

The Political Conspiracy of the West Indies Federation

by

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From the pages of:
“The Jaws of Politics”

The year 1956 is perhaps one of the most controversial in the history of the young nationalist movement. It was the year when the six-year old nationalist movement suffered a serious split in its leadership. People’s United Party elected members of the Legislative Assembly were Party Leader, Leigh Richardson, Philip Goldson, Herman Jex and George Price, Secretary of the Party. The trade union force that brought the party to power was headed by General Secretary of the BHGWU, Nicholas Anthony Pollard, Sr., who had replaced Clifford Betzen as President in 1950 on a People’s Committee slate at the union’s AGM on April 28th, 1950. Serving a two-year term as President (1954-1956) of the union in 1956 was Herman Jex. Pollard was then serving as General Secretary.

On Thursday night, at about 8:25 p.m. twelve officers of the People’s United Party including Party Leader Leigh Richardson, Assistant Secretary Philip Goldson and GWU President Herman Jex, resigned and walked out of the PUP’s annual Convention after the reading of their prepared declaration condemning dishonesty of Nicholas Pollard and support of him by Hon. George Price, the Party Secretary. The convention was held at the River Side Hall on North Front Street. Before the Chairman, Mr. Lloyd Coffin could continue to read his declaration, a crowd of trade union supporters of Price and Pollard disrupted the reading and a fight erupted. The delegation of twelve had to flee the venue and Richardson pulled out his licensed revolver to disburse the mob that followed him into the street. Due to the immediate intervention of Police Inspector, Ulric Buntin Fuller, the mob broke up. After almost one year of bitter tension within the party, the infamous “Split” had finally taken place. The campaign launched by the PUP, “Price for Politics, Pollard for Union” had defeated Leigh Richardson, the Party Leader and Price would now become the new Leader of the PUP. The Political Conspiracy had failed for Richardson, Goldson and Jex and Pollard’s vicious campaign brought Price his victory. The bitter struggle between the Honduran Independence Party, headed by Richardson and Goldson would now go ‘neck to neck’ with the PUP.

Dr. Cedric Grant’s “The Making of Modern Belize” mentions that the “Split” resulted over missing trade union funds which Pollard was accused of ‘fraudulently’ removing from Hurricane Janet contributions to the BHGWU. Indeed following that accusation in early 1956 by the union’s treasurer, Mr. Robert Stanmore, Pollard was expelled by the General Council of the Union in July, 1956 at a meeting called by Richardson and Goldson at Liberty Hall; Pollard’s expulsion from the union resulted in his bitter and

slanderous attack on those who orchestrated his expulsion, namely Richardson, Goldson and Jex. His anger and bitterness was an immediate reaction since he had worked very hard for the BHGWU from 1950, organizing workers all over the country. Pollard was considered the strongest force behind the union...not Richardson, Goldson nor Jex. Not satisfied with the reason for the “Split”, I decided to do my own extensive research; I arrived at the conclusion that the incident was deeply set in a political conspiracy that started as early as 1954 and, which did not involve Pollard at that time. I am convinced that the British wooed Richardson, Goldson and Jex to move them away from Price who had associated himself with Guatemala and Central America. The British believed that by disassociating these three PUP leaders from Price and winning their friendship toward a more pro-West Indies self-government, the electorate would support them. But the strongest electorate alliance was the GWU and its leadership strength was Nick Pollard. Pollard would first have to be removed to weaken Price. My research has been as thorough as possible to provide readers of my book, “The Jaws of Politics” with an accurate account of the 1956 split. I now share with you the facts from my research.

The introduction to West Indies Federation came about when the British Government held the first Conference for the *‘Closer Association of the British West Indies Colonies’* in Montego Bay, Jamaica in 1947. The view expressed at the conference was that political development of the islands must also be pursued as an aim in itself; some of the colonies, including Belize, were considered too small to aspire to independence on an island basis. Belize was represented at the conference by Harrison Courtenay and one F. R. Dragten. Three years after that conference, The Daily Clarion of April 15th, 1950 published the following headline story:

“Federation Gains Ground in B.H.” “Best and only Road along which Colony must travel” “ Nothing but good should come from a Federation of the British Territories in the Caribbean; and it was in the best interest of the Colony that British Honduras should join in such a federation”, said The Hon’ble W. Harrison Courtenay, O.B.E., British Honduras Legislator and Caribbean Commissioner, who represented this Colony on the Standing Closer Association Committee. In his speech to a “distinguished gathering at Harvey Hall”, Mr. Courtenay spoke about the need to end Colonialism and for British Honduras to consider three alternatives:

- 1) *Self Determination*
- 2) *Continuance as an independent unit within the British Commonwealth, with the ultimate goal what is commonly known as ‘Dominion Status’*
- 3) ***Federation with the British Territories of the Caribbean.***

W. H. Courtenay was very active in the political affairs of the Colony and was Leader of the National Party from 1951 to 1953 when he stepped down and Herbert Fuller succeeded him as Leader in September, 1953.

Dr. Cedric Grant in his book, "The Making Of Modern Belize" goes at length to discuss the arguments that were made in the early 1950s as to why British Honduras would not benefit from integration into West Indies Federation. **He points out that "Federation was not seen as the way to economic development for the Colony. But those who argued for it claimed that it was the solution to Guatemala's assertions. The anti-federationists were essentially middle-class Creoles who constituted the political elite and who supported the Legislative Council to pass a resolution of allegiance to the British Crown in 1948 and for the Colony to remain in the Commonwealth."** Dr. Grant also points out two disadvantages to West Indies Federation, namely "The anti-federationists also vigorously opposed for reasons of prestige the idea of changing the value of its currency. Being at parity with the US dollar the Belizean dollar was in a unique position in the West Indies and therefore a source of pride." "Federation was also seen as an imperial conspiracy", says Dr. Grant, "...to facilitate the massive migration from the overcrowded West Indian islands which the Evans Commission had recommended."

The publication in 1948 of the Evans Commission Report, which had investigated the possibilities of the settlement in Belize and Guyana of the surplus populations of the British or other West Indian Islands and of displaced Europeans of the Second World War, held out a ray of hope. The Commission fully covered the colony's potential for economic development and recommended several economic projects that were designed to realize the tremendous agricultural possibilities. (Dr. Cedric Grant)

In the early 1950s, Nick Pollard, Sr. was aware of Richardson's and Goldson's closer alliance to the Anglicans and Methodists supporters who favoured Federation. But he was also aware of Price's pro-Guatemala interests. Both Pollard and Price were Catholics and the Central American countries were mostly Catholic while the Caribbean islands were more Anglican and Methodist. In 1954, the PUP won the General Elections. Richardson was still Party Leader and Price, Party Secretary. Herman Jex who was also elected to the Legislative Assembly was also the President of the British Honduras General Workers Union while Pollard continued as General Secretary. The widening of the gap in the PUP was more apparent but at the same time, Richardson and Goldson still saw themselves as a strong force in the BHGWU; as Party Leader, Richardson remained very influential. Pollard, the General Secretary of the Union was undoubtedly the strongest force – not only in Belize City but countrywide, especially in Stann Creek and Gallon Jug.

Dr Cedric Grant probes deep into the hostilities that were developing in 1954. He says and I quote: "*The pressure which the colonial government was exerting was having its effect. By stifling the Belize Billboard it was separating Goldson and Richardson from Price. The two former leaders evidently saw no reason to jeopardize their future merely to advance the aims of the party and more specifically to provide Price with a radical platform while he remained untouchable by the Law. But their retreat to a more moderate position had less popular appeal than Price's unabated extremism.*"

*“The distortion within the party hierarchy was further compounded when in June, 1954, Richardson, Goldson, Price and Jex were appointed to the Executive Council which also included the Governor, the Colonial Secretary, the Financial Secretary, the Attorney General and two nominated members from the Legislative Assembly, J.W. MacMillan and Salvador Espot who had also been members of the old Executive Council. Within months of their appointment, Richardson, Goldson and Jex accompanied the Governor and Espot to London to negotiate financial assistance and more political responsibility for the elected members of the Executive Council. **The Interaction between the PUP delegates and their hosts in London produced an identity of interests that went beyond the PUP’s pledge to co-operate with the administration.**”* Writes Dr. Grant:

*“The colonial government received \$5 million in aid which Richardson saw as ‘a bond’ (author’s italics) between Belize and Britain and of which most was to be spent on creating ‘**a proper climate for the attraction of foreign investment**’ and preparing for self-government. Goldson was no less effusive than Richardson in his account of the negotiations. He commented at length on the British government’s decision to introduce the Membership System which was largely a matter of transferring executive functions in an ‘orderly’ way and ensuring continuity in colonial administration. Former colonial officials with whom he dined were no longer the devil incarnate. He described one of them as ‘an outstanding fighter for the rights of colonial people and...one representative, Jex, was euphoric about the visit. Before his rise to prominence in trade unionism and politics he was an hourly paid employee in the BEC sawmill. Recognizing that he was the President of the GWU, the British government arranged for him to be a guest of the Directors of the BEC which included a former Governor of Belize, Sir John Hunter. **As far as Jex was concerned, while the political battle with the British government may not have been won, the industrial strife with the BEC was virtually over.** The government and the company, he reported were ‘to start off on a new basis’. Altogether, Richardson, Goldson and Jex had begun to behave as if the party were in power when it was not even in office. Furthermore they had not been entrusted with responsibility for individual departments. This was not done until the Membership System was introduced on 1 January, 1955 which they hailed as a significant constitutional advance. Given their unqualified co-operation with the colonial administration it was not surprising that Richardson was appointed the Member for Natural Resources, Goldson became the Member for Social Services, and Jex undertook to be the Member for Public Utilities.”*

Dr. Grant also pointed out the following: “The relationship between these three PUP Leaders and the colonial administration was in marked contrast to that between Price and the latter. In the first place Price declined membership of the Executive Council delegation to London in October, 1954 on the grounds that one of the three principal PUP Leaders should remain in Belize. But no sooner had the delegation left for London than he accompanied his employer, Turton to the USA only to return about three weeks after the delegation. Claiming that his services in Turton’s business could not be spared, he kept his peripheral role intact by electing to be the junior and part-time Associate Member of National Resources in 1955.”

Interestingly, while political differences were escalating between Price and the three elected members, the GWU continued to gain strength and increase its membership under General Secretary, Nicholas Pollard. Was Pollard targeted by the British because of his power within the Union and the fact that he was born on Mexican territory? In my opinion, the incident of mis-appropriation of trade union funds by Pollard was a cold and calculated strategy that Richardson attempted to use to get Pollard out of the Union and take back full control countrywide thus weakening Price. Price was never directly involved with the trade unions.

Richardson's and Goldson's pro-British efforts inside the PUP were certainly a huge turn-around in comparison to their hostile behaviour toward the British in 1950, 51, 52 and 53. But it is evident that they never forgot their involvement with Price in the Guatemalan activities. The Reginald Sharpe Inquiry of 1954 prior to the 1954 General Elections in which John Smith testified against Price brought accusations against Goldson and Richardson. The Sharpe Inquiry alleged that Goldson had an interview in Guatemala City with the President of Guatemala and a discussion with the Guatemalan Foreign Minister on the subject of obtaining from Guatemala a supply of news print for the Belize Billboard. It was also alleged that Richardson was a party to the newspaper transaction and also assisted as an intermediary between Price and the Guatemalan authorities during his visit in 1953. Whether the allegations were true or not, Richardson's and Goldson's participation in trips to Guatemala left no doubt in their minds that Price was involved with Guatemala.

Following Pollard's expulsion in July, 1956 from the GWU at Liberty Hall on Barrack Road, Pollard launched a slanderous attack on Richardson, Goldson and Jex. In return these three used the Belize Billboard to slander Pollard about his dishonesty with union monies. (Reference, the Belize Billboard's front page story of August 12th, "Private Story") This front page story was very dirty. However, was Richardson satisfied with Pollard's expulsion? According to Dr. Cedric Grant, Richardson position was this: *"The immediate occasion for the split was Pollard's suspension from the secretaryship of the GWU in July, 1956, for alleged peculation. Here it should be observed that because of the close relationship between the party and the union a dissension in one was bound to have a similar effect in the other. **Goldson and Richardson immediately supported the expulsion of Pollard who was assured of Price's support for at least two reasons. In the first place Pollard was first and foremost a trade unionist and unalterably opposed to federation because of his belief that it would result in an influx of West Indians who would deprive Belizeans of their jobs. He had therefore stood behind Price in the party's latest debate on federation and was receiving reciprocal support from Price in his dispute with the union. But in condoning Pollard's action Price was looking ahead to the general elections in early 1957. Pollard was an electoral asset in several respects. He was a dynamic and effective speaker and more known than any other activist in the outdistricts. Furthermore, he retained the support of the workers in two principal areas, Belize City and Stann Creek, which became the nucleus of the Christian***

Democratic Union (CDU) which he formed after his expulsion from the GWU in July, 1956.

Did Pollard have strong reasons to accuse Richardson and Goldson of West Indies Federation? *Dr. Grant writes: “ Richardson, in particular, acquired a new perspective of the country’s problems from participating in regional economic and Standing Federation Conferences in the West Indies and Britain. He was convinced, for example, that the country was benefiting from its membership of the West Indies Regional Economic Committee which had been set up in 1951 by a resolution of the 1947 Montego Bay Federation Conference, because , as he put it, ‘it was felt to be some ordered way of conducting the economic life of the region’. But by merely conceding that there were merits in the economic ties with the West Indies, Richardson re-opened the federation debate which had subsided when the Legislative Council had agreed to postpone a decision on the issue indefinitely in 1952 and died when the PUP won the 1954 election.*

By August, 1956, Richardson and Goldson had taken full control of the GWU; they were already owners of the Belize Billboard. In retaliation, Pollard with Price’s support formed the CDU and began the dirty process of removing the workers from the GWU. This union fight got so nasty that the Belize Billboard headline story of August 30th, 1956 read: ‘Temporary “Cease Fire” Signed in Union Issue’. *The Billboard’s story reported, “The truce, which was engineered by Mr. Harry Polak, who was commissioned by the AFL-CIO and the ORIT to gather the facts on the situation, stipulates that each side will refrain from holding public meetings, from making any sort of attack, directly or indirectly, or from making any sort of statement whatsoever.” The Billboard also reported that the truce was signed by Leopold Grinage and George Frazer for the GWU and A.E. Cattouse and N.A. Pollard, for their organization.* It is noticeable that the
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Billboard did not give recognition to the CDU. However the truce would not deter Pollard and Price to remove Richardson, Goldson and Jex. The Belize Billboard of Thursday, August 30th reported that on Monday, August 27th, a group of marchers went to the Governor’s house on Regent Street and petitioned Governor Thornley to use his constitutional powers to dismiss the three Members of the PUP from public office. The petition protested against the entry of British Honduras into West Indian Federation. Goldson’s response was, ***“I have no objection to any protest against federation. But it is not true to say that Mr. Richardson or any of us are seeking to federate this country against the peoples’ wishes. It has been stated time and time again that this country cannot be federated unless the people wish it and clearly express their desire for it.”***

The dispute had worsened by August, so much so, that on Saturday, August 11th, as reported in the Belize Billboard of Sunday, August 12th, someone set fire to Mr. Richardson’s home at 2:40 a.m putting his family life in serious danger.

On Tuesday, September 11th, 1956, Pollard was found guilty of fraudulently converting union funds in the sum of \$67.09 out of a US cheque in the sum of \$100.00. Pollard had deposited the sum of \$74.66 and kept \$67.09. Pollard was sentenced to a fine of \$50.00 or in default 3 months in prison. The story behind this incident is very sad in my view and it is one that my Father never wished to speak about. However, it disturbs me profusely that this picayune incident was the orchestrated plot of Richardson, Goldson and Jex along with the British to take control of the PUP and the Union.

The Final Blow

On Thursday, September 27th, 1956, The Leader of the People's United Party along with Philip Goldson, Herman Jex - all elected Members of the Legislative Assembly along with the Chairman of the Party, William Lloyd Coffin, Robert Stansmore, treasurer of the GWU, Albert Arzu, Elfreda Reyes, Arthur Waite, Magnus Vernon, Jose Chin, Jaime Staine and Leopold Grinage issued a statement called, 'Declaration of PUP Leaders'. An attempt by Party Chairman, Lloyd Coffin to read that statement at the PUP Convention at Riverside Hall the evening of September 27th failed. The Split had finally occurred. But the content of this declaration reveals conspiracy on the side of Richardson and on the side of Price with Pollard being the fall guy. It is very clear that although there was sufficient evidence to substantiate both Richardson's and Goldson's support for West Indies Federation, it remains clear that mischief was intended and, that the British were involved in that mischief. Why? Because both parties knew of Price's association with Guatemala and so did Pollard. In their declaration, Richardson and Goldson wrote the following accusations against Price:

“As part of his secret campaign to undermine and destroy his colleagues in the Party and in the Government, George Price has

- 1) revealed confidential Government information in a twisted manner to Pollard for use in his slander campaign against the PUP Leaders in the Government,

Richardson goes on to give two more reasons why Price should be removed from the Party. But more importantly, Richardson and Goldson go on to state that *“this campaign, if not checked, will tend to damage the country's prospects for getting development capital from abroad and injure vital trade prospects and tend also to encourage a neighbouring republic to press its claim for our country.”*

In three further claims, Richardson and Goldson who had both been accused of being involved with Price with Guatemala (Sharpe Inquiry of 1954) make a serious accusation against Price. In number 3 of the three claims, they state:

- 2) *Now wish to publicly disassociate ourselves completely from George Price and his secret activities. Obviously they had failed to stop Price and lost their opportunity because of \$67.09.*

In November, 1957, one year later, Price was sent home by the British after attending a luncheon given by the Guatemalan Foreign Minister, Jorge Garcia Granados where it was alleged that Price was offered to sever its connection with the British Crown and Guatemala would assume financial responsibility for the colony. Price was known to have had contact with ODECA, the Organization of the Central American States which was formed in 1952. *Writes Dr. Grant, "In 1955, ODECA pronounced the reincorporation of Belize to be a Central American question and pledged to 'incorporate Belize in the movement of economic integration of Central America at a conference in Argentina just before the elections in British Honduras in 1957. Although the declaration was not new, it intensified suspicion among the opposition parties that Price was secretly negotiating a settlement through the Central American organization rather than in conjunction with the British Government."*

In 1958, the British enlisted Pollard as they did Richardson, Goldson and Jex. They gave him his British Nationality in March 1958 and he took his Oath of Allegiance on December 22nd, 1958. However, in March 1958, Price expelled Pollard from the PUP and from the CDU. Pollard immediately abandon his trade union activity and formed a political party called the Christian Democratic Party and contested the 1961 General Elections which Price won with a landslide victory.

On Tuesday, May 9th, 1961, not long after the March 1961 General Elections, the Belize Times which was formed by Pollard to rival the Billboard in September, 1956, published this headline story, " Belize: Associate Member of ECLA, Price takes seat with other Members.

Says the Belize Times, "Belize is now an Associate Member of the Economic Commission of Latin America. This was concluded on Saturday last after a lengthy debate of the Commission at Santiago de Chile. The voting was 17 in favour of Belize's admission, one against – Argentina - , with two abstentions – Haiti and Uruguay - . Four countries, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cuba and Paraguay, were absent from the vote.....Dr. Cheddi Jagan of British Guiana seconded the application of Belize, and Guatemala co-sponsored it. The chief delegate of Guatemala did not oppose the application but doubted that the United Kingdom sponsored it."

In 1967, the Draft Treaty between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Republic of Guatemala relating to the resolution of the dispute over British Honduras (Belize) (or the Webster Proposals) carried in Article 13, (4) the following:

(4) After the accession of Belize to this Treaty, the Government shall support the entry of Belize into the Central American community and into the Inter-American

community and in particular into the Organization of Central American States, the Organization of American States, and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Dr. Cedric Grant began his dissertation through the University of Edinburgh in 1969 and the first publication of *“The Making of Modern Belize”* was in 1976. Therefore, eight years after the ECLA Conference in Santiago de Chile, Dr. Grant wrote: “ In 1961 the Economic Commission of Latin America (ECLA) decided to undertake a study of the possibilities of economic co-operation between Belize and Central America with a view to Belize joining what was at that time the Central American Economic Cooperation Committee. Seven years later (or in 1968 or, a year after the Webster Proposals were turned down by Belize), ECLA reported that the historical patterns of Belize’s economic development and in particular its participation in the system of Commonwealth preferences did not favour its membership in the CACM. This left Belize virtually no choice other than to move more in the direction of the Commonwealth Caribbean and join what was at that time the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA), which it did in May, 1971. **The ECLA study was related to the unsuccessful attempt to find a diplomatic solution to the Guatemalan claim.**”

Could the 1956 conspiracy have been avoided among Catholic men of the Jesuits’ Christian Social Action Movement and then Catholic converts, Richardson and Goldson who had worked for the moderator of the Jesuits’ CSAM, Ignacio Valdez? Valdez, who, was threatened by the British with expulsion from Belize in 1948, was the owner of the

Belize Billboard which he then sold to Richardson and Goldson? Having read the Papal Encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* on Social Justice, I cannot understand why these intelligent men that were motivated into Nationalism because of Price and Turton were not wise enough to settle their differences. Could it be that Price’s ambitious position toward Guatemala and Central America was not transparent to Richardson and Goldson or, that the latter feared reprisals by the British? And why did Pollard, who knew of Price’s activities, support Price after the 1956 Split? Was the union more important to him at that time than the Central American issue? Perhaps we will never know the answers to these questions but, historians will continue to probe for answers.

Post Mortem:

Nicholas Anthony Ignatius Pollard, Sr was born in Bacalar, Payo Obispo, now Chetumal. He was never a Mexican in blood but of strong Belizean Ancestry. His father was the son of a Belizean fisherman, Alexander Pollard who frequently visited Trujillo, Honduras and there fathered a son with a Honduran mestizo of surname Castro. Alexander named his son, Juan Castro de Pollard after his father, a French immigrant, John Pollard who

arrived in the colony circa 1825, and, who was later attached to the British Police Force. Juan Castro married Stella Alberta Gill nee Garbutt in Placencia in 1911. Stella's mother was Helen Garbutt of Monkey River and her father was William Gill 11, son of William 1 who it is believed fought at the Battle of St. George's Caye in 1798. Although he was refused the opened scholarship in 1941 after achieving the highest honours in the Cambridge Exams for being a 'Mexican-born', Nicholas Pollard, Sr. was of full Belizean Ancestry and he was done a serious wrong.

Following Pollard's death in January, 2003, Leigh Richardson wrote in the Amandala, recognizing Pollard's contributions to the trade union movement but still mindful of the conviction that had been left with Pollard over the accusation of \$67.09. Richardson called for a post-humus pardon but my family turned it down. Was it his Conscience? But, he was too late. He should have recommended the pardon before Pollard died.

My main source of information has been Doctor Cedric Grant's book, "The Making of Modern Belize". There have been different stories about Price's Maya Ancestry and claims that it directly influenced his aspiration toward ties with Central America rather than with the West Indies. Dr. Grant mentions on page no. 22 of his book the following: *"The outstanding example is Premier Price. Not only does he belong to a prominent colonial but reaches out on his maternal side to the indigenous Maya for his heritage. Price has often stressed the country's Mayan identity as a basis for Nationalism. This predilection was reinforced by his commitment at the outset of the nationalist movement to the development of the economy through links with the wider Latin American groupings rather than with the West Indian Territories. Indeed his desire for a Central American orientation was equally matched by his opposition to political links with the West Indies Federation which the British Government had begun to promote after the Second World War. Yet none of the other prominent leaders within the nationalist movement was a Mestizo or could have claimed affinity with this cultural complex.*

But was it really about a Mayan heritage or was it directly a desire of Price's mentor, Robert Sydney Turton? Here is another comment by Dr. Grant. *"As one of the leading advocates of closer economic relationship with the United States, Price was also probably influenced by his close relationship with his multi-millionaire employer, R.S.Turton. The latter not only had extensive business connections in the United States but was also a large shareholder in two-American-financed companies, the Wrigley Company and I.T. Williams Company, formidable rivals of the BEC in the chicle and mahogany industries respectively. These business connections often took Price to the United States and he may well have conceived from his visits and the general success of his employer the idea of a more prominent role for American private capital in the economy"*

Dr. Grant makes further comments about Turton's influence on Price. *He says: "It is likely that Price's anti-British sentiments were influenced by his association with Turton. Despite his wealth and occasional generosity to public causes, Turton, whose formal education was limited, was not awarded the social patronage of the upper stratum of society. He commanded little respect from the colonial officials and as a Legislative*

Councillor from 1936 to 1948 was a severe critic of the government. Moreover, he had been one of the principal casualties of the devaluation, having been compelled by the administration to transfer his monetary assets from the USA.”

“Other long term political considerations might also have influenced Price’s pro-American campaign. Closer economic association with the USA would have bolstered his claim that the country’s economic and political future lay with the Central American Republics and not the West Indian Territories. In other words his idea of a Central American destiny was more likely to be realized not through closer identity with Britain and the West Indies but through the USA with its increasing interest in Latin America. An attempt to forge a triangular relationship, with the USA at the base, could have been detected in Price’s assertion that the country’s economy and way of life is interdependent with the USA and with Central America.”

How interesting that Harrison Courtney Sr., who visited Robert Sydney Turton’s office on North Front Street on the bank of the Belize River and who along with Price and Fred Westby would chat about business and politics in the Colony, would have this to say at his West Indies Federation presentation on April 15th, 1950. And I quote from The Daily Clarion, “ *As I am not to be numbered among those who may entertain for the Colony ‘the wistful dream of a pampered protectorate of the rich United States’, I reject completely that possibility as an alternative worthy of consideration. Merely to change masters is unthinkable in my humble submission. And it may be of surprising interest to the proposers of that idea to learn that the United States refused the offer of this Colony, which was made to her during the negotiation of the Treaty of Versailles.*”

It is therefore very clear to me that regardless of what the British might have offered to improve the economy of the colony within the West Indies Federation, Turton and Price would never have accepted, not because of Mayan heritage but because of Turton’s anti-British sentiments which influenced Price. Turton’s investments were in the U.S.A. and he was an immediate rival of British BEC. What grieves me in my heart is the fact that my father, a sincere trade unionist was not fully aware of what was going on, nor of the fact that Price’s support following his expulsion from the BHGWU in July, 1956 was not sincere but one of a ‘temporary usage’.

Was Turton truly anti-British? On page no. 82 of his book, Dr. Grant says, “ *Any doubts that the BEC was out-matched were removed when the British Government felt compelled to nominate the company’s manager, C.H.Brown, to the Legislative Council immediately after his defeat in the 1936 elections by R. S. Turton, the multi-millionaire and one of the company’s principal local business rivals. Turton’s victory confirmed the political ascendancy of the local nouveaux riches, and, more important, provided the American concerns with another indefatigable parliamentary supporter. His election was also a personal triumph over the colonial officials since he had been refused a nominated seat in 1932.*”

I am convinced that the nucleus of the People’s Committee of 1950 was not one of Nationalism but one that aspired to find trade with the United States and Central

America. Those recruits who joined the PC out of the Jesuits' camp, the Christian Social Action Movement like Pollard, Smith, Goldson and Richardson were selected to provide the anti-British sentiments in the Colony not realizing that West Indies Federation would never be supported by Turton and Price. Perhaps they did not comprehend the determination of Price to move Belize closer to Guatemala and the Central American Associated States which were financially supported by the United States.

*Presented by Nick Pollard, Jr.
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