

Dr. Cedric Hilburn Grant
Arthur of “The Making of Modern Belize”
1st Publication: 1976 by Cambridge University Press
London, England

Why Dr. Cedric Grant?

When I first set out to write my manuscript, “The Jaws of Politics”, I relied on the many events told to me by my Father, Nicholas Anthony Pollard, Sr., his articles and files, newspapers from the National Archives in Belmopan and Dr. Cedric Grant’s “The Making of Modern Belize”, a book my father treasured. Dr. Grant’s book is very informative and full of historical data that covers the Nationalist Movement, the political struggle and the development of the trade union movement in the 1940’s, 50’s and 60’s.

“The Jaws of Politics” was an idea that came to me about seven years ago. I remember sharing the idea with my father and he was excited and urged me to do it. It is a true story of Nicolas Antonio De La Roca who was born in Mexico to parents of great Belizean Ancestry. In the small English colony, British Honduras, a political movement supported by trade union workers is born following a devaluation of its dollar in 1949. Nick enters this arena only to find him caught in a bitter trade union and political war that forces his family into great hardship and fear. “The Jaws of Politics” is a true history of the 1940’s to the 1960’s. I was born on September 22nd, 1949 and from my young childhood days I lived in the midst of this struggle. This has motivated me to write my history so that I can leave a legacy of a true patriot and at the same time provide more information that is based on my experiences of that era.

In his ‘Acknowledgements’, Dr. Grant mentions those who aided him in his work such as Vernon Leslie, Resident Tutor of the Department of Extra Mural Studies, University of the West Indies, Gilbert Rodwell Hulse, a former Anglican Archdeacon and Sir Harrison Courtenay, a lawyer and former Speaker of the House of Representatives. Although his book was never made available to the Belizean public because of ‘controversial statements he made (said Nick Pollard, Sr.), Dr. Grant stated that the PUP government proved to be an admirably open administration and, that he was granted frequent and informal interviews with members of the political executive, including George Price. I can also recall my father mentioning his discussions with Dr. Grant about the trade union movement. In fact, Dr. Grant encouraged my father to write his book, a task that he undertook many years later leaving behind an unfinished manuscript.

One has to question the fact that there appears to be only two copies of Dr. Grant’s book in Belize, one that is at the University of Belize and the one that my father had which he gave to me, Nick, Jr. However, I may be wrong; if anyone has a copy or knows of someone who has this book in their possession, I would appreciate that knowledge. Dr. Grant’s book is now of great value since he is now deceased. Dr. Grant, a Guyanese,

completed his doctoral dissertation for the University of Edinburgh in late 1969 and published his book, “The Making of Modern Belize” in 1976.

Indeed, we have to ask ourselves the question, “Why hasn’t Dr. Cedric Grant’s book, “The Making of Modern Belize” been available to secondary and tertiary educational institutions in Belize?” Was it because a lot of what he wrote did not sit well with the PUP and George Price? In a press statement by the People’s National Congress Reform Hall of Heroes, they stated: “*As a diplomat, academic and prolific writer in political science and international relations, Dr. Grant had distinguished himself. His analytical but incisive contributions to the intellectual discussions will be sadly missed. There is little doubt therefore that he was fitting and deserving of the Cacique Crown of Honour awarded to him by the government and people of Guyana.*”

In the many hours I have spent reading “The Making of Modern Belize”, I have come across interesting statements or should I say historical opinions by Dr. Grant. Let me share with you two of those. First, Chapter 6, page no. 187, “The Conflict, the climax and resolution”

The climax

The London incident: If the first colonial administration in which the PUP participated ended with a repudiation of Richardson’s and Goldson’s West Indian sympathies, the second began with a renewed suspicion of Price’s Guatemala leanings. To some extent this suspicion had been revived by a renewal of discussions towards a settlement between Britain and Guatemala in March, 1957, the same month as the PUP’s electoral victory. According to Guatemala, the British Government favoured some form of economic integration between Guatemala and Belize. This was to be the first step in the formation of a Central American Federation in which Belize would be an independent republic. If Belize was to be sovereign indeed, then Guatemala was conceding its sacred territorial claim. For its part the British Government was indicating that the integration of Belize into the Central American economy should be the objective of the country’s future development. To this extent it was responding positively to both the unpopularity of the West Indies Federation in Belize and to the proposition that an independent Belize would not be economically viable outside of an economic grouping. The reopening of negotiations between Britain and Guatemala left Price free to pursue his notion of a Central American destiny without having either to side with Britain in repudiating the Guatemalan claim or uphold the Guatemalan viewpoint.

After writing many pages on the history of the Trade Union Movement in Belize, Dr. Cedric Grant was also brave enough to state the following: “*We can deduce from the preceding analysis of union-party leaderships several important consequences for the future development of trade unions in the political process. One is the division within the trade union movement will persist as long as they are aligned to political parties opposed to each other. A second consequence is that irrespective of whether they are sympathetic or opposed to the government, they will not be left to their own devices. A part of their own problem is that as in most post-colonial regimes the government is one of the largest*

employers and has a vested interest in regulating the activities of trade unions. For this reason the union-party relationship is likely to be one-sided with the labour movement's impact upon the political parties being negligible. In this regard the unions share the fate of their counterparts in new nations where the ruling party stifles these organizations and renders them powerless within their embrace."

I now invite you to enjoy my presentation. At the end of the presentation, I will take questions for a period of 10 minutes or allow very short comments. Thereafter, I invite you to view the supporting documents mentioned in my presentation. Any further comments, criticism may be sent to my e-mail address at nickpollard_bze@yahoo.com.

Thursday, September 27th, 2007

Time: 7:00 pm

Venue: Radisson Fort George Hotel

Belize City

Presented by Nick Pollard, Jr.

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