalism, it is time they were given a decent burial". (For similar views see *Bombay Chronicle*, November 27, 1935; Sarbadhikary (1945) and the *Statesman,* December 2, 1935). Its sports editor, J C Maitra, consistently wrote in support of the Ranji Trophy and against the continuation of the Pentangular.[19] J M Ganguly, a renowned sports journalist, propounded an identical view in his article, 'Quadrangular Cricket: A Plea for Its Abolition' [Ganguly 1938:188]. While these men were conscientious objectors to communal cricket, others like the maharjkumar of Vizianagram and the maharaja of Patiala, influential members of the Board of Control and the state cricket associations used similar rhetoric to conceal ulterior motives in their crusade against the Pentangular.

III

The movement against the abolition of the Pentangular intensified with Gandhi's pronouncement against the tournament (*Bombay Chronicle,* December 7, 1940). Close scrutiny, however, reveals that the Mahatma's verdict had been selectively publicised by the opposing lobby to suit their ends. The entire text of the Mahatma's plea, has never been referred to in its entirety in existing historiography. On being met by a select delegation of the Hindu Gymkhana at Wardha, the Mahatma had remarked:

> Numerous enquiries have been made as to my opinion on the proposed Pentangular cricket match in Bombay advertised to be played on the 14th. I have just been made aware of the movement to stop the match. I understand this as a mark of grief over the arrests and imprisonment's of the satyagrahis, more especially the recent arrest of leaders (ibid).
>
> He went on to add:
>
> I would discountenance such amusements at a time when the whole of the thinking world should be in mourning over a war that is threatening the stable life of Europe and its civilisation and which bids to overwhelm Asia...And holding this view I naturally welcome the movement for stopping the forthcoming match from the narrow standpoint I have mentioned above (ibid).

It was only after this statement that he went on to condemn the communal nature of the tournament, a denunciation often quoted in existing historiography.[20] Even the headline in the *Bombay Chronicle*, that reported the Mahatma's stand, read: 'No Festival when world in mourning', and it is only as a sub-heading that it was stated 'Communal code in sport condemned'.

Despite the Mahatma's declaration of his disapproval against the competition, there were no signs of declining interest in the Pentangular matches. The very next day after Gandhi had issued his statement, *The Times of India* reported:

> With Bombay's great annual cricket festival only a few days ahead the Pentangular fever is at its height, a height that has rarely been attained before. Large crowds watched all the three trial matches played over the weekend...Although rumours had been set afoot that there would be a serious attempt made by a large procession of students to compel the authorities to abandon the trial more than 500 enthusiasts gathered on Saturday afternoon for the start, and the number was almost doubled the next day.[21]

In a similar vein, when a resolution was tabled at the Hindu Gymkhana calling for a withdrawal from the tournament, it had the support of only 70 members of the Gymkhana. The members in favour of the resolution were less than 10 per cent of the total membership of the Gymkhana, which

stood at 900. The led the sports correspondent of *The Times of India* to declare:

> There is a strong Hindu feeling, not only in the Gymkhana but in the city as well, in favour of the Pentangular being held as already arranged. I shall be extremely surprised if the redoubtable champions are not at the Brabourne stadium on the morn of December 17 to begin their defence of an honour (*The Times of India*, December 6, 1940).

Though this resolution was eventually passed by a small margin of 37 votes (280-243), particularly as a mark of regard for Gandhi's pronouncement against the tournament, it generated serious ill feeling among the members themselves.[22] A prominent member of the Gymkhana, who had supported the resolution, stated later that the managing committee of the Gymkhana had been unwise in deciding in seeking Gandhi's opinion on the subject. He went on to state that once they had done so it was their duty to abide by it without question and not go against it, for that would have been a mark of disrespect towards the Mahatma (*The Times of India*, December 16, 1940).

However, Gandhi's stand was not viewed with favour by many and was criticised in a series of letters to the editor of *The Times of India*:

> The Mahatma's argument against the continuity of the Pentangular cricket tournament in effect that it should be dropped because it is a form of amusement, and that too while a blood bath is going on, makes strange reading. Indeed one is tempted to ask whether it is fair on Mr. Gandhi's part to embarrass and put obstacles in the way of democracies in general, and law and order in this country in particular, while this blood bath is going on, and to incite people to lawlessness and civil disobedience. I appeal to sportsmen and particularly to the Hindu players who are unlikely to be selected for the Pentangular to rise to the occasion by proving that political considerations do not stand in the way of sport.[23]

Gandhi's stand did provoke considerable opposition from most of the small Hindu cricket clubs of Bombay. It was pointed out that many of these clubs, which barely managed to eke out an existence on the profits accruing from the Pentangular, had already invested their meagre capital in securing seats at the Brabourne stadium, the venue for the tournament. In the event of the withdrawal of the Hindus from the competition, interest was expected to wane to such an extent as to make the sale of tickets impossible, and would bring in its wake ruin for these clubs. This, it was argued, would be unfair in view of the wholehearted support accorded by the Hindus and Hindu clubs, in Bombay and in the mofussil, to the Hindu Gymkhana in times of crisis (*The Times of India*, December 14, 1940). These clubs emphasised that the Hindu Gymkhana should not overlook the fact that it was a Hindu representative XI that was expected to participate in the Pentangular – and not a Hindu Gymkhana team. Accordingly, it was regarded inconceivable that any drastic action could be implemented on the decision of the 900 odd members of the Hindu Gymkhana alone. A decision that was expected to affect thousands of Hindus, it was agreed, was expected to take into account their interests and opinion. This body of opinion, expressing surprise at the decision to consult Gandhi, went on to state:

> We respect Mr Gandhi's opinion in politics as being that of a great statesman and patriot, but when he offers it in connection with cricket and the Pentangular, about which he himself pleads ignorance, we feel he has no local standing (*The Times of India*, December 14, 1940).

Expressing dissatisfaction over the actions of the Hindu Gymkhana in a meeting convened by the Bombay Hindu cricket clubs, they adopted a series of resolutions supporting the Pentangular.[24] The tenor of these resolutions show that the primary factor for their support of the Pentangular was its commercial potential.

> This meeting of the Bombay Hindu Cricket Clubs is of the opinion that the Hindus should take part in the ensuing Pentangular tournament, as the non-participation of the Hindus in this years tournament will lead to serious financial loss to the Hindu cricket clubs in particular and the Hindu public in general.
>
> In the event of the P J Hindu Gymkhana deciding not to participate in this years Pentangular, this meeting requests the Bombay Cricket Association to reconsider the minimum charges fixed for the sale of tickets, and further requests the Gymkhana to fix its rates in consultation with the representatives of this Union (*The Times of India*, December 14, 1940).

IV

Within a couple of weeks of Gandhi's pronouncement on the Pentangular, the maharajkumar of Vizianagram, who wielded considerable power in the Board of Control for Cricket declared, "Mahatma Gandhi has expressed unequivocally on communal cricket. He gave it as his considered opinion that communalism carried into the domain of sport is no happy augury for human growth. It is high time that we gave Pentangular cricket the burial it always deserved" (*Bombay Chronicle*, December 19, 1940). He was supported by the jam of Nawanagar and the maharaja of Patiala, who went on to assert that no Nawanagar or Patiala player would be available for any match conducted on communal lines. Cricketers employed by these princes, it was expected, would not have the audacity to defy their orders.

Suspicions regarding the motives of the patrician lobby acquire potency in the light of the fact that only the commercially successful Bombay Pentangular had been singled out to bear the brunt of their wrath, when similar 'communal' tournaments continued to be played in Sind, the Central Provinces, Nagpur and Berar (*Bombay Chronicle*, October 29, 1946). Significantly, it was around this time that the Congress government in Bombay converted swimming baths in the city into communal ones, with separate bathing times for Hindus, Muslims and Parsees. Abdullah Brelvi referred to this fact in a public address. Curiously enough while he spoke of banning the Pentangular, his own paper, the *Bombay Chronicle* (December 1, 1941) made no effort to boycott it. The absence of protest against this action of the Congress government makes it evident that the motives of the protesters, though couched in the politically correct idiom of secularism, were rooted in other considerations.[25]

V

The opposition against the Pentangular reached a climax when the United Provinces Cricket Association passed the following resolution in 1942:

> It is felt on all hands that the time has come when concerted action should be taken to rid the country of the canker of communal cricket as it tends to retard unity and good fellowship in the country. Is it not deplorable for Hindus to play against their Muslim brethren and vice versa? The cream of Indian cricketers participate in the Pentangular and these players belong to the various provinces which are affiliated to the Board of Control as the Governing body. The Board, as constituted with these affiliating units, should come to a decision by which a player who participates in communal cricket shall not, for the rest of his cricketing career, be eligible to play for his own province or his country in any official match that may be staged or any tournament that is run under the auspices of the Provincial Association concerned or the Board.[26]

This resolution marked the beginning of a concerted campaign against the Pentangular, culminating with the government threatening to intervene if the Pentangular committee continued with the tournament. The Board, which had favourable relations with the government, ensured that its protests against the Pentangular had official sanction, and this was significant in the eventual closure of the competition in 1946. Such protests however, had very little impact on the popularity of the Pentangular tournament. *The Times of India* report affirms to this fact:

> There appears to be no doubt as to the popularity of this seasons cricket festival. Youthful picketers resumed their efforts to dissuade enthusiasts from entering the Brabourne stadium, but they were good humouredly ignored and an even bigger crowd than on the previous morning greeted the rival teams on the commencement of play, a crowd steadily increasing until it was somewhat in the vicinity of the 20,000 mark during the afternoon (*The Times of India,* November 23, 1943).

Drawing on this popularity, Sir Homi Mody presiding over the tenth annual general meeting of the Cricket Club of India in 1944, strongly criticised the opposing lobby, asserting:

> We have a set of critics in Bombay who have no eyes or ears for the many communal institutions which flourish in our midst and the many communal fixtures that are staged throughout the country. The gaze of these people is fixed upon the Pentangular and they return again and again to attack it. The sporting public of Bombay has given a most convincing and resounding answer to their charge that the Pentangular breeds communalism and radical ill feeling. Never in the whole history of cricket in this country have such enormous and enthusiastic crowds been seen (*Bombay Chronicle*, December 2, 1944).

Unable to contend with the growing popularity of the Pentangular, the Board was forced to call an extraordinary general meeting in January 1942 to obtain the support of cricket associations country-wide for banning the Pentangular. At the general meeting the following resolution was tabled:

> The Board considers that time has come when concerted action should be taken to rid the country of the canker of communal cricket as it tends to retard unity of good fellowship in the country, and as the first step in that direction it views with strong disfavour any tournament or match being played on communal lines and calls upon its affiliated associations to cooperate in this respect and take all necessary steps to stop such matches and tournaments.[27]

This resolution understandably provoked serious opposition from the representative of the Bombay Cricket Association. H N Contractor, representing Bombay, retorted that the Bombay Pentangular organised by the communal Gymkhanas under the aegis of the Bombay Cricket Association was an autonomous tournament and the Board had no power to interfere with its internal management. He asserted that the guiding principles of the Board precluded it from tampering with the conduct of any tournament run independently, especially, one, which had been in existence since long before the Board had been formed. He pointed out that the main tenet of the Board's resolution was political, being directed exclusively against the commercially successful Bombay Pentangular.[28]

Following the above response, P Gupta of Bengal, representing the interests of the Board, moved the following amendment:

> The Board of Control for Cricket in India, on a matter of principle and in the larger interests of the country deplores any cricket festival or tournament and all matches run on lines, which may, or are likely to, lead to unhealthy communal rivalry. The Board resolves to appoint a subcommittee to formulate schemes for an alternate tournament for its consideration, and adoption if necessary.[29]

At this Contractor again expressed doubt as to whether the Board had the authority to interfere with the activities of a provincial association, in whatever capacity that may be. He went on to state that if the Board forcibly enforced the resolution, it would lead to a parting of ways between the Board and the Bombay Cricket Association. This assertion clearly demonstrates the confidence of the Bombay Cricket Association, which was in no way dependent on the Board for its well-being. Contradicting the main tenet of the resolution that communal cricket generated communal antagonism, Contractor narrated his experience of the 1936 Quadrangular. This tournament was played at a time when Bombay was experiencing bitter communal riots. Despite such strife in the city the Pentangular (then Quadrangular) did not cause a single unpleasant incident. On the contrary, the tournament had helped to cement amity between the members of the two communities and had "ameliorated the estranged feelings by smoothing the hot atmosphere and had actually ended the serious riots."[30] A A Jasdenvala and H D Kanga also complained of the attitude of some of the princes towards the Bombay Pentangular. These princes had banned players of their states, or those employed under them, from participating in the Pentangular. Kanga eventually declared that Bombay would not tolerate such behaviour.[31]

In the face opposition, Subbaraon, the president of the Board, announced his decision to resign if the resolution was not passed. He also justified the actions of the princes, who, he argued had the nation's interests in mind when they had banned players from taking part in the communal Pentangular.[32]

A rift between the Board and the Bombay Cricket Association looming large, Pankaj Gupta of the Bengal Gymkhana appealed to the Bombay Cricket Association not to oppose the Board. The Board's decision, whether good or bad, was to be obeyed by all regional associations in the country.[33] Despite his plea, the representatives of the Bombay Cricket Association were relentless, and emphatic that the Board was doing a grave wrong. Failing to impose their decision on the Bombay Cricket Association, the Board finally decided to withdraw the resolution and appoint a select committee to deliberate on the question of communal cricket.[34]

After much deliberation on the issue, the committee asserted in the next meeting of the Board on March 15, 1942 that the controlling body was empowered to take any step deemed necessary to discontinue the holding of any tournament by any member association within its jurisdiction. It asked the member associations responsible for the management of communal tournaments to put an immediate stop to them, failing which the Board would be forced to intervene. At the same time, however, fearing that the Bombay Cricket Association might decide to break away from the control of the Board, the subcommittee was forced to make concessions, contradicting its own stand in the process:

> The structure of Bombay and Sind cricket being on communal lines, this subcommittee further considers that relaxation of the principle set forth above may be made in case of Bombay, Sind or any other association in order to follow the principle that there should be no interference normally in the internal administration of any member association, provided the tournament concerned is confined to players in the area of the association concerned on

the lines of the rules of the Sind Pentangular.[35]

Despite such concessions, Contractor continued to express dissent, arguing that the more the Board tried to legislate on matters beyond its jurisdiction and interfere in the internal affairs of a provincial body, the more difficult it would become for the Board to retain its position. The Bombay Cricket Association, he asserted, had never intervened in the affairs of the communal Gymkhanas that controlled the running of the Pentangular. Finally, he declared:

> It is ridiculous to enunciate the principle that communal cricket is likely to lead to unhealthy communal rivalry, and in the same breath to allow Bombay, Sind or other associations to run communal tournaments, provided the players participating therein are local players. The profound fears of the committee come into play when players are imported. Conveniently forgetting the principle on which it lays so much importance, the committee establishes an 'exception' to its principle and makes a laughing stock of itself. Is this playing 'cricket' with Bombay?[36]

Representing Sind, Sohrab Mehta echoed similar sentiments arguing that if the Board had no objection to communal cricket being played by players of a certain area, there was no reason why the Bombay Pentangular tournament should be subjected to criticism.[37]

The conflict between the Board and the BCA did not abate, eventually resulting in the withdrawal of Bombay from the National Championships in November 1942. Bombay's refusal to participate provoked a hostile reaction in most quarters of the country because most of the other associations, less favourably endowed than Bombay, had consented to participate in the championships. The chief reason behind Bombay's refusal to participate as reported by the *The Times of India* was fear of serious financial loss.[38] This decision had the support of the players, Vijay Merchant, captain of the Bombay team, being the chief advocate behind the move to stay away from the national championships, a decision that may have resulted in his suspension by the Board.

It is possible to read into this decision an attempt by the players to take on the might of the Board. Aggrieved at the Board's attempts to thwart the Pentangular, the players had consciously decided to boycott the national championships organised by the Board. They were largely successful, as the following statement by K S Ranga Rao, the honorary secretary of the Board demonstrates:

> The recommendations of the Bombay Cricket Association to abandon the Ranji Trophy for this year has been circulated to all associations for their views and a majority of them have expressed themselves in favour of holding the all India championships as usual.
>
> It is needless for the Board to stress how important the Ranji Trophy is for the furtherance of cricket in India, in view of its all India character. I am directed by the president of the Board to request such associations as have expressed their inability to participate in this year's championships to reconsider their decision and to extend their full co-operation and support as hitherto in the successful conduct of the championships.[39]

VI

As mentioned at the start of this essay, the anti-Pentangular movement can only be meaningfully analysed if viewed against the wider politico-economic canvas of the state. One cannot read a straightforward narrative of the rise, spread and flowering of anti-communal sentiment in Bombay, which eventually resulted in the stoppage of the Pentangular. Existing historiography seeking to explain the tournaments' closure read very much like a simple narrative of transposition where the intricacies of the history of the game and its immediate context are lost.

The analysis of the anti-Pentangular movement clearly reflects that, behind the projected ideal of secularism, vested politico-economic motives were at work. The rhetoric of secularism was a facade that masked rabid commercial considerations. Empty stands at the Ranji Trophy matches, contrasting starkly with attendances at the Pentangular, made the Board, patrons of the former, envious of the communal Gymkhanas and the Bombay Cricket Association, benefactors of the latter. The BCCI and the princely patrons did their utmost to curb the mass appeal of the Pentangular, characterising it as a barrier in the path of the evolution and burgeoning of the national movement. This effort rooted in financial and social concerns (assertion of patrician control over the players) was a complete failure, as may be gleaned from the disappointment expressed over the lack of public support for the Ranji Trophy, even after the Pentangular was stopped in January 1946.[40]

The anti-Pentangular movement raises fundamental questions about the persisting myth of cricket being a gentleman's game. The very inception of the game in Bombay, as discussed above, was rooted in commercial rivalry between the Parsees and the Hindus, the two leading Indian business communities. The above analysis brings to the fore the central role played by the forces of urbanisation and commerce in the evolution of the game in the subcontinent and challenges some of the fundamental paradigms of existing historiography. Growing professionalism in sport, it may be argued, led to the forging of an unnatural alliance between the princely/nationalist lobby, groups antipathetic to each other in normal circumstances. The princes, firm loyalists of the raj, and severe critics of the nationalist agenda, tried to make use of the Mahatma's appeal in their crusade against the Pentangular. The anti-Pentangular movement, proof enough of the social and commercial potential of cricket in early 20th century India, also challenges the hypothesis that commercialisation of the sport was a phenomenon of the 1970s, although the degree of commercialisation has certainly increased manifold since. In fact, it was in view of its commercial potential that cricket was viewed as a viable career option by men from the middle and working classes, as early as the 1930s.

By focusing on an analysis of the anti-Pentangular movement, I have tried to shift attention from studies centring on the communal Pentangular and its ramifications, to the world of the professional, and of the role played by commerce and an emerging urban public sphere, in the development of Indian cricket. This shift is significant, since emphasis on these forces of urbanisation and commercialisation, forces shaping the day-to-day life of the individual, leads to a reification of the culture-economy antinomy. By focusing on these processes, the effort has been to highlight the impact of capitalism and related social forces on Indian cricket, though, at the same time, divorcing this study from normative expectations derived from European historical experience.

The above analysis of the anti-Pentangular movement provides insights into the processes whereby an emerging urban public sphere influenced trajectories of leisure in the country, issues governing their administration and the relationship between the cricketer and his erstwhile patron.

Established trends in Indian cricket writing have, by and large, neglected the

influence of the forces of capitalism on pre-1971 Indian cricket. The above analysis makes room for the argument that cricket was already being perceived as a potent commercial force from the third decade of the 20th century.

This paper demonstrates the importance of sport in Indian socio-political and economic life, at the same time trying to highlight that the history of the game was always subject to influences from beyond the sporting arena. A history of Indian cricket, only makes sense when we take into account its social and economic context, read in terms of power equations governing the day-to-day administration of public life in the country. EPW

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Notes

1 An Indian term for clubs. In pre-partition India such clubs were community based and cricket was organised along communitarian lines. Cricket in pre partition Bombay was dominated by these Gymkhanas, which were, in most cases, financially stable, on account of the immense popularity of the Bombay Pentangular tournament organised by them.

2 By the 1890s the Parsees of Bombay had acquired considerable cricketing prowess and had no difficulty defeating the Europeans of the city. This led to a proposal that they should henceforth play a combined European team, comprising of the best European talent in the presidency. With encouragement from Lord Harris, governor of Bombay between 1890-95, these matches were started in 1892. In the first year however, the match was washed away because of rain and fire engines had to be brought to dry the ground, which led the match becoming known as the fire engine match.

3 Initially the Pentangular was played in the monsoon months of July and August. It was shifted to the winter months in 1918. The tournament continued to be played in the last months of the year till 1944. In 1945 the tournament could not be held in December and was played in January. It was discontinued thereafter.

4 All hitherto published works on Indian cricket have portrayed the game in these terms; see Guha (1998, 2002), Docker (1976), Cashman, (1979), Bose Mihir, (1990) *A History of Indian Cricket*, Andre Deutsch, London.

5 In the Indian context communalism refers to the animosity between two communities, the Hindus and the Muslims. Communalism has been an important subject of study in Indian history, and was one of the most important factors that brought about the partition of the nation into two independent states, India and Pakistan in 1947.

6 The existing body of opinion on the anti-Pentangular movement is unanimous that this very popular tournament came to be abolished because of its communal organisation, which was perceived as an impediment in the path of an emerging secular nation. Ever since the 1930s, the Pentangular has been a favourite whipping horse in the world of Indian cricket, the target of frenzied rhetoric of contemporaries and staid denunciation of later scholars and commentators. Sifting through the layers of politically correct rhetoric, however, one would come upon astounding evidences that suggest that far from being propelled by the declared honourable intentions, the anti-Pentangular agitation, led by the native aristocracy and the leaders of the Board of Control, was motivated by nothing but crass commercial intentions and a rabid power rivalry. In this age of cricket controversies, we are perhaps best equipped to deal with a reassessment of history of the anti-Pentangular campaign as another sullied chapter in the history of Indian cricket.

7 When Gandhi called off the non-cooperation agitation in 1922, Hindu Muslim amity in the country suffered a serious setback, leading to a drastic fall in the Muslim membership of the Indian National Congress.

8 Leader of the Muslim league, first prime minister of independent Pakistan.

9 While hockey is India's dejure national sport, cricket far outstrips in popularity all other sports played in the country, rightfully earning for itself the epithet of the country's de facto national sport.

10 The anti-Pentangular movement was perhaps one of the most widely reported events in Bombay in the 1930s and 40s. Contemporary newspapers, *The Times of India*, *Bombay Chronicle*, *Bombay Sentinel* often reported the Pentangular matches on their front pages; sports magazines like *Indian Cricket*, *Crickinia*, *The Indian Cricket Annual* carried detailed reports of the raging debate on the Pentangular.

11 In 1929-30 the betting tax yielded rupees 12,31,000. *Proceedings of the Government of Bombay*, Finance Department, 1932, IOLR, P/11909, p 187.

12 This becomes clear from the figures of annual importation of film into India between 1922-23 and 1927-28. There was a steady increase in the quantity of imported film, which rose from 7310,429 feet in 1922-23 to 19,668,648 feet in 1927-28. The number of silent films produced in India in the 1920s also supports this argument. The number rose from 27 in 1920 to 201 in 1931. Report of the Indian Cinematograph Committee, 1927-28; quoted in Bagchi Prabal (1991-92), 'Pattern of Film Business in the Silent Era in India (1896-1931) with Special Reference to Bengal', RTP thesis, submitted as part of the RTP programme at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta.

13 This is evident from the huge amount of money collected as entertainment tax in 1929-30. In this year rupees 7,87,000 was collected under this head. *Proceedings of the Government of Bombay*, Finance Department, (1932), IOLR, P/11909, p 187.

14 At the root of Bombay's hegemonic position in Indian cricket lay the popularity of the Pentangular. Other regions of the country with equally rich cricketing traditions had to gradually give way to Bombay, primarily because of the commercially viable nature of the game in the city. At the root of this viability lay the popularity of the communal Pentangular. The competitive spirit in the Pentangular matches saw the rise of many Indian stars in the 1930s and 40s. Eyewitness accounts reveal that this tournament greatly stimulated interest in the game in pre-partition India. J C Maitra, the sports correspondent of the *Bombay Chronicle*, testifies to the commercially viable nature of the Pentangular. "Having its basis on communalism, it perpetuates and revitalises its unhealthy differences. I freely concede that this aspect of the tournament helps to bring in a lot of money to the committee and other cricket organisations." *Bombay Chronicle*, October 15, (1939).

15 The Purshottam Shield Cricket Tournament is the oldest cricket tournament organised by the Hindu Gymkhana. Besides this tournament the Hindu Gymkhana also organises the Talim Shield Cricket Tournament, the Police Invitation Cricket Tournament, A F S Talyarkhan Tournament and the Young Comrade Shield Cricket Tournament; *P J Hindu Gymkhana Centenary Souvenir 1894-1994*, (Mumbai: 1994).

16 The first Mohammedan cricket club was established in 1883 at Parade Ground, now Cross Maidan in Bombay. See Dossa 1990. Dossa Anandji, 'Peep into Past on Glorious Chapter' in *Islam Gymkhana Centenary Souvenir*, Mumbai.

17 In view of Harris' contribution to the cause of Indian cricket, the Harris Shield Cricket Tournament for schools was started in Bombay in 1893. This is the oldest surviving cricket tournament in India. Oil portraits of Lord Harris are also found in the headquarters of the Hindu, Islam and Parsee Gymkhanas in Bombay.

18 Four competing teams participated in the Sind tournament of 1919, 1920 and 1921 – The Rest, comprising Europeans, Goans and Anglo-Indians, Hindus, Muslims and Parsees. In these years, therefore, it was a Quadrangular. It became a Pentangular in 1922 when the Europeans fielded a separate side of their own, with the Rest making up the fifth side. Rubie C B and B D Shankar (1930), *A History of the Sind Cricket Tournament and Karachi Cricket in General*, Karachi.

19 J C Maitra continued to write against the communal Pentangular in his columns through the 1940s. When the tournament was eventually terminated, he expressed hope that its place would be successfully taken by a zonal Pentangular. Records, however, reveal that the Pentangular could not be matched in popularity by any other tournament in pre-partition India.

20 All major tracts on Indian cricket have referred to this assertion by the Mahatma; Guha (1998) Docker (1976), Cashman (1979).

21 *The Times of India*, December 10, 1940; It is striking to note that the mounting of opposition to the Pentangular was accompanied by a simultaneous rise in the popularity of the tournament. Eyewitness accounts reveal that the stadium was packed to capacity in all the matches of the Pentangular.

22 This is borne out by the description of the meeting published in the *Bombay Chronicle*, December 14, 1940. "After nearly three hours of storm and deafening clamour, the special general meeting of the P J Hindu Gymkhana, called to consider the issue of the Hindus participating in the Pentangular Cricket Tournament, decided by 280 votes to 243 that, the Hindu Gymkhana with whom lies the responsibility of putting in the field the Hindu XI for the Pentangular should not sponsor a side to play in the Pentangular, that starts at the Brabourne stadium today. There was intense excitement within and outside the Gymkhana. On the lawns of the Gymkhana assembled a large crowd largely composed of boys, who kept up shouting their slogan "Hindus must play" and "Stop drinking and gambling and then interfere with sport". These youngsters were difficult to keep in hand as hooliganism and stone throwing were indulged in. The meeting itself was a most disorganised affair. Both camps, for and against, were determined to have their say at one and the same time. Shouting generally drowned every effort to speak out. A number of attempts were made to take the sense of the meeting but every time tactics to outwit a genuine vote frustrated the efforts. It was eventually decided to take count of opinions by making members leave the room one at a time after pronouncing their views on the issue."

23 Ibid, December 12, 1940. Two other letters were published on December 11 and 13. They were forthright in condemning Gandhi's pronouncements against the Pentangular. One of them went so far as to declare that since Gandhi had himself admitted that he had never played cricket, he had no authority to comment on the game.

24 They also tried to put up a Hindu team ignoring the wishes of the Hindu Gymkhana. This effort was described at length in the *Bombay Chronicle* (December 20, 1940). "Today it is revealed that but for the want of the formal consent of the Bombay Pentangular Committee a Hindu team might have participated in this year's Pentangular. Following the meeting on December 13, a late effort was made to raise a Hindu side, a number of representatives of various Hindu clubs got together and decided to flout the authority of the Hindu Gymkhana and challenge the boycott decision. These clubs informally approached the Bombay Pentangular Committee. They were made to understand that a Hindu team if got together and was sufficiently representative, it would be accepted for participation. A new Hindu selection committee was formed, representatives of Bombay city, Maharastra, Baroda and western Indian states being on the committee. This body, it is said, selected all the players previously chosen bar Vijay Merchant and L P Jai. D B Deodhar was mentioned as captain. But it was felt the professor would stand down in favour of major C K Nayadu, as this was the silver jubilee year of the major's cricketing career. A wire was sent to L Amarnath to reach Bombay by last Tuesday morning. All these plans, however, fell through when the Bombay Pentangular committee met to consider the question. They withdrew their formal consent and decided by a majority that this new Hindu team should not be accepted.

25 In a letter addressed to the editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*, (December 12, 1940) Kesavram Reddy wrote, "Sir, Recently there has been a great controversy regarding the holding of the Pentangular, as it is a communal sport. Even Mahatma Gandhi has given his opinion against it. I read in the press report of Sunderdas Morarji, a Congress leader, condemning the Pentangular, as it encourages communalism even in sport. But is he not the chief organiser of the Hindu swimming pools, which is out and out communal? Is it not a pity that our nationalist leaders talk about nationalism but practise communalism even in sports. Could any of our nationalist leaders explain this enigma? Yours etc, Kesavram Reddy.

26 Sarbadhikary, *Indian Cricket Uncovered*, pp 71-72. It was natural for the UP cricket Association to oppose the commercially viable Pentangular given its miserable financial state. On December 16, 1940 a select delegation of the UP Cricket Association had met the governor of UP drawing his attention to the impoverished financial state plaguing the association. The deputation requested the governor to raise the non-recurring grant of 500 rupees to a thousand rupees, making it a recurring grant in the process. The deputationists, the *Bombay Chronicle* states, pointed out that there was a woeful lack of sustained general interest in the game in the province and hoped that with the reorganisation of the association things will improve. A couple of days later Vizzy, the president of the association referred to the financial crisis facing the association, which had made the holding of trial matches difficult. It was not unnatural that he voiced his criticism against the Pentangular the very next day, December 19, 1940. *Bombay Chronicle*, December 16, 18, 19, 1940.

27 Proceedings of the Extra-Ordinary General Meeting of the Board held on January 22, 1942 with Subbaraon as the chair. Mansur Alam, representative of the United Provinces Cricket Association, tabled the resolution. The resolution was originally in two parts, but the second, calling for the imposition of a penalty upon players who participated in communal tournaments, was eventually dropped. Muni Lal (ed), *The Crickinia: 1942-43*, 1943, Lahore, pp 65-66.

28 Contractor declared that the resolution was ultra vires as there was no clause in Rule 2 of the Board's constitution that empowered it to interfere in the internal affairs of a provincial association.

29 Proceedings of the extra-ordinary general meeting of the Board held on January 22, 1942, *The Crickinia: 1942-43*, p 66.

30 RS Ranga Rao, representing the Madras Cricket Association moved a second amendment. Like the first, it wanted the question of the continuance or discontinuance of the Pentangular to be examined by a sub-committee appointed by the Board, in which the Bombay and United Provinces Cricket Associations were adequately represented.

31 Jasdenvala opined that the note circulated by the Maharaja of Vizianagram representing the UP Cricket Association was not in good taste. He challenged the U P Cricket Association to table facts, if they had any, proving that the Pentangular had fostered ill feeling among different communities. He concluded saying that the resolution was detrimental to the development of Indian cricket.

32 Subbaraon went on to say that it was a matter of pleasure to note that the princes had become national minded and were trying to do away with communalism in every branch of life. This, he thought, would help in laying the foundation of a free India.

33 He went on to add that his amendment had not been viewed in the right spirit. He urged the members to study the difference between the original resolution and the amendment before voting.

34 This was a victory for the Bombay Cricket Association. The Board was forced to persuade Mansur Alam and Pankaj Gupta to withdraw their amendments in the wake of tremendous opposition from the members of the Bombay Cricket Association.

35 Proceedings of the Communal Cricket Sub-Committee, *The Crickinia: 1942-43*, pp 76-78.

36 Minutes of dissent against the resolutions passed by the Communal Cricket Sub-Committee, *The Crickinia: 1942-43*, pp 81-83.

37 Ibid, pp 83-84.

38 *The Times Of India*, November 23, 1942. The same report goes on to state that even after a Bombay sportsman had offered to make up for the losses suffered by the Bombay Cricket Association, it refused to participate in the national championships.

39 Ibid, November 16, 1942.

40 *Bombay Chronicle*, November 5, 1946. To remedy the apathy, Maitra suggested, in his columns in the *Bombay Chronicle*, that ministers and leading citizens of Bombay should attend the matches of the zonal tournament to restore confidence among the public.

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