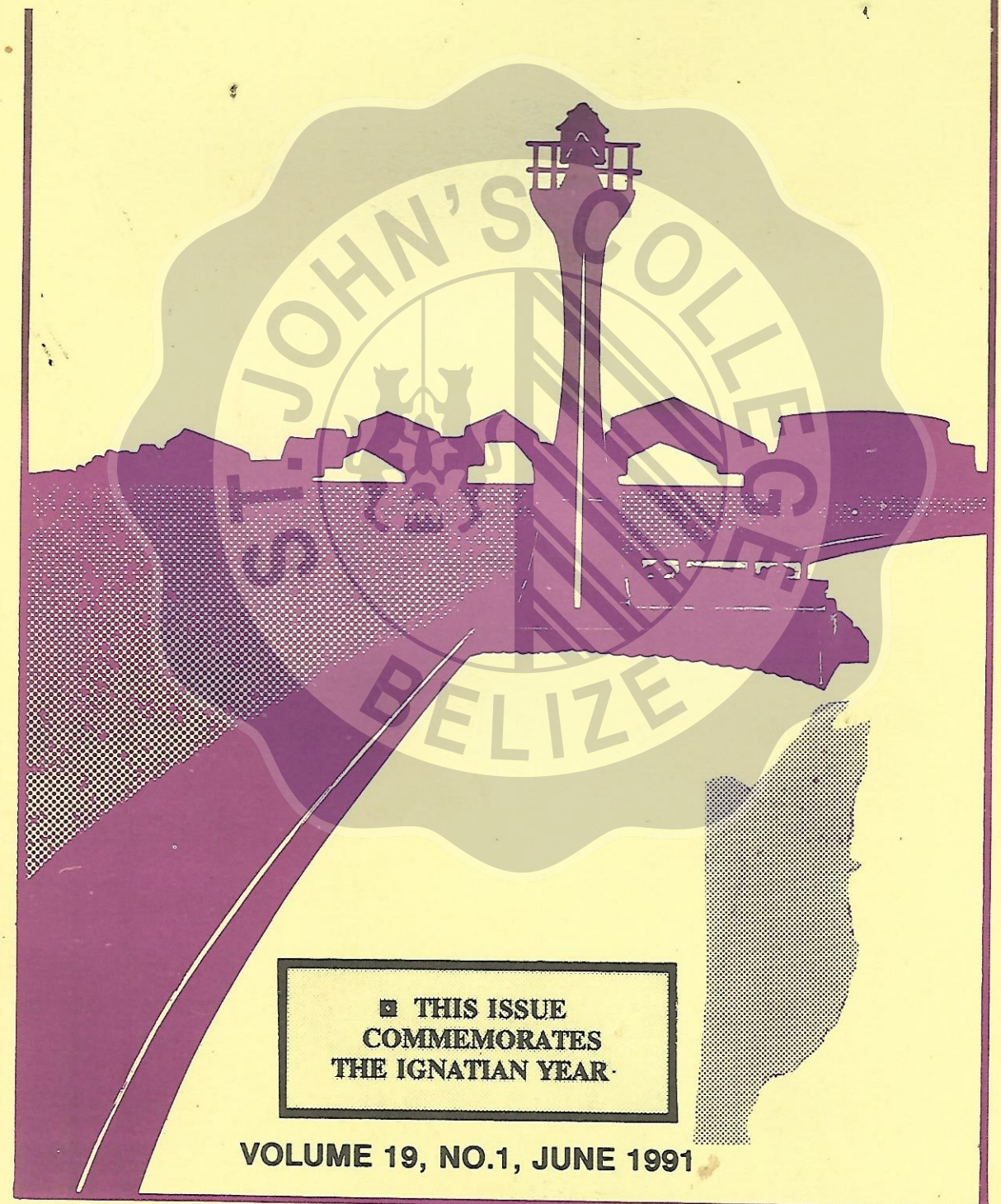
BELIZEAN STUDIES



■ THIS ISSUE COMMEMORATES THE IGNATIAN YEAR·

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Belizean Studies
A Journal of Social Research and Thought

Volume 19, Number 1, June 1991

Dear Reader:

AS the newly appointed editor, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on future directions of the journal. I want to express my appreciation to Lita Hunter-Krohn who edited this journal with distinction over the past five years. Despite some problems of transition as I assume these new responsibilities, I hope that Belizean Studies will continue to make a valuable contribution in the continued quest to understand Belize, both its past and the present.

FOR almost two decades now, Belizean Studies has published a variety of articles on Belize. Together these publications constitute one of the most important collection of studies on Belize. The occasion of the change of editors offers an opportunity to rethink how best Belizean Studies can continue to carry out its goals in the 1990s. After discussion with the Advisory Board, and meetings with a number of individuals, the following directions emerge for future exploration.

THE general consensus is that the journal should focus its attention on contemporary Belizean affairs, and bring to such discussion a Christian perspective, while continuing to publish historical and socio-cultural articles on Belize. In addition, every attempt should be made to increase local subscriptions (they lag far behind foreign subscriptions) of the journal, and to get the publication into the hands of Belizean professionals, especially teachers with a special emphasis on materials suitable for classroom use at the secondary and post-secondary levels. Finally, our hope is to obtain contributions of manuscripts from as many Belizeans as possible. To facilitate this we hope to commission a number of Belizeans to undertake research and write articles for the journal.

THIS issue commemorates the Ignatian Year which James Murphy, S.J. explains in his foreword. The Jesuits through St. John's College has, over years, provided the vision, personnel, and funding that has kept the journal alive. Unquestionably, the Society of Jesus has had a tremendous impact on education in Belize. Fr. Charles Hunter explores one aspect of this influence in the Second Annual Signa L. Yorke Memorial Lecture and shows how the Society has had to come to grips with Belize's multi-culturalism.

IN the midst of increasing national rethinking of our educational priorities, Charles Rutheiser challenges us to consider how American patterns have influenced Belizean schooling. In his commentary, veteran educator, J. Alexander Bennett assures us that this presence has not gone unexamined. Finally, Fr. Hunter reviews Meg Craig's delightful new book, *Characters and Caricatures in Belizean Folklore*. Together they bring us that much closer to grasping the challenges of schooling in Belize and to a greater appreciation of our cultural wealth.

Yours sincerely,

Herman J. Byrd

Herman J. Byrd, Editor

THE SECOND ANNUAL SIGNA L. YORKE MEMORIAL LECTURE

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE IGNATIAN YEAR AND INTRODUCTION OF FR. CHARLES T. HUNTER, S.J.

JAMES S. MURPHY, S.J.
President

ABOUT A YEAR AGO, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, asked that educators involved in the international network of Jesuit schools observe the period September 2, 1990 to July 31, 1991 as an IGNATIAN YEAR, named in honour of the Basque founder of the Jesuit order, St. Ignatius of Loyola. Fr. Kolvenbach asked that the Ignatian Year be a time for commemorative events and renewed commitment to the apostolic efforts of Jesuit schools and other Jesuit sponsored works throughout the world.

THE opening date last September marked the 450th anniversary of the approval of the Jesuits by Pope Paul III. The closing date this summer is the feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola and 1991 is the 500th anniversary of his birth. The Second Annual Signa L. Yorke Memorial Lecture, in honor of the distinguished Belizean educator and former Dean of the Sixth Form, the late Signa L. Yorke, was sponsored by St. John's College Sixth Form in commemoration of this important anniversary in Jesuit education. Its presenter, Fr. Charles Hunter, S.J., is a distinguished graduate of the College and a leading Belizean Jesuit.

I am especially grateful to Father Hunter for his willingness to address the topic of Catholic education's contribution to Belize's multi-cultural makeup during the Ignatian Year. For Catholic education in Belize, at least at the secondary and tertiary levels, has, for better or worse, been heavily influenced by the spirit of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

A 1928 graduate of St. John's College and product of Catholic education from beginning to end, Father Hunter is an altogether qualified candidate to explore the lecture's theme. He studied law in London for two years, 1930 to 1932, but changed his life's orientation in response to the tragedy of the 1931 hurricane. Among those killed at the old Loyola Park campus of S.J.C. were several Jesuits Father Hunter counted as friends, and their deaths made a powerful impact on his life. He joined the Jesuit order because, as he put it, he wanted to "help make up for the losses of the men in the hurricane."

AFTER joining the Jesuits Fr. Hunter remained in the United States for forty-two years, from 1932 to 1974, serving the Jesuit community in three important capacities: lecturer in the Classics to young Jesuits in training for the priesthood and as director of Jesuits in the initial and final stages of their formation. Since his return to Belize in 1974, Father Hunter has served on the faculty of his alma mater, lecturing in Caribbean literature and theology.

A Jesuit educator has written of St. Ignatius' vision of education this way: "It was not love of learning for its own sake that inspired him (St. Ignatius) but an implacable and practical devotion to a purpose which he might served. This is the Ignatian viewpoint in which the finality of education is directly governed by a Christian concept of the finality of life itself and schooling is made to minister to the over-arching aim of love of God and love of humankind for the sake of God."

"IT was not love of learning for its own sake that inspired him but an implacable and practical devotion to a purpose which he might serv." These words could easily be said of our colleague and friend, Father Hunter. He devotes extraordinary energy to the purpose he has served life-long: total commitment to his God lived in service to Good's people through education. Reflection, research, teaching, writing, dialogue with colleagues over many years, and life-long involvement with Catholic

and Jesuit education, preeminently qualify Father Hunter to address the role of Jesuit secondary education in maintaining cultural pluralism in Belize.

FATHER Hunter's paper brilliantly chronicles an important dimension of the growth that has characterized Catholic education in Belize. While it focuses on a single institution, St. John's College, similar change has marked Catholic education throughout the country;indeed, it is characteristic, to a greater or lesser extent, of all the church-state schools across the country. After exploring the growth and expansion of the college from the late 19th century to the present in multi-cultural Belize, Fr. Hunter maintains that one senses a dynamic movement from "mono-cultural myopia to multi-cultural vision." The emergence of this multi-cultural vision has been one of the keys to the success of Catholic education;without doubt, it has created a climate in which, according to Father Hunter, "all of us in Belize may continue to nourish in the whole country a cultural pluralism that thrives together with national unity."

THE challenge posed by the paper is directed to all the men and women involved in this important ministry of the Church nation-wide. The future vitality of this work hinges to a large degree on the capacity of the Church's educational institutions to attract and retain competent, faith-filled educators who are committed to its vision of education: not love of learning for its own sake, but the practical purpose of forming men and women into generous and contributing adult members of society.

THE SECOND ANNUAL SIGNA L. YORKE MEMORIAL LECTURE

CHARLES T. HUNTER, S.J.

From Mono-Cultural Myopia To Multi-Cultural Vision:

The Role of Jesuit Secondary Education In Maintaining Cultural Pluralism in Belize

WHEN SIR ALLAN BURNS, Governor of British Honduras (1934-1939), made his round of visits to the districts, he had this to say about Benque Viejo: "I have heard German nuns trying to teach Maya children out of an English text book which they had to explain in Spanish, and I have wondered how much education the children were really receiving as a result of this!"[1] You can readily understand from this how difficult it would be to tell the story of Catholic primary education in multi-cultural Belize.

When William Stanton, first Jesuit scholastic of St. John's College prefected the study hall of the old school situated just behind the Holy Redeemer Presbytery, he wrote in a letter to his family: "Just imagine me at this moment, 7:30 a.m., seated in our neat, airy little study hall. Look at the faces before me: five pure whites, two chalk-eyed grinning negroes, an untamable wee bit of a Maya Indian, endeavoring vainly to sit still on a civilized chair, two half-blooded Indians from the North, couple of Guatemaltecan spaniards almost as black as negroes but of refined Caucasian features, and the rest curious mixtures of white, black, Indian, and I know not what"(sic).[2] You can readily understand that it would not be easy to tell the whole story of Catholic secondary education in multi-ethnic Belize. I have, therefore, decided to confine the area of this evening's exploration to Jesuit secondary education in multi-racial Belize. I ask your indulgence for restricting the talk to Jesuits in this Ignatian year which celebrates five hundred years since the birth of Ignatius and four hundred and fifty years since the birth of the Society of Jesus. Another circumstance emboldens me in my choice: this is the year of the death of Father General Pedro Arrupe.

He was a man after the heart of Ignatius with a worldwide view that has made him the most outspoken apostle of the subject of this evening's exploration, the need for inculturation in our world and in our church. In fact, his definition of inculturation has become classical in the recently explored field of cultural pluralism in a world Church. Here is that definition: "Inculturation is the incarnation of the Christian life and message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation), but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about a new creation."[3]

Father Arrupe defines the subject of our exploration but we must know something about the cultural cross-currents of the country of Belize itself. First we have the mystic cenote of Amerindian culture, the Maya civilization of Mesoamerica that flowed full tide in Belize. Next we have the strong Afro-European current, the Anglo-Creole, a forestocratic culture that flowed down the rivers around the port of Belize. This we speak of as creolization in Belize. From the north streamed down the Euro-Amerindian tide with the rising of the *Guerra de Las Casas*. This diffuses the Hispano-mestizaje. After that we have slow but steady garifunazisation from the south. Afro-Amerindian Black Caribs displaced by the British, found new homes along the southern coast of Belize. Their cultural influence flowed north and west thanks to Father Tenk's education of Garifuna teachers who became the intellectual, cultural and spiritual leaders in a large number of villages throughout our country.

Sino-Syrians, East Indians, Mennonites and more recently Central American refugees make up the multi-cultural blend that is our country of Belize.

What shall we say of this multi-racial diversity - is it a mix or a blend? A couple of years ago at an Antigua diocesan synod being held at Montserrat, I was one of a group asked to hammer out a report on the theme: The Church, Catholic and Caribbean. At midnight of the last day, we left the chairman with the duty of deciding whether the largely Afro-European make-up of the Antigua diocese was a 'tossed salad' or 'boiled down soup.' As we left the frustrated meeting, I could not help thinking that here in Belize we would have been coming to grips with whether our cultural blend was a 'boil-up' or a 'sere.' At least we would have been aware that each culture would be contributing something to the taste of the whole dish while yet preserving its own distinct flavor.

We certainly would have been dissatisfied with Sir Alan Burns' ethno-religious oversimplification when he says, "In no colony that I have served has religious feeling run so high as in British Honduras, and this I attribute very largely to the fact the denominational adherence followed closely on the lines of racial cleavage. Generally speaking, the Mayas, Caribs, Mexicans and Guatemalans were Roman Catholic, and most of them spoke Spanish while the priests were American Jesuits; the British and the Negro Creoles were Protestant, and spoke English."[4]

The chronological setting is easily defined in geographical terms: first the Select School under the English Jesuits, in the Presbytery (1887-1896); then the Greater St. John's College, just behind the Presbytery under the North American Jesuits (1896-1917); St. John's College, Loyola Park (1917-1931); next St. John's College back to Holy Redeemer area (1931-1952); finally St. John's College at Landivar, where it now stands from 1952 down to the present.

THE SELECT SCHOOL:1887-1896

AN adequate picture of the Select School of the English Jesuits is outlined in the pages of *The Angelus*,[5] a Catholic monthly periodical of those years (1887-1896), which carried articles in both English and Spanish. The bilingual make-up of the *Angelus* is indicative of the Select School where English, Spanish, Arithmetic, Geography and English History were taught. Latin and bookkeeping were taught as extras. In the tradition of the Jesuit schools, there were public exhibitions, elocution contests and plays. One year Shakespeare's *Tempest* was staged by students. Again in the Jesuit tradition, honors were distributed each quarter and prizes awarded at the Annual Closing Exercises. The favourite sport was cricket and there is mention of spinning tops. Anglo-creole boys predominated but there were a few Hispano-mestizo boarders in Father Cassian Gillet's classes. Gillet was one of four brothers, all Jesuit priests of the English Province.

GREATER ST. JOHN'S:1896-1917

THE Select School of the English Jesuits became what the new North American Jesuit director, Fr. William Wallace, called 'Greater St. John's College.' The school moved from the present Presbytery to a building just behind it and nearer the canal. The curriculum remained much the same, but pupils increased in numbers both day-scholars and boarders. St. John's had now, for the first time, two North American scholastics. One of them, Fr. William Kane later wrote *A Memoir of Fr. William Stanton*, his companion scholastic, whose impressions of his multi-racial study hall were mentioned above. Stanton was nicknamed 'Buck' from his boyhood for his sense of virility. Young Jesuits still remember him as holding the record time for swimming the Chain-of-Lakes in Wisconsin. He was in charge of discipline and directed sports. According to his friend Kane: "He foolishly tried to replace English cricket by American baseball, then good-humouredly resigned himself to failure."[6]

By the time he had finished his three years of regency in Belize, he had grown considerably in cross-cultural sensitivity, writing to one scholastic who succeeded him at S.J.C. in Latin, English and even Spanish: *"Al fin, hermano mio, haga me el favor de tirar en la caja, algunos libros viejos espanoles* to fill up space ... I'm striving for Spanish. *Adios, Adios."*[7] After ordination, Fr.

Stanton wrote his Provincial making a preferential option for the poor. He said in his letter that he noticed 'that our Lord, when on earth, had always had the keenest eye out for the chap who was most in need.'[8] He became the first apostle of Benque Viejo. His apostolate was cut short by cancer but his assiduous sending specimens of Belize's flora and fauna to the Smithsonian Institute earned him the honor of having one plant, *Asplenum Stantoni Copeland*, named after him.

"In theology he [Stanton] was stalwart champion of the little mission of Belize. During the hour of Recreation after meals a group of theologians gathered daily on one of the staircases and dubbed itself 'The Honduran Club.' Stanton was its president; and its chatter was often uproarious, especially when 'letters from the front' were read by the president."[9]

The first North American scholastic, Stanton, gives us a picture of men starting out with a certain monocultural myopia but later wearing glasses that gave them a more long-ranged multi-cultural vision.

S.J.C.:LOYOLA PARK:1917-1931

JUST as we scooped up the history of the original St. John's College of the Presbytery by browsing through *The Angelus, The Mangrove* gives the complete picture of the new St. John's College hidden away in the bushes south of Belize City. *The Mangrove* was published monthly during the school year which then began in July and ended in April. The closing issue in April was pictorial and gave a vivid view of what life was like at Loyola Park.

The staff was all-American Jesuits: an average of two or three Jesuit Brothers, always six scholastics and ten or twelve priests. All lived at the college with the Hispano-mestizo boarders who generally outnumbered the Anglo-Creole day scholars. There were four forms of high school and two years of Preparatory, Higher Prep and Lower Prep. The Preparatory years were meant to resolve the difficulty arising from the fact that all the boarders spoke no English. Occasionally a weaker English-speaking student would start in higher Preparatory to shore up his studies. I myself started in Higher Prep after jumping from St. Catherine's Standard Four. This gained me a year and put me in college in my fifteenth year.

Life at Loyola Park was definitely multi-cultural: North American Jesuit teachers, Central American Hispano-mestizo boarders, and Anglo-Creole day scholars from Belize. An occasional Belizean boarder spoke only English. The late Mr. Henry Bowman of Stann Creek describes this unique experience in his autobiographical sketch *Emerald Valley:* "When I went to St. John's College at Loyola Park as a little fledgling, there were 136 boys from Central America at the College. I am almost sure that 135 of them could not speak more than a dozen words in English and I could not speak a word in Spanish. I can guarantee that this is the best way to learn Spanish by force if you want to eat!"[10]

Eat the boarders did and all of them grew fat on rice-and-beans. In an article "Rice and Beans" done by boarder Ernesto Fuentes we read: *"Rice and Beans! He aqui un plato que nunca fala en el menú del Colegio. Es tan sabroso, después de las futigas del día, sentarse uno tranquilamente a comer arroz y frijolitos calientes!"*[11]

For that particular pictorial issue I was asked by the director to do a cover design. My effort was amateurish compared with the professional work done the year before by Gregorio Castillo who perished in the 1931 hurricane.

His design is thoroughly inculturated. It is the picture of a sailing lighter at anchor on a becalmed Caribbean, framed at one side by a mangrove tree whose roots claw at the swampy shore: authentic Caribbean art. My design takes artistic license to move the Cockscomb Mountains west of the college with a wavy Caribbean looking eastward. The whole is framed by an austere, classical Doric arch with fluted pillars! A clear case of cultural hybridization.

The core curriculum was English, Spanish, math, history (ancient and modern), science and religion. The classical course did four years of Latin; the commercial students did bookkeeping, typing and shorthand in place of Latin.

Extra-curricular activities were a plenty: elocution contests, debating club, glee club, camera club, mission society, library club and *Mangrove* staff for which one had to be bilingual as articles

were done in both English and Spanish. There were plays, especially at Christmas, in English (Dickens' *Christmas Carol*), and in Spanish *El Phantasm*, a ghost story operetta. There was the annual "Da-Hoo-Yu" masquerade open to both boarders and day scholars. There was the annual Passion play, *The Upper Room*, of Monsignór Benson, done publicly at Nords' C-VS Theater, involving alumni, St. Catherine's, and the S.J.C. glee club joined to the Holy Redeemer choir. There were dual celebrations of national days: the 10th of September for day scholars, for boarders the *Quince*.

Sports were an interesting compromise: North American scholastics teamed up with Central American boarders to play baseball; cricket was played by Belizean day scholars. Everyone played soccer, basketball, handball and later on, softball and volleyball. The day scholars had league games at noon, boarders after school. Great interest was shown in the play-off rivalries in all sports (except for cricket and baseball) between day scholars and boarders. All-star teams, made up of both day scholars and boarders often played champion Belizean teams and sometimes won in soccer and basketball. S.J.C. was part of the city league that was played in town at the C-VS Theater and sometimes won first place. I remember being asked by Fr. Corey, the president of S.J.C., to make begging speeches during the half-time of these frolicking evenings. We were trying to raise funds for our new gymnasium.

One further cultural remark about sports: the four high school forms were listed in field day schedules as Seniors, Juniors, Middlemen, and Minims. The Higher and Lower preparatory boys were given more imaginatively inculturated titles. The Higher Prepsters were called Mosquitoes, the Lower ones were Sandflies.

Three more notes before we wave "good-bye" to Loyola Park: The first is more agricultural than cultural. Henry Bowman, whom we mentioned before soon became a successful banana and citrus planter in the Pomona Valley of Dangriga. As a loyal alumnus, he offered money prizes to students at Loyola Park for the three most successful farmers. Small plots of ground were allotted to aspiring agriculturalists. They cultivated truck gardens of vegetables. Boarders had the advantage of week end cultivation and took all three prizes. But the soil was salty and hard to till. The experiment lasted only one year and was not unprophetic of Lynam College in Dangriga. It must be said that Jesuit secondary education was definitely more successful at multi-culture than at agriculture.

About Spanish speakers on the Jesuit faculty: one Jesuit from Spain, Fr. Palacio, spoke Spanish fluently as did Father Leo Rooney and Joseph Kemper who had made their theology in Spain. Frs. Kemper and Hamilton were both remarkable for their fluency in Belize creole. Jesuit scholastics spoke Spanish with difficulty during their first year. One scholastic who became later famous as Fr. Dismas, the hero of the movie "The Hoodlum Priest", had his personal problems with Spanish during his first year. Outgoing, and eager to communicate with the smaller boys he questioned one Lower Prepster, *"Quantos anos tiene Vd?"*, omitting the tilde. The Sandfly was quick with his bite. "Uno" was his reply, gesturing with his right index finger.

Another scholastic story involving corporal punishment: the prefect of discipline administered punishment daily to offenders after class. One scholastic of the subsequent Chicago Province, disbelieved in postponing the pain. His treatment was somewhat devoid of cultural sensitivity. He always had a hand of bananas sketched mouth-high at the side of the blackboard up front. Whenever a boy offended in any way, he was given an immediate invitation to come to the blackboard to 'eat bananas.' With his face to the board and his bare calves (we wore Bermuda shorts) facing the class, the teacher stroke the bare legs with a stoutly be-knotted bamboo cane. The pain of the caning was not nearly as acute as the humiliation of tasting the bitter taste of chalked local fruit.

One more post-script to Loyola park. In 1932 on my way to join the Jesuit novices at Florissant, Missouri, I travelled to Topeka, Kansas to visit with my friend Lessel Landwher. He was at the time a student priest at Kenrick Seminary. We visited the Jesuit theologians at St. Mary's, Kansas. It was a Sunday morning and the theologians were free. The scholastics who had made regency in

Belize with some of their friends, met with us in the outdoor stands of the baseball field of St. Mary's. Stanton's 'Honduran Club' had now deteriorated into the 'Shark Club' and the sharks regaled their friends by recounting stories about 'Honky Dory'. Stanton's 'Honduras' had now become 'Honky Dory' and most of the stories were goodly-humored tales that tended to diminish Belize and Belizeans. True many of the scholastics were at that time disaffected theologians from the Chicago Province but Less Landwher and I both bore in silence the belittling of Belize.

The term 'Honky Dory' is American slang for a cheap small town saloon or theater (even a brothel) and the 'dory' was the poor Belizean fishermen's and farmers' modest means of transportation. Both the name, and the tone of that gathering lacked a certain cross-cultural sensitivity.

At 9 a.m. on September 10, 1931, the committee of the Board of Management of St. Johns Berchman's College met at Loyola Park. The minutes of that meeting revealed that "the President had received permission to complete the sea wall ... then plans were adopted for planting trees and grass so as to beautify the premises. The treasurer was again questioned about the insurance and submitted latest figures. He was asked by Fr. Palacio why we did not insure against hurricane and said that he had enquired about it and was told there was no need of it. He was empowered to go ahead on his insurance plans ... ."[12] That afternoon of September 10, 1931, both Fr. Palacio and the treasurer, Fr. Leo Rooney, were entombed in the debris of the college. Nine other Jesuit teachers died, among them, the first Belizean Jesuit scholastic, Deodato Burn.

That is the story of St. John's of Loyola Park. It was the hybridization of Anglo-Creole Belizean day scholars and Hispano-Mestizo Central American boarders under North American Jesuits. There is no evidence at this time of Amerindian or Garifuna presence at Loyola Park. There were no Belizean, Caribbean or Central American studies. The only indication of any evidently cultural interest is one magic lantern slide lecture of Fr. Stevenson on Maya culture and ruins of the Toledo and Cayo Districts. Lloyd Lind of the graduating class of '30, wrote an article on "The story of Old Man Duendy" and his classmate, the late Dr. Adolfo Perez, had another on "Chichen Itza and the Ancient Mayas." Both articles appeared in the Jubilee issue of Pope Pius XI in *The Mangrove* for April 1929.

In a tropical issue of *The Mangrove* of August 1930, just a year before the 1931 hurricane, there appears a Central American map indicating the geographical origins of St. John's students. Lines leading to Belize came from as far north as Cozumel off the Yucatán coast of Mexico, lines from Guatemala on the west, Salvador on the south and Honduras on the south-east. There is a photograph of St. John's College inserted with the superscription in English: "School o' the Spanish Main" and it is subscribed *"Esquela Inglesa International."* But it was Lee Anderson of the year earlier who best caught the multi-cultural impact in his article, "Central American Shakes Hands at St. John's ." In the pictorial issue of *The Mangrove* for 1929 he wrote:"All our boys, with few exceptions, are from Central America: British Honduras, Spanish Honduras, Guatemala, Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. Others come from Mexico ... here at St. John's boys from all these Republics meet, become acquainted, and form life-enduring friendships. Not to any of our other large cities, not to any of our ... tropical towns, or well-furnished buildings of the costliest variety, but right here to the long yellow building of a great little college in the back yard of Belize, come all these boys to be united and made one under the cultural and godly rules of dear St. John's ... ." Here we find a clear expression of the academic unity that smelted the cultural diversity of teachers from North America and Central American students made up of Hispano-mestizos and Anglo-creole Belizeans.

BACK TO HOLY REDEEMER, S.J.C.:1931-1952

ALUMNUS Edgar Gegg writing in *The Voice* (S.J.C. Alumni Publications, November, 1940), speaks of the situation immediately after the hurricane: "And so with a determination and a heroism that commands our highest admiration,

exactly one month after the tragic destruction of St. John's, our valiant shock troops had put the college on her feet again and classes reassembled in temporary quarters in Belize City. These 'temporary' quarters were in the buildings adjoining Holy Redeemer Cathedral and were to serve the college for twenty years."[13]

In the absence of the strong stream of Hispano-mestization that flowed through Loyola Park, the Anglo-Creole current now dominated and makes it more possible for us to take sounding. Three deep areas reveal themselves, all of them flowing towards greater Belizeanization of St. John's, despite the constant charge of Americanization, crystallized in the terms 'white, rich, and foreign.' First, with almost all boarders gone, there was a definite turn in curriculum towards preparation for Cambridge Overseas Exams;second, Bro. Jacoby's boy scouts gave a boost to local leader-ship;lastly, St. John's became involved in on-going, adult education and was perceived as not uninvolved in the nationalist movement of that mid-twentieth century.

About the charge of Americanization of St. John's: There is no doubt that the staff was all-American and so was the governance. The Board of Management of the Corporate Body of St. John's College had the Jesuit Superior as chairman and his Mission Consultors as members. But even that board, in its first sitting after the hurricane, on December 14, 1931, showed definite local inter-est. Here is what Fr. Corey, chairman, together with Frs. O'Connor and Hickey decided: "(1) Approval was given to the sale of the lumber and other materials saved from the wreck of the College building at Loyola Park. (2) It was agreed that no attempt be made toward starting a board-ing school ... (3) In our high School the courses are to be continued as heretofore in order to prepare the students for the Cambridge Examina-tions."[14]

This is an important development. Up to that time S.J.C. was a member of the American North Central Association and credit hours were awarded in the various subjects. So it was that I had no entrance difficulty with St. Mary's College in Kansas. When I applied to the Inns of Court in London in 1930, my high school and college credits were unacceptable and I had to put myself under a Chancery lane crammer by the name of Marcy to study for the London matriculation examination. One graduated from S.J.C. now with both accreditation in the American North Central Association and with matriculation at Cambridge University.

It was during this period that Brother Jacoby's Holy Redeemer Scout troop flourished. Bro. Jake taught math at S.J.C. and he used his older pupils to share responsibility for the younger boy scouts. Convinced with Sir Baden Powell that the way to make an older boy become a man was to put him in charge of younger boys, Bro. Jake's scout troops became a veritable school of Belizean leadership. His vote of confidence to local leadership was amply rewarded. When the move was made to Landivar, Brother Jacoby was ready to continue his teaching at S.J.C. but was loathe to leave his boys. The Superior of the Jesuits at that time regarded Bro. Jake as forming young Belizeans loyal to the Crown at a time when Belize was moving towards greater independence. Bro. Jake had indeed been honoured by having been made an honourable member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. This dissensus lead to his reluctant departure from Belize. He was for a time with us at Florissant where I often gratefully visited him. But completely tropicalized, he suffered from the Missouri winter, and ultimately died in Florida.

Another couple contributing to localization was Fathers Ganey and Sutti. Their vote of confidence to Belizean leadership has been amply rewarded in our extremely successful credit union and cooperative movements. Their work deserves more exploration than can be afforded in this lecture and their connection with S.J.C. was less intimate than that of Bro. Jake.

What deserves even more exploration is S.J.C.'s connection with the growth and development of our nationalist movement. Anglophilic writers, among them not a few Afro-Saxons, both of whom are often more Gringophobic than anything, tend to interpret the participation of the 'Catholic Mission' (equivalently the Society of Jesus) as more politically anti-British than need be. They speak of this Americanization as "neo-colonial"; some

even go so far as to speak of the movement from political dependence on Great Britain to the more recent economic dependence on the United States as a sort of cultural 'imperial succession.'

The truth of the matter is that S.J.C. in Belize City did engage itself in on-going adult education. Fr. James Murphy sketches the development this way: "St. John's College pioneered adult evening education with the inauguration of ... the Extension School, in September, 1947. The press release announcing this important, innovative expansion described the program's goals well: 'One of the most valuable techniques of our day, cooperative search for truth, gives adult learners an opportunity to meet together, face a problem in common, think it through as a group, and solve it if possible ... the roster of students in those early days included the names of men who went on to lead Belize's independence movement."[15]

Unsheltered by the mangrove bushes of Loyola Park and plunged into the bustle of things Belizean at the foot of the swing bridge, S.J.C. became a more vibrant part of the economic, social and political life of the city. This brought a healthy and even creative tension between the church, strongly represented by the 'Catholic Mission' and the diminishing power of the Crown Colony, represented in the Governor. We give our final sounding of the cultural cross-currents (now mostly Anglo-American) by giving Sir Alan Burns' description of the tension as it personalized itself in his relations with the Catholic Bishop.

"... The Roman Catholic mission was very largely supported by American contributions; the priests were well educated men and better preachers than most I have listened to in the colonies. The Bishop was an Irish-born American, a true Fenian at heart, with a bitter dislike for everything British which he made no attempt to conceal; he told me on one occasion that he did not mind the children in his school singing the National Anthem as they did not understand it, but he himself would never soil his lips with it. I made great efforts to be friendly with the Bishop, not only because of his prominent position in a population more than half Catholic, but also because I am myself a Catholic; I cannot honestly say that I was successful. His priests were most loyal to him, but I feel that they themselves realized his tactlessness. It may seem absurd, but apart from his anti-British attitude I resented very strongly his assumption that because I was British I was therefore a 'heretic' at heart; he caused me to understand why so many practicing Christians should be anticlerical."[16]

What strikes one most in this summation is the culturally ethnocentric tone of both Bishop and Governor in their speaking about Belize. Perhaps this is what more waspish writers mean when they speak about 'imperial succession' in Belize.

S.J.C. At LANDIVAR: 1952-1991

AT mid-twentieth century St. John's College moved to the reclaimed mangrove swamp north of town and west of the national stadium. The site was christened Landivar in honour of a Jesuit poet, the Virgil of Central America. He wrote his *Georgics* in classical Latin dactylic hexameters. The name was undoubtedly meant by the Jesuit Mission Superior to continue the tradition of Loyola Park's *Escuela Internacional Inglesa*, the 'school o' the Spanish main.' That it was never again to become.

Hispano-Mestizo boarders, lodge first at Hone Park and later in what is now a VI Form library and classrooms were in a definite minority and would never again gain the cultural ascendancy of the Loyola Park boarders. Two natural disasters, first yellow fever then hurricane, had discouraged many parents. Besides boarding schools were gaining general disfavour and much of the Latin anti-clericalism that drove Central American Catholics to Belize was on the wane. The solitary marble bust of Landivar, brought to Belize by my Guatemalan classmate, Juan Rosales, remains an isolated symbol of the failure of Landivar to recapture the loyalty of the sons of Central American alumni. And Landivar, as a Guatemalan national hero, casts a cultural shadow that reminds us of our neighbour's ambiguous claim on Belize, despite the international acceptance of Belizean independence.

Even so, the glorious inauguration of St. John's on November 26, 1952 was celebrated by Belizean Bishop Hickey, assisted by two Antillean Bishops,

Ryan of Port of Spain, Trinidad, and McEleny of Kingston, Jamaica; together with one Bishop from Central America, Patrick y Barahona of Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

With the growing national current, there was a feeling, certainly among the Anglo-creole students for a greater infusion of Belizean Studies. The felt need is well captured by Evan Hyde who later expressed the need in his poignantly satirical poem *About Poems*. Hyde read poetry, as did students in the days of Loyola Park, from *The Loyola Book of Verse*, in use at the time in most American Jesuit high schools. The anthology has a rich current of Catholic religious poetry, typical of which is Joyce Kilmer's *Trees*:

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree .....,
Poems are made by fools like me
But only God can make a tree.

For Hyde this nice nature poem, reminiscent of the creator God of *Genesis*, ill suited his nasty mood of anger at colonialism, a mood that should have been responded to by protest poetry, reminiscent of the Liberator God of *Exodus*. Notice how his poem captures the resentment in the deliberate use of 'bad' English, instead of good creole dialect.

ABOUT POEMS
by Evan X Hyde

We didn't know
no better
we was small
we was slaves
so they said
we they said
we will teach you
about poems
poems is like this
trees by Joyce Kilmer
God can make a tree
poems by a fool like me
poem is like this
they have to rhyme
in every line
and every time
poems must be nice
so we tried to write poems
while we was small
and we was slaves
and they said good, that's poem
but after we get big
and fight for freedom
and write
the way we feel
hunger in the eyelashes
of our eyes
and hatred give us fever
they said NO
those is not poems
they is hatred
they is violence
they is not nice
neither proper
nor correct
most uncourteous
so we said alright
it's not poems
it's AMANDALA
AMANDALA they said
what's that?
and we said
it's what we call
poems by men like me
God can still make
a tree.[17]

Hyde is saying something rather felt than understood about much of the curriculum, by students who were becoming more aware of national, cultural identity.

Awareness of the need for inculturation first begins to show itself about the time of Vatican II. *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* has a whole chapter (II) on "The Proper Development of Culture." The *Decree on the Apostolate of Laity* calls for greater shared-responsibility of clerical power with lay men and women. The *Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church* is explicit in its recommendation of this shared responsibility. "To improve coordination," says the Decree, "Let the bishop set up, insofar as possible, a pastoral council. In this

council,.clergy, religious, and laity can have a part through the medium of selected delegates ..." (#30). Responsibility was shared with lay men and women first in a diocesan council, later in Assembly I and II, and more recently in the First Synod of the Catholic Church of Belize and Belmopan.

In 1970 S.J.C. opened up to full-flooded shared responsibility with local Laity in the appointment of Signa Yorke, in whose honor this lecture has been prepared. Miss Yorke is at once the first Anglo-Creole Belizean person, and the first woman with whom the all-male and all American Jesuits shared the responsible super-ordinate position of Dean of Sixth Form. When Fr. Zinkle, first dean, left to assume the directorship of the Missouri Province Mission Bureau, she took full charge and brought a new Belizeanization to St. John's college. Miss Yorke often spoke to me about her memoirs which she was then writing. They told of her life as teacher in Maya villages where a half a dozen eggs given by one family, a chicken for the week end donated by yet another, helped her to make ends meet. She assimilated the culture of the Mayas then moved to the Mestizos of Caye Caulker and San Pedro. Her teaching bought her to Anglo-Creole Belize and finally to the multi-cultural social mixture of VI Form. Fire brought an end to her autobiographical notes. She lost everything: home, clothes, furniture, her favourite classical recordings, her cherished medal of distinguished membership in the British Empire. But for us, the greatest loss of all was the loss to the flames of her memoirs.

A couple of years later Fathers Buhler and Hadel added cultural anthropology and West Indian literature to the list of course. They were precursors, facilitator of inculturation, especially with BISRA (Belize Institute for Social Research and Action) and *National*, later *Belizean Studies*. Subsequently *Belizean Studies* would publish *Readings in Belizean History*4, the latest edition of which carries a ground-breaking set of notes by the editor on Maya history. Miss Yorke was a member of the advisory board of *Belizean Studies* from the outset of its publication. It was Fr. Hadel, too, who heightened Garifuna cultural self-awareness with his Garifuna dictionary which did much to renew interest in the language.

But the real agents of inculturation must always be locals and the local agent of inculturation at St. John's VI Form was its dean, Signa Yorke. She it was who introduced art and music. She was responsible for starting the English House System in VI Form. The student body was "divided into Houses, each with its own leadership. Houses sponsor various social activities for their own members. The Houses and student body are unified through the Student Government which sponsors a variety of social and cultural activities throughout the year" (St. John's College VI Form Catalogue 1986-88). In this House system met the multi-cultural blend of Belizeans: largely Anglo-Creoles, Hispano-Mestizos to whom were added now children of our great Garifuna school teachers and increasing numbers of Mayas from the district villages.

At this time Jesuit renewal came with General Congregation Thirty-one and Thirty-two. Both congregations, revisiting Gospel origins and charismatic heritage, and interpreting them in terms of the 'signs of the times', strongly stipulated for inculturation. But it was Father General Pedro Arrupe's letter to the whole Society *On Inculturation* (1978) that most awakened cross-cultural sensitivity in Jesuits. I have my highlighted copy of the letter before me and what strikes me most urgently is his stress for the need of changed internal dispositions: "The changes which have taken place and which will keep on taking place in the future, as we try to adapt ourselves to contemporary cultural changes, have their origin in the criteria of Vatican II and in the priorities and directives of the thirty-first and thirty-second General Congregations. But these changes will have no practical effect if we do not allow the transforming power of the spirit to modify our personal life from within. We might call this 'the personal interior inculturation', which must necessarily precede, or at least accompany, the external task of inculturation. All changes arising from Vatican II and from our last two General Congregations have precisely this objective: to make us effective agents of a genuine inculturation of the Gospel" (p.6). For Pedro Arrupe inculturation was more than wearing blue Guayaberras and

sousing one's scrambled eggs with red hot pepper sauce.

It was in the spirit of this 'personal interior inculturation' that a group of five Jesuit gathered to explore the possibility of opening the governance of S.J.C. to lay trusteeship. After a couple of meetings, whose minutes are marked 'confidential', the group presented the Jesuit Superior with the plans for opening the All-Jesuit (and, in fact, all-American) Board of Management to mixed membership, that is, membership made up of Jesuits and non-Jesuits. In a memo to the Superior, dated November 30, 1977, the rationale for the change was given. Among other reasons the following was listed: "Belizeans are growing in an awareness of their own identity as a people, and they are conscious of their rightful desire to shape that identity. We believe that St. John's College can have a role in helping them shape that identity. However, we are aware of the paternalistic image that the Church, especially through the Society of Jesus, has presented in the past, and we are aware of the limitations that our present system of governance place on effective and meaningful participation by Belizeans. These limitations must be overcome, and past practices altered, if St. John's is to have a role to play in helping Belizeans shape their identity."

By mid-February the group had hammered out the *By-Laws of St. John's College*, the Preamble of which states that "St. John's College affirms its dedication to the people of Belize, and strives to encourage a deeper understanding and respect for her history and culture."

The minutes of the S.J.C. Board of Trustees meeting of October 30, 1980 read: "Fr. Hunter (chairman) welcomed the new members of the board pointing out that it was the first time that laymen were on the board and that it was also the first time that Belizeans were a majority of the members of the board." The two members were Mr. William (Chichi) Fonseca, veteran Belizean educator, and Mr. Stewart Simmons, soon to leave the board to become at once S.J.C.'s first Belizean headmaster and the high school's first lay principal. The way to greater lay and local participation in governance had been opened.

Today's Board of Trustees has six lay members two of whom are women. This declericalization of St. John's College Board has done much to dispel the cloud of misunderstanding in the pulp press that rather regularly speaks of 'Jesuit autonomy' or even 'Jesuit hegemony'. But misunderstanding is not easily dispelled. President Buhler's involvement with the rise of the Belize College of Arts, Science, and Technology (BELCAST) and President Weber's advent at about the time of Belcast's fall caused such misunderstanding, especially because of the complication that Jesuit internal affairs are not readily available to the general public. Writing about "Cultural Colonization and Educational Underdevelopment" which appears in this issue of *Belizean Studies*, Charles Rutheiser has this to say: "The first educational move by the United Democratic Party (UDP) government was to dismantle the Belize College of Arts, Science and Technology (BELCAST) and invite Ferris State University of Big Rapids, Michigan to establish and run the University College of Belize (UCB). More than any other single event in the educational sector, the BELCAST/UCB imbroglio came to embody Belizeans' worst fears of recolonization, for it involved the loss of sovereignty over a national institution that symbolized Belize's first major attempt to break from the dependent educational relationships of its colonial past."[18]

On New Year's day, 1990, St. John's College published its Five Year Plan for the period of 1990 to 1995. Through widely distributed questionnaires sent to students, parents, alumni, faculty and employers, data were gathered. The Board of Trustees spent long evening hours clarifying for themselves "the meaning of 'Jesuit Education' in the context of Belizean culture" (p.1). Most important in the plan is its present stance about Post-Secondary Education. After broadly consulting with Belizeans, the Board of Trustees decided: "Our consultations revealed very many opportunities for valuable and needed services to the Church and the nation at the existing academic level of Sixth Form education, coupled with a political climate unfavorable to **independent** vertical expansion by the College at this time."

"Hence, during the life of this plan, the College will devote its energies to the implementation of opportunities for **horizontal** growth in the post-secondary education program at S.J.C. Simultaneously, the college will remain alert to opportunities for **vertical** expansion through active collaboration with the state in the development of tertiary education in Belize" (p.7).

Among the examples of recommendations for shoring up traditional Humanities and Liberal Arts are "the incorporation of Belizean History as a required component of all degrees", and "a more Belizean-sensitive curriculum"(p.8). Already Caribbean Exam Certificate (CXC) requirements had broadened the base for a Belizean Studies program.

On June 8, 1990, Fr. James Murphy, S.J., was installed as the first Belizean President of St. John's College. That places the governance entirely in the hands of Belizeans, with Sister Mercy Cervantes, R.S.M. a Belizean religious woman Dean of VI Form, and Mr. Andrew Lopez soon to take over as a Lay Belizean headmaster.

At a National Educational Symposium, held at Belmopan on November 15, 1990, Mr. Herman Byrd, now director of S.J.C. VI Form Evening Division, made a panel presentation on "The Role of Managers (Church-State) in Shaping Educational Policy." Byrd sees a tremendous change in denominational schools over the last thirty years, the years of which we have been speaking.

Says Byrd, "These schools are no longer under foreign control nor for that matter are the denominational churches ... A massive process of Belizeanization, intended or not, has occurred both in the churches and the schools. It has been twofold: Belizean leadership is now overwhelming in the classroom, the principal's desk, in the manager's seat and at the head of the respective denominations. Secondly, ... the evangelical character of our schools has changed drastically .... The cultural pluralism of the land has filled school of whatever denominations with children of varying religious backgrounds - they have become truly ecumenical ...."[19]

He concludes that "a comprehensive Belizean Studies program should become an important part of our national educational goal-setting for the 1990s."

Such a goal has already been written large in St. John's College's Five Year Plan. More recently, the Missouri Province of the Jesuits has entered into a twinning covenant with the Central American Province. Central American scholastics come for their holiday period at the beginning of each new year to learn English. Besides language, not a little of multi-cultural Belize rubs off on them and it is hoped that before too long some of them may be returning to St. John's where some of their *mestizaje* may rub off on us.

We've travelled the cultural cross-currents of the Caribbean that wash the barrier reef and shores of Belize, where Anglo-Creole and Hispano-Mestizo currents, guided for a long time by American Jesuits, from Holy Redeemer to Loyola Park and back again. From the foot of the swing bridge, currents of local leadership and strong currents of nationalism move out north to Landivar, where in response to Vatican II, the Jesuit General Congregation and especially the captaincy of Pedro Arrupe, they have steered St. John's towards greater cross-cultural sensitivity to Belize's multi-racial make-up and towards all but total shared responsibility with locals and laity for the teaching and governance of 'dear St. John's.'

The growth and development of cross-cultural sensitivity at St. John's College has been echoed, *mutatis mutandis*, in all the other Catholic secondary schools: in St. Catherine's and Pallotti of Belize City, and at Muffles and Sacred Heart in the districts. The growth and development has parallels in all the other religious-related secondary schools and throughout the public schools over the whole country. The hope of this limited exploration is that further ground-breaking may study the special role of other secondary schools and, in fact, the whole system of church and state primary education in maintaining Belize as a multi-cultural society, so as to confirm us all in cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity. In that way, all of us in Belize, may continue to nourish in the whole country a cultural pluralism that thrives together with true national unity. With all our cultural differences, 'all o' we da one.'

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CHARLES RUTHEISER

CULTURAL COLONIZATION AND EDUCATIONAL UNDERDEVELOPMENT:

CHANGING PATTERNS OF AMERICAN INFLUENCE IN BELIZEAN SCHOOLING

TWENTY YEARS AGO, a Belizean high school teacher made the following remarks to a conference on the state of Belizean education:

For years we have been used to looking up to the foreigner. He has been our teacher, set our exams, our educational standards and syllabuses; we have looked to the foreigner from habit. Now we must learn to go it alone, the foreigner will not always be here.[1]

Some two decades later, despite concerted efforts to decolonize education, the foreigner and, most importantly, his money, remain prominent features of the Belizean school system. Although there are more Belizean teachers than ever before, non-nationals, many of them Americans, are still to be found in every level and area of education practice. The number of students enrolled is at an all-time high, but the provision of new schools and the enhancement of the existing ones are almost totally dependent on foreign loans and grants. Externally-derived criteria still drive school curricula and serve as the standards for measuring the performance of students and, consequently, their occupational futures. For those who seek a university education, the choice is between a limited number of scholarships abroad or matriculation at the recently founded University College of Belize (UCB) which despite its Anglophilic name,is,in effect, a branch campus of a mediocre university in the American midwest.

While Belizean educational policy goals have been aimed at furthering economic, political, and cultural autonomy, the disparity between development plans and practice looms large in Belize. Attempts by the Ministry of Education to de-colonize the school system have been and continue to be limited by a continued reliance on external sources of assistance in such vital areas as financing, planning, and staffing. Belizean politicians and educators may very well set policy goals consistent with those of other post-colonial societies, but lacking essential fiscal and manpower resources, still tend to "....take cues from the donors of aid" (Bennett 1979:22). Over the last three decades, the major sources of funding in education have shifted from foreign religious denominations and the British Government, to the European Economic Community, Canada, and most recently, USAID. The result is a patchwork system that has "....largely been made to respond to external demands rather than to act as a supporting service to over-riding national goals" (UNESCO 1983:9). The problem of enduring structural dependence on foreign aid is further complicated by the recently intensified relationship with the United States.

This paper looks at some of the changing ways in which the Unites States has exerted its influence on the formation and realization of Belizean educational policy and practice. Although education in its widest sense encompasses more than schooling and American influence pervades almost all aspects of Belizean life, this paper will limit itself to an analysis of the system of formal education. As schooling is the principal venue for the reproduction of a society's core values and knowledge, it is a particularly crucial sector in which to assess the extent of the shift from British to American cultural hegemony, a change other scholars have referred to as "imperial succession" (Everitt 1987). Whereas forty years ago, American influence in the schools and society was decidedly anti-colonial, since independence it has come to assume a definite neo-colonial orientation (Grant 1976;Bolland 1987).

However, to subsume all mention of American influence in education, or in Belizean society for that matter, under the rubric of "neo-colonialism" obscures more than it reveals. Such an interpretation assumes that it is relatively easy to disentangle metropolitan influences from authentic Belizean cultural productions. Furthermore, it presents "U.S. influence" (itself, admittedly a vague term) as a monolithic, coordinated enterprise. Despite linkages programs, the contemporary American presence is divided into a variety of private and governmental institutions with distinctive aims, interests, and methods of action. In addition, they have substantially different histories and intensities of connection with the Belizean people.

Not all American influences are equally erosive of national sovereignty or contrary to development goals. Some U.S. projects, such as REAP and GROWTH programs initiated by CARE, for example, have helped contributed to Belizean development goals by providing agricultural education and support to young farmers. American Jesuits have trained and inspired several generations of nationalist leaders as well as stimulating interest in the recovery of the Belizean past.

However, many of the recent U.S. actions have hindered rather than advanced Belizean attempts to increase autonomy. Even the programs that coincide with the need to improve vocational-technical and agricultural education reconfigure these vital sectors of the school system along American lines. In addition, the overall educational agendas of the official U.S. government agencies, like Peace Corps and USAID, are determine by American rather than Belizean priorities.

The evolution of American influence in Belizean education can be divided into three phases, each marked by an increasing intensity of involvement. The first, lasting from 1883 to 1962, can be equated for the most part with the activities of the Roman Catholic Mission. The second, stretching from the beginnings of internal self-rule to shortly after independence in 1981, involves the closer working relationship between the Catholic Church and the Ministry of Education and the introduction of official United States assistance through the Peace Corps, quasi-governmental groups like Michigan Partners and private organization like CARE and Projects HOPE and CONCERN. The value of private aid far outweighed that of official US assistance through 1983, which was for the most part limited to the Peace Corps budget (SERD 1977:I-1). During this period the actual process of educational planning was largely dependent on the activities of the UNESCO missions, which visited the country in 1964 and 1983 (Ministry of Education 1984:3). The vast majority of public assistance came from British, and later, Canadian and European coffers (USAID 1983:52-55).

Belize independence in 1981 ushered in a third phase, marked by Ministry of Education efforts to extend its authority over all areas of the school system. These efforts had actually begun in the late 1970s with the foundation of Belize College of Arts, Science, and Technology (BELCAST), the nation's first full tertiary level institution. Belize also sought to expand its traditionally metropolitan base of educational assistance through programs with Cuba, Mexico, and Panama. Some attempts were also made to emulate certain of the educational practices of Cuba and Nicaragua, such as the health and literacy activities of the "Unity Brigades" among the rural Maya of the Toledo District. This direction was short-lived, however.

"Even before the electoral defeat of the People's United Party (PUP) in December, 1984, Belize was moving towards closer dependence on the United States" (Jamail 1984a,b). Increased U.S. assistance in the form of USAID and an enlarged Peace Corps contingent followed the recognition of Belize's new found strategic importance as a "bridge" between the Caribbean and Central America. Education or "human resource development" was seen as playing a central role in accomplishing US aims in "stabilizing" Belize through promoting growth in private sector export industries and facilitating close contacts with the United States (USAID 1983:ix-xi).

The formal educational policy goals of the United Democratic Party (UDP) government remain nominally similar to those of the PUP.

The main emphases were placed on improving the availability and quality of education at all levels and making the school system more relevant to the realities of students' lives and the needs of the economy (See Ministry of Education 1984; and the FIVE-YEAR MACRO-ECONOMIC PLAN FOR BELIZE, 1985-1989). In practice, however, the PUP and the UDP diverged radically, especially in the area of tertiary education.

The first educational move by the UDP government was to dismantle the Belize College of Arts Science and Technology (BELCAST) and invite Ferris State University of Big Rapids, Michigan to establish and run the University College of Belize (UCB). More than any other single recent in the educational sector, the BELCAST/UCB imbroglio came to embody Belizeans worst fears of recolonization, for it involved the actual loss of sovereignty over a national institution that symbolized Belize's first major attempt to break from the dependent educational relationships of its colonial past. As Bolland noted, "while UCB is to be located in Belize, it will not be an institution controlled by Belizeans"(Bolland 1987:71).

Within this historical framework, we can trace the shifting importance and interrelation of four primary avenues of American influence in education: Roman Catholic missionaries, private, and voluntary organizations (PVO's), the Peace Corps, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Of the four, the one with the longest and, arguably, the most profound influence has been the Roman Catholic Church, or most specifically, the Jesuit Mission of the Fathers of the Missouri Province.

The arrival of these American missionary personnel during last two decades of the nineteenth century broke the exclusive orientation of the educational system towards the British practice and coincided with the re-orientation of the colony's trade from Britain to the United States. The American Jesuits, many of whom were of German and Irish birth and were negatively disposed towards the British, brought with them an alternative metropolitan orientation that, within a relatively few decades, would pose a serious challenge to the British cultural hegemony.[2]

The Jesuit Mission, with its large congregation and access to considerable American financing, was the most energetic in establishing new schools. By the turn of the century, it had completely outpaced competing denominations in bringing education to the districts.[3]

Influenced by the contemporary rise in anti-clericalism in Mexico and Guatemala, the Jesuits also sought to attract students from the surrounding republics.

In the wake of the global depression of the 1930s and the disastrous hurricane of 1931, the Jesuits focused their still-growing efforts more locally, pioneering institutions to further social justice and increase in political power of their congregation. Among its students in the 1930s, were virtually all the nationalist leaders of the 1950s. In the turbulent years of the early 1950s, the Extension Department of St. John's College offered night classes in trade unionism and related subjects to the general public.

By the mid-1950s, at every level of educational endeavour--primary and secondary schools, teacher training, sixth form, scholarships to foreign to universities--the Catholics were unequalled by the efforts of the other denominations and the Government. They enrolled over two-thirds of the primary school students and the vast majority of those in secondary programs (Education Dept. 1954). Until the early 1960s they held a virtual monopoly over secondary education in the districts outside of Belize. This expansion was conducted largely without the financial support of the colonial state, relying largely on contributions from the United States and, to a much lesser extent, the payment of school fees, to maintain, and expand their institutions. However, Catholic influence over educational practice and policy remained limited to their own school subsystems.

A New phase in American influence was ushered in with the Education Ordinance of 1962 and the advent of self-rule two years later. The first contingent of Peace Corps volunteers arrived that year, initiating official United States assistance to Belize. The Ordinance dissolved the denomination-controlled Board of Education

and gave a Belizean-controlled Ministry of Education exclusive direction over educational policy. Although highly-symbolic, its effects on practice was limited. The Church-State partnership remained as the basis for the school system and the denominations continued to manage their schools separately and make their own decisions as to how and when they were to be expanded (Ashcraft and Grant 1968). As late as 1966, the Belizean Government saw its role as only supporting educational plans "...devised and set into operation by the private institutions existing in the country" (quoted in Ashcraft and Grant 1968:178).

The Government's laissez faire policy benefitted the Jesuit Mission most, since with its large congregation and lucrative U.S. connections, it was in a far stronger position to make its own initiatives than the smaller Anglican and Methodist churches. Given the close connection between the Jesuit Mission and the People's United Party hierarchy, the benefits of this policy were hardly coincidental.

A Still common interpretation among Protestant educators and others is that Belizean educational policy during the 1960s was purposely biased in favor of the Catholics and "set up to ruin" the Protestant school systems. They point to the close connections between the leadership of the ruling People's United Party, most of whom attended Catholic schools, and the expatriate hierarchy of the Jesuit Mission. During the late 1960s, the newspaper Amandala accused two of the most prominent Jesuit leaders of running the Ministry of Education and being "almost co-Premiers of the country," (*Amandala,* 1 October 1969). By contrast, many of the political opposition were graduates of the Anglican and Methodist school system. The whole question of Catholic influence on policy formation involves complex issues of race, religion, and politics that go beyond the scope of this paper and begs further research into a relatively unexamined area of the Belizean past.

Whatever interpretation of the not-so-distant past one privileges, however, it is arguable that several aspects of Catholic educational practice were adopted for system-wide use, with long term implications for all Belizean schools. In a decision that reflected the influence of Catholic educators, in 1969, the Belize Association of Principals of Secondary Schools (BAPSS) adopted the American STS exam to determine entrance into every secondary school in the country. This move was strongly opposed by the Protestant boards of management, but to no avail. Used previously only by Catholic schools, the Common Entrance Exam (CEE), as it was called, was replaced by the government-designed Belize National Selection Exam (BNSE) in 1981.

Another American exam first introduced by the Catholic schools remains widespread use in Belize and shows little indication of being replaced in the near future. The American College Test (ACT) is used to determine entrance into the nation's four Sixth Form Programs. As the secondary school curriculum is oriented to the syllabi of the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC), the use of an exam designed for American syllabi places many students at a disadvantage. Increasingly, students desiring to attend United States universities also take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

Sixth Form as a whole currently embodies more of the cross-influences and contradictions present in the Belizean educational system than the primary or secondary levels. The very name of this level of post-secondary education represents the enduring British legacy in the structure of schooling--schools are not divided into "grades", but "standards" (primary) and "forms" (secondary). However, in context, external connections, and trajectories of students, Sixth Forms are increasingly American in orientation.

In 1969, St. John's College Sixth Form became a member of the American Association of Junior Colleges and began to award the Associate's Degree at the end of Sixth Form studies. The Belize Technical College, once a model of British vocational pedagogy, also adopted this practice sometime after its third reorganization in the early 1970s (UNESCO 1983:A/3). The bestowal of an Associate's degree (A.A.) facilitates the transfer of Sixth Form graduates into American universities. According to teachers, student in interest in and performance on the Cambridge Advanced or 'A-Level' Examination--the traditional terminus of a Sixth Form educa-

tion-has been steadily declining, especially at St. John's College. This represents not only a change in the pattern of preference, but opportunity as well, since A-level results are the prime criteria for access to Commonwealth universities and, most importantly, for the determination of scholarships. As one Sixth Form teacher explained it:

> The [GCE 'A' Level] exams are in June, after the diploma exam and the SAT. Many students have begun celebrating already and don't study for the 'A' levels because it is not important to them. They have little meaning for them because they don't help them get to where they want to go [the U.S.].

From interviews and survey data collected during 1986 and 1987, it is clear that contemporary Belizean students overwhelmingly prefer the prospect of American higher education to British, West Indian, Canadian, and Latin American universities. A nation-wide survey of secondary school students conducted during the 1987/88 academic year, found that almost half of the respondents (including more than 80 percent of those intending to complete a university degree) planned or hoped to go abroad to complete their education. Of these, three-quarters identified the United States as their desired destination. The second-largest group, some 9 percent, did not express a preference. Of the remainder, 5 percent stated they intended to study in the West Indies, 4 percent each in Britain and Mexico/Guatemala, and 2 percent in Canada, while 1 percent expressed their desire to attend school in Cuba, even though the exchange program with thin country is currently inoperative.[4]

No systematic survey was conducted among Sixth Form students, but from interviews and conversations it appeared the United States was the most popular choice for higher education, although more Sixth Formers, especially at Belize Technical College, expressed a somewhat greater interest in the University of the West Indies than their secondary school counterparts. The reasons given for preferring the United States at both levels were similar: perceived higher quality of education, family connections, living standards, and availability of scholarships. Many saw an American degree as a ticket to obtaining a job and/or residence in the United States. Others claimed that U.S. credentials were more valued in Belize. A number of students acknowledged that since the United States had "taken over" in Belize, it would therefore be useful to get further acquainted with the American way of doing things. Acquaintance does not mean acquiescence, several of those who expressed this opinion believed that the knowledge so gained would eventually help Belizeans deal more effectively with the United States. "We need to be able to speak your language to make you respect us," said one.

The pattern of preferences expressed by the students contrasts markedly with a list of Belizeans studying abroad compiled by the Ministry of Education in 1985, which showed over half of the 138 individuals studying at institutions in the West Indies. Slightly less than a quarter were in such neighbouring countries as Mexico, Panama, and Costa Rica. Only 8 percent of those listed were in American institutions, while 10 percent were enrolled in programs in the United Kingdom (Ministry of Education files). However, this list was acknowledged by Ministry officials as being "considerably" incomplete. What proportion of Belizeans studying abroad at the time represented by the list is uncleared, but considering there is no mention of the sizable number of students on Jesuit scholarships, self-financed study, or emigres matriculating at their own expense, it most definitely undercounts Belizeans studying abroad.

In recent years, the availability of scholarships to the U.S. universities has grown rapidly. Many of these are the results of USAID programs, such as the Central American Peace Scholarships (CAPS), which will be described more fully in a later section. Still, a significant number of awards from other sources--British Overseas Development Assistance, the Mexican Cultural Exchange Program, the Commonwealth, and the Belizean Government itself--continue to exist. Given the cost of higher education abroad, the availability of scholarships rather than preference will determine where students will go. The pattern of preferences indicated by secondary

school students are then perhaps more representative of prevailing cultural orientations and trends than realistic appraisals of existing opportunities.

A final example of the pervasiveness of American influence through the medium of Catholic education may seem relatively innocuous, but signifies the extent and nature of the penetration of Belizean life by U.S. culture. In the last twenty-years, American-style graduation rituals, a practice first introduced by Catholic schools and reenforced generations of Peace Corps and other American volunteer teachers, have become regular features of the Belizean educational landscape, from pre-schools to university. Along with caps and gowns and the familiar strains of "Pomp and circumstance," come accompanying styles of cultural consumption and status display. Parents can easily spend more than the equivalent of a year's tuition to "adequately" celebrate the event with clothes, gifts, and parties. The traditionally Anglophilic Protestant schools remain more resistant to this practice (they do without caps and gowns, but students celebrate in similar fashions), but their graduates have high rates of emigration to the United States.[5]

PEACE CORPS

Next to the Jesuit Mission, the Peace Corps represents the most enduring American presence in Belizean schooling. However, it was only one of several organizations that provided volunteer teachers to work in the expanding school system in the 1960s and 1970. For most of this period, every secondary school had at least one, and sometimes several volunteers on staff. The U.S.-based Papal Volunteers (now replaced by the Jesuit International Volunteer or JIV program) taught in the Roman Catholic schools, while British Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) laboured in Protestant and government institutions. From the start, volunteers taught not only those subjects in which teachers were in short supply, such as math and science, but academic courses as well. While all the volunteer programs were intended as short-term measures until enough qualified Belizean were trained, they have remained, albeit in fewer schools, as regular features of teaching staffs. As late as 1980, non-nationals represented as much as 18 percent of all secondary school teachers and 35 percent of those with post-secondary degrees (UNESCO 1983: A/2).[6] Unlike the other volunteer programs the Peace corps is a government agency, directly beholden to U.S. foreign policy goals. Until independence it was the primary conduit for bilateral aid between the United States and Belize. The first contingent of 33 Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in September, 1962. At that time, the program had three goals (1) to provide needed trained manpower; (2) to promote understanding of Americans by Belizeans, and (3) to promote understanding of Belizeans by Americans. As with subsequent contingents, the largest group of PCVs were employed in education, mostly in secondary schools. The number of volunteers rose steadily in subsequent years, as the other programs shrank towards the end of the decade. The VSO left entirely sometime during the 1970s, but returned after independence. By 1967, with 46 volunteers, Belize had the highest ratio of PCVs to host country citizenry in the Peace Corps world (Peace Corps 1967:4). The following year the number of volunteers almost doubled, to a total of 85 (Ibid:6). Subsequently, the Belizean government placed a ceiling on the number of PCVs it would accept as 60 (SERD 1977:ii).

Following the ascension to power of the United Democratic Party in December, 1984, there was 130 PCVs in the country, one for roughly every 1300 Belizeans (Donizeger 1987:28). Although the Peace Corps goal remained the same, "meeting skilled manpower needs necessary for development", there was a definite shift of emphasis in the Reagan-era Peace Corps mission. Training programs to promote the Belizean private sector were emphasized alongside, even if ahead of, traditional Peace Corps activities like schooling and rural community development. This emphasis on private sector training worked hand in hand with the major thrust of USAID efforts in development assistance. Still, the formal educational sector absorbed the largest numbers of volunteers. Ascertaining exactly how many of volunteers were engaged in education is difficult, since consid-

erable numbers of them had no fixed job, or moved rapidly between posting. According to one source, 82 of the PCVs worked as teachers, teacher trainers, resource personnel and curriculum specialists (AED 1988:II-14).

Seventeen Volunteers worked as secondary school teachers, one more than the total 19 years earlier (Peace Corps 1967:4). This contrasts markedly with an outside evaluation made in 1977, which stated that it was "...likely that the PC/B phase-out of secondary education, which is already underway, can be completed by 1981" (SERD 1977:III-8). It is important to note, however, that neither the Peace Corps staff nor the Government of Belize concurred in this assessment, even though the same report concluded that "there is reason to believe that PCVs may be displacing Belizeans or occupying positions for which qualified Belizeans could be hired" (Ibid.).

With the increased number of volunteers, this is doubly true a decade later, as Belizean schools have been turning out more graduate skills in vital subjects like science and math. There are a number of reasons, apart from a cheap way for the U.S. to "show the flag", why there are still significant numbers of PCVs working in the educational system. The most important is that, since the United States pays the cost of the volunteers, they, are free labour to Belizean government. Seventeen teachers may not seem like much, but the equivalent salaries of Belizeans in there places would constitute a significant amount of the budgets of certain secondary schools. The decision as to where Peace Corps teachers are to be assigned is not solely up to the Ministry of Education in non-government schools, but the local management of the school. The flood of Peace Corps has provoked a backlash among some educators and the general populace. At least two principals will not tolerate PCVs on their staffs, although they welcome the presence of other volunteer programs like JIV and VSO. Another principal is openly critical and distrustful of the American presence in Belize, but asks for more Peace corps each year because of the money they can bring into the financially-strapped school. Peace Corps teachers frequently report being alienated from Belizean colleagues and parents.

The remaining reasons are applicable to all volunteer programs in general: Peace Corps, VSO, JIV, and the small program from Boston College, which operate in two schools in the Corozal District. It has to do with the way the volunteer programs are structured and where certain schools are located. Although there may well be enough qualified Belizeans to fill half, if not all, the post currently occupied by volunteers (in Donizeger 1987:30), the program consists equally of getting those individuals where they are needed, that is to say, in the district schools. Volunteer teachers are generally, but not exclusively, found in secondary schools located in towns in the rural areas. The highest concentrations are in the four newest schools, all of which are government-managed institutions with a "technical-vocational bias". At one of these schools during 1986/87 academic year, foreign volunteers constituted one-half the total staff, with all four volunteer programs represented. At the three other schools, PCVs taught math, science, and some vocational courses, while VSO personnel provided instruction in a wide range of technical-vocational subjects. JIV and Boston College volunteers are more generalists, but frequently teach business and coach school sports teams.

The crucial problem of program structure revolves around the utter lack of counterpart training, which necessitates the continuous replacement of volunteers. Eventually, these positions should be filled by graduates of these programs after they have received further training in Belize City or abroad. However, along with the cheap labour provided by the volunteers, the locations of schools and the contemporary nature of the teaching profession militates against the complete replacement of foreign teachers. Virtually every secondary school is beset by a high turnover rate of faculty. Even the most seasoned, skilled and motivated teachers "burn out" under the strain of inadequate salaries,heavy workloads,the incessant pressure to produce better external exam result, and the vicissitudes of school and community politics.

Many schools operate without the necessary full complement of teachers. A large number of the younger teachers view teaching as only a stepping stone occupation rather than a career. Many complain, with good reason, that the low salaries they are paid are insufficient to raise a family on. Most importantly, the advanced training in both the scientific and technical-vocational fields that is necessary to replace volunteers also provides alternative, more desirable careers than teaching, both in Belize and abroad. While these problems occur in all schools, they are more acute in those located in the districts. For a variety of reasons, it is extremely difficult to attract and, most importantly, keep, the most qualified teachers in schools located outside of Belize City.

Opportunities for advanced training in vital fields are also seriously limited, although some new USAID programs have been set up to alleviate this "bottleneck" through both in-service and foreign study programs. The effectiveness of these programs has yet to be demonstrated, though. A major blow to the local provision of this kind of training came with the dismantling of BELCAST in 1985. The University College of Belize, which was erected in its place, does not have provision for these kind of training. Instead, the emphasis at UCB is turning out graduates with business and managerial skills, an orientation that is consonant with USAID aims of stimulating private sector growth.

As long as there are ready supplies of volunteers, it will be easier and cheaper to use them rather than to hire qualified Belizean teachers in the science and technical fields. However, if the government increases salaries to attract these people away from alternative career paths or emigration, there will be little money left over for the operation and expansion of new and needed, especially in the vocational-technical fields (AED 1989: IV-3).

PRIVATE AND VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

The 1960s saw the advent of additional private as well as U.S. assistance. By the mid-1970s, there was a total of 14 American organizations providing aid programs in a variety of areas, including education (TAIC 1976). The number has increased since then and may also be considered to include several Belizean emigre groups in the United States which have established scholarship programs for needy students (eg. the Belizean Cosmopolitan Benevolent Association, the concerned Belizean Association of Los Angeles, etc.). Generally, however, PVO programs are relatively small and have had little impact on educational policy and practice. Two important exceptions have been Cooperative for Americans Relief Everywhere (CARE) and the Michigan Partners.

Although CARE has been active in Belize since, its participation in educational activities stems from 1976 when it introduced an experimental primary school program known as REAP.7 Initially the program sought to make rural primary schools more effective and relevant terminal educational institutions by emphasizing the transmission of agricultural skills and knowledge. A series of evaluations have demonstrated the REAP has been successful not only in transmitting agricultural skills to rural students, but improving performance in more traditional academic areas as well(Massey 1983; AED 1988). Liaison with the Ministry of Education is through a REAP Advisory Counsel. In the mid-1980s, CARE initiated a program, known as GROWTH (Gaining relevant Orientation to Work, Training, and Health), to provide short-term, low-interest loans and other assistance to enable graduates of REAP programs to start small agricultural enterprises of their own, such as beekeeping and chicken farming.

In its early years, the program was marred by considerable failures, as the enterprises could not generate enough early profits to pay back the loans. Peace Corps volunteers have been employed by the REAP project since its inception, as well as with GROWTH. Both projects have received substantial financial support from USAID in recent years.

The Michigan Partners of the Americas represent a different sort of voluntary organization, "not unlike the Peace Corps, but not as highly structured" (Michigan Partners Annual Report 1988/89). The program was composed of Michi-

gan businessmen and educators working with prominent Belizeans to devise programs to assist Belize in achieving self-sufficiency by the time independence arrived (Latin American Reports n.d.:16). Education was one of the more successful areas of activity, with the partners providing scholarships and needed educational materials like books. Other areas of activity, like business and investment, were less successful. Prior to 1970, when it was known as the Partners of the Alliance (for Progress), this volunteer program operated within the institutional structure of USAID. Now a completely private sector organization, the partners have,in recent years, reduced their activities in Belize. With their emphasis of development through the private sector, the Michigan Partners foreshadowed the dominant thrust of recent efforts by USAID.

THE ROLE OF USAID

In its initial Country Development Strategy Statement, USAID identified the educational sector as crucial to the attainment of mission objectives, which were to ensure that Belize remained "politically stable, economically viable, and linked through economic and other ties with the U.S. and other friendly nations of the Caribbean"(USAID 1983:xi,42). To this end, the initial USAID assistance package included a number of "human resource development" programs to bolster both formal and informal education. After the sizable reduction in assistance beginning in 1987, USAID has chosen to concentrate its efforts in a few human resource development programs, even expanding the scope ad funding of certain projects(USAID 1988).

Although they share similar aims, to make education and training relevant to the development needs of the country, the relationship between USAID officials and the Ministry of Education is marked by tension, as the two parties bring different interests and priorities to the effort. The most fundamental conflict centers around the following. The Belizean school system is in need of comprehensive, long-term assistance at all levels: primary, secondary, tertiary, and teacher training (UNESCO 1983; Ministry of Education 1984). By contrast, U.S. objectives are focussed on a limited number of short-term projects in the areas of technical and managerial training. As one USAID official remarked to me, agency activities in education are "a quick fix" aimed at getting "the most bang for our buck."

The centerpiece of the USAID effort is the training for Education and Productivity (TEP) project. Begun in 1985, its initial goals were to address deficiencies "in critical management, public administration, and technical skills necessary to promote the growth of export- and tourism-oriented enterprises"(USAID 1985:39). The TEP project aimed specifically at (1) reconstituting the Belize Institute of Management (BIM) to provide in-country training for public administrators and private sector personnel, (2) strengthening vocational/training education efforts of the Ministry of Education through the establishment of a Vocational-Technical Training Unit as well as grants of equipment, skill training for teachers, and furthering coordination between educators and private educators through the formation of the Belize Vocational Association;and (3), providing baseline data on manpower needs and evaluation of ongoing and past programs (Ibid.).

The main emphasis of TEP is not on the formal educational sector. Rather, management and skill training received over one-half of the initial project budget (Brashich 1987). Approximately 470 private sector persons, received management training in 1987 and a further 854 in 1988, a full 42 percent more than expected. Over 700 Government of Belize employees received training through BIM by early 1989(USAID 1989:60). USAID anticipates that over 500 individuals from the business community will receive training in each year through 1991. While it is too early to assess the effects of this aspect of the TEP program in qualitative terms, i.e. how will it actually affect the way things are done in Belize, it seems likely that it will produce a cadre of personnel in both private business and the public service who will be imbued with a distinctly American form of business know-how which favors the private over the public sector. While they are needed in Belize, management skills are not simply value-neutral

techniques to more efficiently conduct the business at hand, they carry an ideological baggage that influences the ways in problems are defined, priorities set, and actions taken.

The Ministry of Education component of TEP has been expanded from the original project proposal in 1985. Initially, USAID input consisted of the following: helping establish a Vocational-Technical Training Unit within the Ministry of Education; assist in the drafting of a National Vocational Plan; providing in-service training for existing vocational teachers; the development of a competency-based curriculum, and providing for the upgrading and equipping of two key vocational-technical schools. The most recent USAID "Action Plan" calls for increased assistance to all nine government-managed vocational-technical secondary schools by 1992(USAID 1989:70).

As vocational-technical educational has long been the most underdeveloped and least-prestigious sector of the school system, increased assistance is most needed. However, if the program is successful it will, in the long run, lead to the further "Americanization" of the school system. Prior to TEP, the guiding pedagogy of technical education was of British derivation and certification bestowed through British exams, such as the City and Guilds of London. As TEP progresses, the emphasis will shift to American institutions and procedures. The in-service training for teachers has been organized by the West Virginia Institute of Technology and the University of Northern Florida. The new "competency-based curricula" will likewise be oriented to American norms and U.S. certification methods.

Another problematic aspect of TEP is that the program will benefit only certain sectors of the school system, e.g. the nine government-managed secondary schools with a vocational-technical bias. Concerns were raised at the First Annual convention of the Belize Vocational Association (another TEP creation) in April, 1987 that private or community -run schools would see none of the considerable money, equipment, or teacher skill-training allocated by USAID. This would placed non-governmental schools that possessed vocational-technical curricular tracks, like Stann Creek Ecumenical College, at a particular disadvantage. Nor would it encourage or enable the majority of non-governmental schools that lacked any sort of vocational program, save commercial or business studies, to develop curricular offerings that would be better connected to the needs of the Belizean economy and society. The second major feature of the USAID effort in education, after TEP, is the Central American Peace Scholarship (CAPS) program. An outgrowth of the Kissinger Commission Report of 1982, it is more overtly political in nature and consists of a number of awards for short-term (up to 3 months) and long-term (2-3 years, some full degree programs) study in the United States. The project is aimed foremost at increasing "the direct exposure to American principles of democracy and freedom of those people who have traditionally been targeted for training in Soviet and bloc countries"(USAID 1989:72). It has the secondary goal of enabling recipients to be "more effective and productive in their professions, thus contributing positively to the development of Belize" (Ibid.). Thus, the primary object of CAPS would appear to be ideological, rather than instructional.

Most of the awards granted since the project's inception in 1984 have been of the short-term variety. Almost two hundred people --youth leaders,school principals, micro-entrepreneurs, among them--have received training at a number of institutions in the United States, included Ferris State University. The goal is that over 300 will receive training under CAPS before the project's completion in 1991. The most recent USAID Action Plan includes yet another scholarship program to complement CAPS. Known as the Development Training scholarships Program, it is aimed at handling training needs not covered by existing projects, primary in the private sector (USAID 1989:79). The effectiveness of CAPS will be difficult to measure. Through television, most Belizeans already have a direct, intensive exposure to the United States. This is not just limited to popular culture;through news programs the exposure includes policies as well. In 1987, when the popular afternoon soap operas were preempted by the Iran-Contra

hearings, for example, many Belizeans watched them as religiously. There is considerable reason to question whether the CAPS program will have its anticipated ideological effect. Minds are notoriously difficult to control. Extended study in the U.S. could very well lead to dissatisfaction with the United States and its presence in Belize.

In addition to TEP and CAPS, USAID has funded a number of smaller projects like anti-drug education and through the Basic Needs Trust Fund, the physical expansion of a number of schools. However, USAID is also notable for what it does not support. Primary education and teacher training, two of the most critical areas in need of aid, do not currently receive USAID assistance.

Belize faces serious constraints on its ability to provide the additional school places necessary for its growing school age population. Recent evidence suggests that the proportion of the eligible cohort enrolled in primary schools, currently between 73 and 83 percent, will decline unless more places are provided (AED 1988:). With approximately 22 percent of the budget already allocated to education, over 90 percent of which is devoted to teacher salaries alone(AED 1988), there is little money available for the construction and the equipping of new schools. The Government's traditional partners in schooling, the churches, are also hindered by limited resources. Without additional outside assistance, the Belizean school system faces the very real possibility of contracting after three decades of continuous growth.

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to show the changing forms and intensities of American influence in Belizean education. Consistent throughout has been the notion of "mission", a term which accurately conveys the sense of efforts by both the Jesuits and USAID to convert Belizeans to certain principles and practices. Over time, the emphasis has shifted from religious proselytization to the more secular gospel of private sector growth.

American influence in education has increased at a number of levels. Through USAID, the United Stares has become the single largest-source of financial assistance to the educational sector. American volunteer programs such as Peace Corps and JIV provide the vast majority of non-national teachers. In curriculum and certification, U.S. standards are replacing traditional British models. At the tertiary level, American institutions and scholarships predominate.

The sheer scope of the American presence in schooling has sparked anti-American feelings of varying intensities among sectors of the Belizean populace. The legions of Peace Corps and USAID personnel, as well as the effective control of UCB by an American university, offends the sensibilities of many nationalist Belizeans. Whether this resentment can be translated into actions that will lead to greater national autonomy over schooling is, however, unclear, as Belize will remain uncomfortably dependent on outside sources of assistance for the foreseeable future.

Charles Rutheiser, of Gettysburg College, first presented this paper at the XVth International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association in Miami, Florida, 4-6 December, 1989.

NOTES

1. The source for this quote is an international Peace Corps/British Honduras memo, "a personal message from Woody to all PC/BH volunteers, "found in the uncatologued "Belize file", Peace Corps/Action library, Washington D.C. The memo is undated, but from references to a New Year's greeting" and "our new Secretary of State (William P.) Rogers", it appears to have been written early in 1969. The context of the quote is an education conference organized by the Michigan Partners for the Catholic Education Association and the Belize Teachers Union.

2. As early as 1917, former governor Sir Eric Swayne noted the prevalence of American cultural and commercial influences in Belize, particularly in the area of education:"Owing to the proximity of American markets it is not to be wondered at that the United States secures the lion's share both of imports and exports...The higher educational opportunities of the States also attracts many young people for the finishing of their education. In afterlife they continue to look to the States for inspiration. American magazines and newspapers enter the colony more freely than English literature, and even American books of instruction have been used in our schools"(Swayne 1917:169). Eighteen years later, a succeeding governor, Sir Alan Burns, warned the secretary of State for the colonies that Belizeans were becoming "more Americans than British in their outlook" through cinema, trade, and education (quoted in Bolland 19-87:69).

3. Rural schools were invariably inferior in almost every regard to those in Belize City. Although there has been some improvement, gross discrepancies between rural and urban schools continue to exist in the state of the facilities, quantity of the staff, and other features of the educational environment (see esp. Ashcraft and Grant 1968;AED 1988).

4. The survey was conducted among the students in the senior-most form of thirteen secondary schools through out Belize in the fall of AY 1987/88. Approximately 40% of all fourth formers took part in the study (n=835), which solicited information on a wide range of sociocultural, economic, and educational issues. The school sample was selected to ensure proportional inclusion of schools from all districts, as well as types of management and curricular orientation. A full discussion of survey results can be found in C.Rutheiser, "Culture, Schooling and Underdevelopment in Belize", a Ph.D dissertation currently nearing completion.

An additional 20 percent of respondents indicated that they intend to emigrate following the completion of schooling in Belize. The overwhelming destination was the United States, with most preferring Los Angeles and its environs. Better employment opportunities and higher quality of living are cited as the main reasons for this group. The majority of respondents, however, indicated that migration would only be "temporary" (although this could be as long as several years) and they would eventually return to Belize. It is unclear, however, how many of this group will actually emigrate.

5. The tracer study involved four secondary schools--St.John's College, Wesley College, Excelsior High School, and Stann Creek Ecumenical College. Attempts were made to ascertain the current whereabouts and employment status of graduates from a ten year period (1977-1987). Emigration rates for Wesley College graduates consistently averaged over 50 percent during the period 1977-82. The Anglican secondary schools, St. Michael's and St. Hilda's colleges, now consolidated in one institution--Anglican Cathedral College--was not part of the study. However, through interviews with students, staff, and alumni, emigration also appears to be equally high.

6. Included in this figure are a half-dozen or so American priests connected with the Jesuit Mission and a number of nuns with U.S. citizenship. A few teachers also held British or West Indian citizenship.

7. Originally, the acronym stood for Rural Education and Agriculture Program. However, after the experimental, and ultimately unsuccessful, extension of the program to urban primary schools, the project is now known as "Relevant Education for Agricultural Production."

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Charles Rutheiser's Patterns of American Influence In Belizean Schooling

A Commentary

By J. Alexander Bennett

CHARLES RUTHEISER'S paper presents an interesting analysis of the growing presence of agencies of U.S. origin in Belize and their influence on formal education in this country. However, he also suggests that Belizeans are aware of this American presence and its actual and potential influence, are critical of it and do what they can, when they can, to avoid becoming prey to its "neo-colonial orientation."

Belize, like other Third World countries, is very heavily dependent on external source in its efforts to further its "economic, political and cultural autonomy." The U.S.A. knows this and in its endeavor to ensure its dominance in the Caribbean and Central American region regards Belize, an ex-British, English - speaking, "tranquil haven of democracy," as having some strategic value. This is the reason for the growing presence of such agencies as USAID and the Peace Corps in Belize. However, Rutheiser's paper is concerned principally with American influence in the formal educational system, which, he suggests has not been purely negative and "erosive of national sovereignty or contrary to development goals."

The body of the paper concentrates on what the author identifies as three phases in the "evolution of American influence in Belizean education." Firstly, the period from 1883 - 1962;secondly, the period from about 1963 to just after independence in 1981 and;thirdly, the period since then.

The first period is linked with the activities of the Catholic Church in Belize, particularly those of the Jesuits. The author attempts to demonstrate the role of the Catholic Church in orientating the educational system to American influences through its engagement in the field of formal education at all levels, the close relationship of the Jesuit mission with the P.U.P. government, the introduction of certain American tests into the school system and the establishment of the American type programmes of junior college education at the sixth form level. While such interventions were led by priests and nuns of U.S. origin, for the most part they had to be adapted to the British colonial pattern in the schools and the school curriculum. At the secondary school and sixth form levels students prepared for the Cambridge School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate examinations. These British external examinations (later replaced by G.C.E. Ordinary and Advanced levels) determined the curriculum of the schools including St John's College a Jesuit institution and St Catherine Academy run by the Sisters of Mercy. The writer does not give any attention to primary education and the training of primary school teachers where American influence was minimal during the first phase identified by the writer. The vast majority of Belizeans did not go beyond primary education and for the eight or nine years of schooling were taught primarily by Belizean teachers who were certified locally. Two training colleges existed between 1954 and 1964, a government and a Catholic institution, the latter run by Catholic priests and nuns. However, both were associated with the University of the West Indies which played a significant role in deciding curriculum and procedures for teacher training and certification. The situation remains the same today.

During the second phase (1963 - 1983), the Peace Corps volunteers became active in the Belizean educational system and have increased in their numbers and their activities over the years. The

writer's analysis of the role of Peace Corps Volunteers in the Belizean school system is certainly accurate both with regard to his perceptions of the American agenda and the response by the Belizean society. The U.S.A. sees Peace Corps Volunteers as good ambassadors of their country and, as a rule, that message is well received by Belizeans. Belizeans, furthermore, regard Peace Corps Volunteers as "meeting skilled manpower needs necessary for development." Oftentimes, however, those placed in the schools are young and inexperienced, taking up a good portion of their tour trying to understand the system and the culture as a whole, and by the time they have acquire the necessary skills with which to work proficiently they are about to leave. As a rule, Peace Corps Volunteers are not placed in positions where they can "Americanize" the educational system, and where they do attempt in any obvious way to do so, without authorization, they are corrected or terminated. This commentator feels that Peace Corps Volunteers -- young, willing, friendly Americans -- do have an impact on Belizeans, but this is felt mostly through their extra-curricular activities with students and through their social living among Belizeans.

The writer has referred to BELCAST which was established during the second phase identified and dismantled and replaced by the University College of Belize (UCB) in the final phase. It has now been accepted that allowing UCB to be controlled by Ferris State University was a huge mistake, because it was a situation tantamount to educational colonialism. However, the American influence commenced even from the inception of BELCAST whose programmes were based on what obtains in the U.S.A. and it is interesting to note that the American influence on BELCAST had come, not from external sources but from within the institution whose President, Vice President and the most influential staff members were graduates of American universities.

UCB is free of Ferris State University, today, but it is seeking affiliation with a consortium of U.S. Universities and its President, Vice President and influential faculty members are graduates of U.S. Universities. Thus we can expect a continuing pattern of American influence in it's programmes and academic culture. This is not to state that such influence is necessarily detrimental to the life of the institution. It is simply a comment in support of the writer's position that there is a growing American influence within the Belizean educational system.

Today, there is an increasing number of agencies of U.S. origin and affiliation at work in Belize, and quite often they impact on the school system. One such agency has been CARE which was heavily involved in the implementation of REAP. However, CARE did not originate REAP. It was the Ministry of Education, which, nevertheless, involved CARE the Peace Corps and HEIFER International in a multiple-agency effort to launch an integrated curriculum in certain rural schools. CARE did influence REAP through the engagement of an external evaluator from the U.S.A. who adapted an initially locally designed program to the design of a curriculum project in career education originating in Florida. However, CARE's involvement in REAP was expected to be short term. Nevertheless, it remained active in the project from 1976 to about 1986 when it withdrew its assistance, concentrating instead on the GROWTH project. Throughout CARE's involvement in REAP, however, the American influence was well balanced by local efforts through the advisory Committee comprised of representatives from the external agencies as well as from those of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Agriculture.

In the opinion of this commentator, Michigan Partners has not had a big impact on the school system. In the 1960s and 1970s it provided a number of University scholarships, but not necessarily to train teachers. Since that time its training funds for Belize have dried up and there is no evident interest in Washington in providing any more. Today, the main activity of Michigan Partners is confined to giving travel grants for Belizeans, mostly outside of the educational system, to visit Michigan for them to obtain some exposure to new ideas in their fields of work. Incidentally, Mr Rutheiser has made a small error in stating that Michigan Partners is a completely private sector organization. In a sense it is, since its members are volunteers from the community who come together and form an executive body. There is also Belize Partners in Belize. However, the Partners

of the Alliance is within the frame-work of the U.S. government and it provides the funds which enable visitors to travel between Belize and Michigan under the Belize-Michigan partners sponsorship. Admittedly, however, the partners is an agency dedicated to influencing the countries it collaborates with towards a love of American capitalism and democracy.

Rutheiser's statements about the intended objectives of the USAID mission in Belize cannot be gainsaid. While the agency is making itself involved in the area of vocational-technical education, a field of stated high priority in the Belizean government's development plans, it does have as its over-reaching political objectives the extension of U.S. dominance in this part of the world. To these two ends USAID is sparing no efforts to ensure its interventions in the educational system. It is doing so with some results although it is too early to make any conclusive judgement as to how its efforts will eventually impact on the school system.

One has to agree with the writer's conclusion that "American influence in education has increased at a number of levels." This has been brought about, not solely because of any deliberate mission, religious or secular, by the United States of America, but also because of an ongoing process of acculturation towards the American way of life over generations through in-migration and out-migration between the U.S.A. and Belize.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

J. Alexander Bennett, MA (University of London) is a former Chief Education Officer of Belize. He has written extensively on educational policy in Belize.

Characters and Caricatures in Belizean Folklore.

By Meg Craig
(Belize City, Belize: Angelus Press, 1991).
Price: $15.00

Reviewed by Charles T. Hunter, S.J.

THERE IS A CERTAIN SUITABILITY that a review of this collection of Belizean Folklore should be done for *Belizean Studies*. At least a handful of the characters are referred to in articles published in the journal over the past twenty years.

The genesis of *Characters and Caricatures in Belizean Folklore* is rooted in Carifesta 1975. On his return from the cultural gathering, the late Ronald Clarke started the Festival Grand Market in Belize and invited Meg Craig to mount the first display of characters from Belizean folklore. The project grew over some fifteen years from a family project into a national venture. What we have now is an altogether handy and charming volume that will be a delight to youngsters, a storehouse for teachers, a joy to the discerning reader and, an inspiration to local artists.

One year before Carifesta, George McKesey published, *The Belizean Lingo*, his glossary of regional Creole at the end of which he added a couple of Belizean folk tales and the proverbial wisdom found in A.H. Anderson's *Brief Sketch of British Honduras*(1963). That same year Shirley Ward collected and transcribed eight folk stories from Belize in *We Jus Catch Um*. In 1979 Ervin Beck of Goshen College published in typescript two volumes of *Creole Folk Tales From Belize* which were a continuation of his earlier *A Collection of Folk Tales Told in Belizean Creole English* (1977). To these three workbooks he added a fourth, *Creole Folk Songs from Belize* (1979). He left copies of these four workbooks in the Belizean Studies collection at St. John's College where they are available for the use of researchers. McKesey and Ward were precursors, Beck had supplied the raw stuff, but Meg Craig's dogged perseverance has graced us with the first finished product which can be put into the hands of the young student,the busy teacher,the curious reader and the artist in search of inspiration.

Characters and Caricatures is a collection of Belizean folktale, handsomely illustrated in color by young artists. The booklet is a product about Belizean folk, by Belizean folk and for Belizean folk. In a foreword, Hon. Vildo Marin, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education and Culture, expresses gratitude for "a project whose benefits will be reaped by generations of Belizeans."

The acknowledgements list a full page of family friends, students, teachers whosesolidarity helped Meg Craig collect the lore. Dr. Palacio, Resident Tutor, University of the West Indies, in a comprehensive introduction stated boldly:"For today's artists - the song-writer, painter, playwright, poet, choreographer, and novelist - the folktale bristle with virgin subject matter that is uniquely Belizean and available for creativity." The twenty items involving some seventeen preternatural creatures - decide for yourself who are the characters, who caricatures! There are twenty-eight colourful paintings, all by budding Belizean artists. Then there are fifty eight pages of fun. The interesting alternative forms of the names of the characters are given at the end of each item but the busy teacher could profit from a key to their pronunciation - especially the Maya names with frequently recurring 'x'.

For a long time writers of the West Indies asked the vexing and not altogether unloaded question: Can anything good come out of the Caribbean? The question was deliberately rhetorical - like the one asked by the naive Nathaniel about Nazareth. *Characters and Caricatures* is something good and - -it comes out of Belize.

The men and women of the Middle Passage were disadvantaged even in the aftermath of slavery. They had little educational opportunity. Masters manacled their limbs but no one could hand-cuffed their creative imagination. And so, long before education was available to slaves, they kept their creative imagination alive in shared folklore: folktale, folk wisdom, folk dance, folk song, folk medicine.

We are only now beginning to appreciate the pre-literate art of the Caribbean - the oral tradition, what Edward Braithwaite has called "orature" as distinct from "literature". The Caribbean poet and critic, Edward Baugh is right in saying that there is no such thing as "only literature". There is the rich heritage of the oral tradition; not to know those riches is to be woefully disinherited.

Characters and Caricatures has already inspired the creative imagination of the young artists who paint their portraits. Ole Heg had already inspired James Martinez, two of whose *Jingles from British Honduras* have found their way into the *Penguin Book of Caribbean Verse*, to write the first of his Granny's Stories for *The Clarion* in 1930. It was Anancy, the super-spiderman, who beat out the rhyming iambic couplets of Colville Young's "Riding Haas"(pp.9, 10) which is a narrative version of his more elaborate Caribbean drama in Wah's selection of plays for Caribbean schools called *Carray!* (1977). In the play *Riding Haas*, Young combines folk tale in the story, folk wisdom in the proverbs and folk song in the choruses which are to be done in at least choral speech.

The pump for the cenote of Belizean folk tales has been primed by the waters of *Characters and Caricatures*. Who will be the next Belizean artist to draw from this living source?

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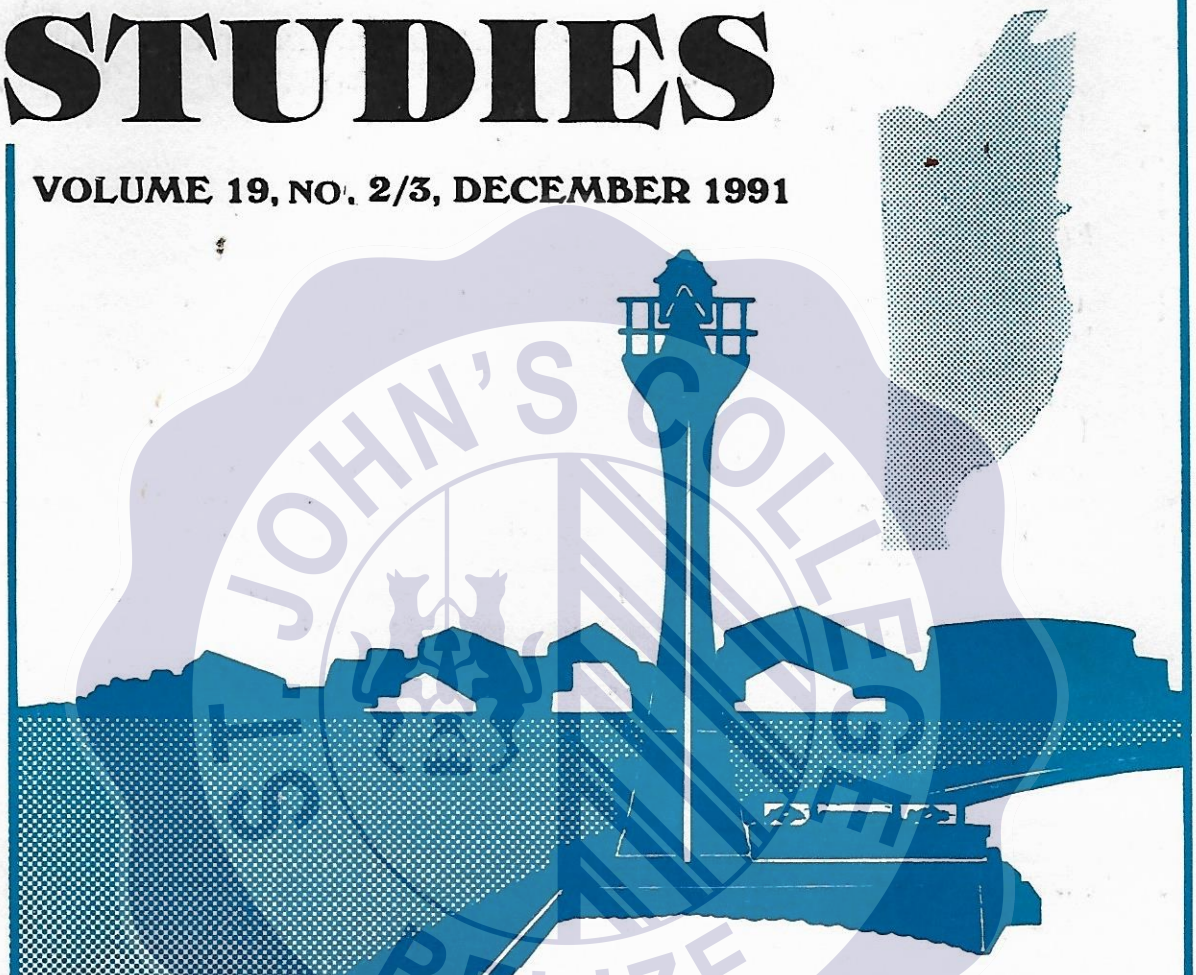

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Belizean Studies
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CONTENTS

Dear Reader:

Three essays in this double issue of Belizean Studies focus on the contemporary and historical relations between Belize and Guatemala. A decade after Belize's achievement of independence, Guatemala has recognized Belize's right to self-determination. The recognition was not accompanied with a complete abandonment of Guatemala's long-standing claim to Belize, and now both nations are in the throes of diplomatic efforts to seek a final solution to the ''territorial dispute''. In Belize the Maritime Areas Bill has been at the center of a national debate precipitated by the explanatory tour across the country of the National Bipartisan Commission, a group of government and opposition politicians charged with the task of developing policy in the negotiations with Guatemala to resolve the dispute. The bill extends Belize's territorial sea to twelve miles with two exceptions: one, in southern Belize, would retain the existing three miles to ensure Guatemala unimpeded access to the Atlantic. President Serrano's declaration of recognition of Belize has not been without opposition. Soon after the declaration, Foreign Minister Alvaro Arzu resigned, and there have been increasing charges that the president's action is unconstitutional. To date these criticisms have not weakened the president's resolve to seek a final settlement.

Dean O. Barrow, a former foreign minister of Belize and a member of the National Bipartisan Commission, launches this issue with his ''Post-War Guatemalan Foreign Policy and the Independence of Belize.'' In his characteristic articulate style he charts the development in Guatemala's posture towards Belize from after 1945 through to the eve of Belize's independence. The essay has languished in the files of the journal since 1981, and had not been published largely because the editors since were unaware of its existence. To its author we offer our sincere apologies. Like good wine it has improved with time and is presented here at a time of increasing national attention on Belize's relations with Guatemala. The second essay in this series comes from the editor's pen, initially a presentation at SPEAR's 5th Studies on Belize conference, it provides a brief discussion of factors in Guatemala which have influenced its relations with Belize since 1981. Karl R. DeRouen's ''Cockburn, Miller and the Shift in British Policy in Belize,'' argues that the granting of land concessions within the Belize area by the Guatemalan government in 1834 led to a renewed official British commitment to Belize. In a different style, Laurie A. Green and Joseph Rubenstein provide us with an opportunity to reflect on changing cultural influences on our celebration of Christmas in ''Christmas and Bramming in Belize City.''

This issue concludes with a review of Zee Edgell's new book, *In Times Like These*: a love story set in Belize on the eve of independence against the backdrop of public protests against the last major effort to solve the Guatemalan dispute;at its core is a powerful critique of the status of women in Belizean society. The challenge of its heroine, Pavana Leslie, is ever present in Belize, ten years after independence: to continue that quest for our true identity in these times. Finally, this issue was completed with the able assistance of Regina Nisbet, Carolyn Williams, Javier Reyes, Octavio Castillo and Gaynor Palacio.

Herman J. Byrd, *Editor*

Dean O. Barrow
POST-WAR GUATEMALAN FOREIGN POLICY AND THE INDEPENDENCE OF BELIZE†

THE CLAIM OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUATEmala to the entire territory of Belize rested historically upon the invocation of the doctrine of *uti possidetis*. When the Spanish colonies of Central and South America proclaimed their independence in the second decade of the 19th century, they adopted a principle of constitutional and international law to which they gave the name of *uti possidetis juris*. According to the rule established by this doctrine, the boundaries of the newly established republics were to be the frontiers of the Spanish provinces they were succeeding.[1] Under the *uti possidetis*, the republic of Guatemala claimed that it was successor in title to the old Spanish Captaincy-General of Guatemala, whose territorial unit, it was contended, had embraced the settlement of Belize in the Bay of Honduras.

While Spain's title by discovery to Belize was undoubted before 1821 (the area having been sighted and named by Columbus in 1502 on his fourth and last expedition),[2] it was never followed up by any effective occupation or administrative control. The actual settling of the territory probably began around 1638, and was undertaken by British subjects who engaged principally in the business of cutting logwood.

In the period following Spain's withdrawal from the American continent, the British continued to maintain and develop their authority over Belize. The Guatemalan claim to sovereignty was resisted on the basis that Spain's title had lapsed after 1821, and it was the British who, by virtue of their occupation and control, had proceeded to acquire a good title in its stead. In the argument, the British were on solid legal footing. Firstly, it was uncertain whether Belize had ever been even nominally a part of the captaincy-general of Guatemala (there never having been a clear demarcation between the jurisdiction of the intendency of Yucatan and that of the captaincy-general of Guatemala).[3] Further, the principle of *uti possidetis* was in any event a purely regional custom in derogation of traditional international law, and having application only among those states which had expressly agreed to be bound by it.[4]

The conflicting claims of sovereignty over Belize continued until April 30th, 1859, when a convention was concluded between Her Majesty's government and the republic of Guatemala. In effect, the 1859 treaty recognized British sovereignty over Belize, and established the boundary lines between the settlement and the republic of Guatemala.

† *Editor's Note: Mr. Barrow's essay was submitted to this journal in 1981. The outcome he suggested at the end of his article, a possible U.S. military underwriting of Belize's independence, a matter of much speculation ten years ago, has not materialized, however, this should not detract from his insightful analysis of developments in Guatemalan foreign policy towards Belize from 1945 up to 1981. He hopes to provide a commentary on developments in Belize-Guatemalan relations since independence in the next issue of Belizean Studies.*

Dean O. Barrow is a former Foreign Minister of Belize and is the Deputy Leader of the United Democratic Party. He is presently an attorney-at-law in Belize City.

Unfortunately for subsequent history, the 1859 treaty contained an article 7 which obliged the high contracting parties "to conjointly use their best efforts . . . for establishing the easiest communication (either by means of a cart road, or employing rivers . . .) between the fittest place on the Atlantic coast near the settlement of Belize and the capital of Guatemala.[5]

The road "or other means of communication" was never built, and the period 1868-1940 was marked by accusations and counter-accusations of responsibility for the non-fulfillment of the provision. In the event, Guatemala in 1940 purported to terminate the 1859 treaty on the grounds of Britain's alleged breach of Article 7. In so doing, she postulated a return to the *status quo ante*, and maintained that her original rights of sovereignty (which Britain had never recognized) had been revived.

It is a moot question whether, assuming there was a breach on Britain's part, the breach could have been construed as sufficiently material to entitle Guatemala to terminate the treaty in its entirety. Further, it is in any event arguable that Guatemala's long delay had stopped her from relying, in 1940, on any putative rights of termination she might have had.[6] Thus, it would appear that the Guatemala claim, whose provenance was already based on a principle of dubious validity, predicated its revival on even shakier grounds of legal scholarship.

Be that as it may, Guatemala served formal notice of her intention to actively pursue measures for the recovery of Belize. The stage was now set for the long history of post-war confrontation that was to ensue.

POST WAR DEVELOPMENTS

THE SO-CALLED FIRST REVOLUTIONARY Guatemalan constitution of March 11, 1945, included the question of Belize in its opening provisions. Article 1 of the Constitution stated: *"Guatemala declara que Belice es parte su territorio, y considera de interés nacional las gestiones encaminadas a lograr su efectiva reincorporación a la República".*[7] With the promulgation of the new constitution, the first salvo in the Guatemalan post-war offensive had been fired.

Initially, the British proposed submission of the dispute to the newly created International Court of Justice at the Hague. Guatemala's stipulation that on any submission the court be empowered to decide the issue *ex aequo et bono* (an equitable principle mitigating the strict rigors of the legally applicable norms), produced a stalemate, but the matter was never brought before the court. Meantime, however, Guatemala was active on the Pan-American level, presenting her case at the Inter-American Security Conference in Rio in 1947, and at the Bogotá meeting of April 1948.[8]

In the early period, the Guatemalan position was cloaked in the garb of an anti-imperialist rhetoric. She represented her struggle over Belize as a struggle to free the American mainland from the vestigial colonial presence of Britain, an extra-hemispheric, imperial power. One is tempted to dismiss this as a posture of convenience, employed by Guatemala to camouflage her own expansionist ambitions. But the immediate post war governments of Juan José Arévalo, and later Jacobo Arbenz, were both nationalistic, left-leaning governments. They may well have believed their own rhetoric.

In the year 1948, Guatemalan diplomatic agitation was intensified, culminating in a note of protest being sent to the British government in consequence of Belize having sent delegates to the conference for the federation of British colonies held in Jamaica.

At about the same time, Guatemalan policy was given its first militaristic expression. Repeated threats to invade Belize were issued from the Guatemalan capital, obliging Britain to dispatch the cruisers Sheffield, Devonshire, and Sparrow to patrol the Belizean coast. In addition, a battalion of British infantrymen was deployed along the border with Guatemala. These moves provoked the closing of the border by Guatemala, and her denunciation of Britain before a meeting of the American commission on dependent territories (which took place in Havana early in 1949).[9] Also, strong protest notes were dispatched by Guatemala; and her president Juan José Arévalo, charging the British with aggression and using for the first time the metaphor of *el tiburón y la sardina* (later to become the title of his impassioned yankee-phobic book), characterized Britain as a voracious

shark bent on destroying the hapless Guatemalan sardine.

Nevertheless, according to the Guatemalan author, Roberto Carpio Nicolle, there is little doubt that President Arévalo had indeed contemplated armed intervention in Belize. It was only the military intercession of the British that aborted this plan.

Very suddenly in 1951, Guatemala reopened the border with Belize. Thereafter, there proceeded a period of relative inactivity on the diplomatic front, interrupted only by the sending of a protest note to Britain in 1952, expressing concern over alleged pressure being exerted to persuade Belize to join the West Indies federation.

The next clearly delineated stage in the confrontation seems to have coincided with the appointment of Licenciado Jorge García Granados as Guatemala's ambassador to London. Up to this point, the dispute had been viewed by both the British and the Guatemalans as a purely bilateral issue. Granados it was who conceived the strategy of seeking to enlist the support of the local populist leaders which the birth of nationalist politics in Belize had produced.

In 1950, following the devaluation of the Belize dollar by the colonial authorities, local protests against deteriorating economic conditions soon developed into a full-fledged political movement. That year resulted in the formal establishment of the People's United Party, a mass-based, nationalist party that began immediately to agitate for decolonization and local control of the political and administrative institutions of the colony.

In 1954, a new constitution promulgated by the colonial office (Belize had been accorded official crown colony status in 1862) introduced universal adult suffrage to Belize, and provided for a legislative assembly consisting of 9 elected and 6 nominated members. Final executive authority was still vested in the colonial governor, who was assisted by an executive council made up of 4 of the elected legislative members and two of the nominated members.

In the first elections held under the new constitution, the recently formed People's United Party won 8 of 9 seats in the legislative assembly. In the 1957 elections, the P.U.P., by this time led by Mr. George Price, succeeded in sweeping all nine of the elected seats. Accordingly, Mr. Price and three others from his party were placed on the executive council, where Mr. Price was made "member for natural resources."[10]

Granados' plan was to secure some form of Belizean pronouncement in favour of the Guatemalan claim. Great Britain could then be denounced with even more fervour as an imperialist interloper, oppressing a subject people who ardently desired its freedom by way of a reintegration with the Guatemalan Fatherland. To this end, Granados in a series of private meetings paid assiduous court to a Price-led, Belize delegation which had journeyed to London at the end of 1957 to seek further constitutional and financial advance for the colony. The fact that secret conversations were being held between Granados and the Belizean Quasi-minister George Price was discovered by the British, provoking a major diplomatic incident and resulting in the suspension of the constitutional talks and the declaration of Granados *persona non grata*.

Even today, the remove of history notwithstanding, opinions remain sharply divided over the precise motives of the Belize delegation in agreeing to private audiences with Granados. Mr. Price, who had briefly attended a Catholic seminary in Guatemala before his political emergence in Belize, had certainly been much influenced by his Latin American experience. His political ideas owed a large ideological debt to the continent's Social Democratic leaders: Haya De La Torre, Rómulo Betancourt, Jose Figueres; and his personal vision, at least in this early period, clearly favoured a Latin destiny for Belize, perhaps as the sixth member of the Central American Confederation, O.D.E.-C.A.

Critics at the time charged that the vision went further. On his return from London, Mr. Price was accused by the colonial governor among others, of having engaged in a plot to deliver Belize to the Guatemalan "lock, stock, and barrel". Mr. Price's partisans have always denied this, and in recent times have sought to promote a revisionist version of the incident. According to this latter interpretation, George Price was and is, above all, a nationalist. He was always fully aware that the Guatemalan policy of reincorporation *vis a vis* Belize would have entailed merely the replacement

of British colonialism by a Guatemalan variant of the same genus. And he had no intention of settling for the dubious achievement of exchanging a European master for a regional one. Rather, Mr. Price was attempting to use the Guatemalan connection as a way of pressuring the British into accepting his demands for accelerated decolonization for Belize (exactly how a flirtation with Guatemala would have effected this has never been made fully clear). In this larger than life version, Mr. Price would thus have succeeded in outmanoeuvreing both the British and Guatemalans to the eventual benefit of national liberation for Belize.

Mr. Price himself, now Prime Minister, has always remained serenely aloof from the controversy surrounding his motives in the 1957 affair. He declines comment about the incident, preferring rather to point to subsequent events which he views as having completely absolved him, and rendered secure his historical place as the true architect of the nation's freedom.

In the year 1960, there occurred a development in international affairs which was to have the most critical impact on Guatemalan posture and the entire Belize question. On December 14th of that year the general assembly of the United Nations promulgated its "Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples."[11] The Declaration affirmed that "subjection of people to alien . . . domination constituted a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and cooperation."[12] Further, it enjoined "immediate steps be taken in trust and non-self-governing territories or all other territories which have not yet attained independence, to transfer all powers to the peoples of those territories . . . in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom."[13] In this way, the concepts of self-determination, anti-colonialism, and territorial integrity, gained international legal currency.

It was this development more than any other that marked the transformation of the dispute from a bilateral confrontation between Great Britain and Guatemala, to an issue having major international significance, and being of particular interest to the emergent nations who became independent in the decade immediately following the U.N. Declaration.

The process would now begin whereby Belize would no longer be treated as merely the passive object of the dispute. In acknowledgement of her inherent right to self-determine her own destiny, she would eventually be accorded active and equal status in the continuing negotiations over her future.

In May of 1961, for the first time since the post-war reactivation of the dispute, face-to-face negotiations were held in London between Britain and Guatemala. Tangible effects of the U.N. Declaration of the previous year became immediately visible. Jesús Urda Murillo, the Foreign Minister of Guatemala, proposed the creation of a new Belize as an associated state of Guatemala. The British response was unequivocal. They rejected the proposal and made it clear that they were thinking rather of complete autonomy for Belize. And for the first time, they insisted that Belize should itself participate in any future negotiations to try and work out a formula for the final resolution of the conflict.[14]

By the time negotiations were resumed in Puerto Rico in April of 1962, Britain was in the process of dismantling its colonial structure in the Caribbean. The head of the English delegation to the talks declared his government's intention of shortly moving Belize from Crown Colony status to that of full internal self-government, with independence to follow in the shortest appropriate time thereafter. Mr. George Price, who represented Belize at the talks as an observer, let it be known that his country rejected the concept of associated statehood with Guatemala, and was determined, in accordance with British commitment, to pursue the road to full independence.[15]

Belize's expressed desire for autonomy, and the British commitment to granting it, stripped the Guatemalan claim of any anti-colonialist veneer of legitimacy to which it had earlier pretended. Henceforth, despite the most careful legal and diplomatic formulation of her case, Guatemala would herself be condemned as imperialist *manqué*, scheming to try and satisfy frustrated

expansionist urging. Meantime, however, General Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes was elected president of Guatemala, and he conceived the idea of seeking U.S. support for the Guatemalan position over Belize. Accordingly Ydigoras proposed the use of Guatemala as the training ground and launching site of a U.S. sponsored army of liberation which would journey to Cuba to free it from the Castro revolution. The *quid pro quo* was to be U.S. pressure on its ally Britain to resolve the Belize dispute in favour of Guatemala. If Ydigoras is to be believed, President John F. Kennedy confirmed acceptance of the proposal.[16] According to this account, Ydigoras received word on 25th March, 1963, that resulting from U.S. pressure, the British were prepared to accommodate Guatemalan demands on Belize.For the purpose of concluding the matter, a Guatemalan diplomatic mission was to be dispatched to London forthwith.[17] Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes was, however, overthrown in a *golpe de estado* on the night of March 30, 1963, and his supposed mission never left Guatemala.

In 1964, Great Britain formally granted internal self-government to the colony of Belize, George Price becoming Premier of the country, with Britain retaining responsibility solely for defence and external affairs. This precipitated an open break with Guatemala, who closed the border with Belize and severed diplomatic relations with London.

Despite this, two important rounds of talks were held in 1965 between Britain and Guatemala, with a Belizean delegation in attendance. The first session was in Miami from the 3rd to 6th of March, and the second was in London from the 29th of June to the 2nd of July. At the latter, after it became clear that the two sides were hopelessly deadlocked, an agreement was reached to solicit U.S. mediation of the dispute.

The government of the United States selected as mediator Ambassador Bethuel M. Webster, and this was duly ratified by the parties to the dispute. During a three-year period, the mediator, with the help of various technicians, experts, and ministers of government of the interested parties, including Belize, completed his task. Early in 1968, he presented the text of his 17 proposals for the resolution of the Anglo-Guatemalan dispute over Belize.

Although Article 1 of the Webster document proposed the granting of independence to Belize no later than the 31st of December, 1970, subsequent articles in the text made it clear that this independence was to be greatly circumscribed by certain features which would in effect make Belize an associated state of Guatemala.[18]

In this event the proposals satisfied the aspirations of none of the parties to the dispute. It appeared that the Guatemalan position had hardened since the time of Urda Murillo, to the point where nothing less than full satisfaction of the claim would assuage the Guatemalan military-foreign policy establishment. On the other hand, the desire of the Belizean people for uncompromised independence within the context of the U.N. Declaration of 1960, impelled them to condemn the Webster proposals out of hand. Thus, both the Guatemalans and the Belizeans joined (each side for its own reasons) in rejecting the product of the mediation effort.

The process of direct negotiations was resumed in March of 1969, and between that date and 1972, five meetings at ministerial level were held. These efforts were abruptly suspended in early 1972 with the dispatch to Belize (in January/February of that year) of the British aircraft carrier Ark Royal, and the destroyer London, a move designed to counter what appeared to be the second attempt on the part of Guatemala to achieve its policy objectives over Belize by way of military force.

Guatemala took the matter of the British troop deployment to the OAS, where she denounced the moves as British aggression against her. She requested the general assembly of the OAS to condemn the British act of intimidation, and she also sought to put in motion the collective security machinery established under the Rio Treaty of reciprocal assistance.[19] The Guatemalan motion was later withdrawn after the Jamaican delegation to the OAS responded with counter charges of Guatemalan aggression against Belize, and a telegram from Premier Price of Belize to the OAS general secretary was circulated among the member countries. The telegram rejected the Guatemalan claim to Belize as "an attempt to perpetuate

colonialism in the hemisphere," and requested the OAS to secure an "unequivocal declaration by Guatemala that she will not invade Belizean territory.[20]

The Argentine journalist, Roberto Bardini, writing in 1979, claims that British intelligence had in fact uncovered (in January of 1972) a joint plot on the part of the governments of Guatemala and El Salvador to invade Belize. Details of the plan had also been discovered by the Pentagon in Washington, who had, in turn, informed the U.S. Department of State. The participation of El Salvador was said to have been motivated by that country's desire to solve her population problem by resettling some half a million campesinos in Belize over the space of ten years.

The year 1972 was also significant in one additional respect. Prior to that time, although Belize had been present at all the discussions since the Puerto Rico conference, her role seems to have been confined principally to that of an observer. Even after self-government in 1964, Belizean representatives seemed to be content to leave the actual negotiating to the British. This was a logical enough position, reflecting as it did the constitutional reality of Belize's status. Britain had, after all retained full authority over the country's foreign relations.

From 1972 onwards however, there appeared an increasing determination to take advantage of the prevailing international thinking on decolonization and self-determination. The leaders of the country thus began to display activism in the world community, developing a strategy which appeared both to parallel and supplement the efforts of the colonial power to settle the dispute.

In pursuance of the Belizean *démarche*, the deputy premier of the country toured the Middle East and Africa in late 1972, informing of the Belizean plight and seeking support for Belize's territorial integrity. Closer to home, Belizean initiative succeeded in having the heads of government of the CARICOM bloc of nations pass a resolution (the Guyana declaration) supporting the full independence of Belize. By the year 1975, these fledgling diplomatic efforts had metamorphosed into a full-blown, concerted offensive, in which the declared policy of the Belizean government was the "internationalization" of the Belize question.

The Guatemalan response to these developments, to the momentum shifting inexorably to the Belize government, was to once again trot out the threat of military invasion. By October of 1975, Premier George Price was complaining of abnormal Guatemalan troop concentration on the border with Belize, and a dramatic increase in the presence of Guatemalan patrol boats in the Caribbean Sea. Britain flew military reinforcements to Belize on board the transport planes Hercules and Britannia, and also dispatched the frigate "Nubia" and the cruiser "Zulu" to patrol the waters off the Belizean coast. A war of words was launched, with the British prime minister reiterating Britain's preparedness "to assume all its responsibilities," and the Guatemalan President Kjell Laugerud Garcia declaring that his country would take "all measures necessary for the recovery of Belize."[21]

On the 10th of November 1975, Guatemala presented a motion before the permanent council of the OAS, denouncing the threatening action of the British in sending reinforcements to Belize. As it turned out, the action coincided with the formal submission to the 4th committee of the U.N. (the so-called decolonization committee) of the first Anglo-Caribbean sponsored resolution on the independence of Belize.

The stage had been set for this latter initiative by an intense Belizean lobbying effort at the conference of (heads of government of the) commonwealth nations held in Kingston, April 28th - May 6th of that year. This had resulted in the passage of a resolution in which the commonwealth had declared its full support for the independence and territorial integrity of Belize. Later in the year, the Belizeans also succeeded in winning a similar commitment from the non-aligned nations meeting in Peru.

Both in the 4th committee and before the U.N. general assembly, Guatemala argued that the world body had no jurisdictional competence over the question of Belize. Their peculiar thesis was that the case of Belize was not one of decolonization proper, but rather one of dismemberment of Guatemalan national territory. Belize was an in-

tegral part of the Guatemalan fatherland which had been severed as a result of British imperialism. Thus, concluded the Guatemalans, what was in issue was a juridical question involving Guatemala's title to 1/5 of her historical territory, and not a political question involving self-determination for Belize.[22]

These arguments did not prevail and could not prevail, given the world view which had crystallized since the U.N. declaration of 1960. In the result, the general assembly passed, at the end of 1975, its first resolution rejecting the Guatemalan claim and in support of Belizean independence and territorial integrity. The vote was 110 in favour, 9 against, and 16 abstentions.[23]

Although the U.N. vote signalled a diplomatic reversal of the first order for Guatemala, this was to some extent offset by the fact that none of the mainland, Latin American republics, had voted for the resolution and against Guatemala. Belize had traditionally been regarded as something of an anomaly in the region. Her separate history of British colonization had marked her as having more in common with the peoples of the English-speaking Caribbean than with mainland America. Thus, in the name of regional solidarity, the concept of *Hispanidad*, Guatemala commanded unanimity of support in Central America, and was able to procure at least the neutrality of those of the other mainland countries which did not actively side with her.

Nevertheless, the Belizean government continued in its aggressive pursuit of international support, winning passage of another favourable General Assembly resolution in 1976, and gaining special observer status at the non-aligned conference held in Sri Lanka in August of 1976. It was on this latter occasion that Belize succeeded in engineering the diplomatic coup of recruiting General Omar Torrijos of Panama to its cause. Torrijos was at the conference lobbying support for his country's sovereignty over the Panama Canal, and was persuaded of the imprudence of simultaneously supporting an unabashedly colonialist Guatemalan claim to Belize. Panama subsequently cast its vote in favour of the Pro-Belize U.N. resolution in December of 1976, thus breaking the Guatemalan diplomatic stranglehold of Latin America.

Guatemala immediately severed relations with Panama, who thereafter became an ardent campaigner for Belize in the rest of the continent. In successive U.N. votes, the Latin American nations increasingly began to break rank with Guatemala, and support the case of Belize. One of the first to do so was Mexico, who had herself maintained an historical claim to Belize.

The Mexican posture of enlightened statesmanship in regional and world affairs, however, soon obliged her to forego earlier pretensions and vote in favour of Belizean independence. Like-wise, Venezuela, who had, in the mid 1970's, announced the formulation of a new policy towards the English-speaking Caribbean (in which she attempted to establish a geopolitical hegemony based on distribution of her oil derived largesse to the poorer countries of the area) found support of the Guatemalan claim untenable.

As the decade of the 1980's approached, Guatemala became more and more isolated over the Belize question. With the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua and the support of the new junta for Belize, the last bastion of regional solidarity, the Central American bloc, was cracked. Guatemala's diplomatic rout was complete when in November 1980, 130 nations voted for a pro-Belize resolution in the U.N. general assembly. No nation voted against, although there were 7 abstentions. The coup de grace was delivered at an OAS meeting later that month on November 26th, when 18 American nations joined the majority in endorsing the earlier U.N. vote.

Ostracized on the diplomatic front, Guatemala in 1977 directed her foreign policy once again towards the prospect of a military adventure to secure the reunification of Belize. In early June of 1977, a massive mobilization of the Guatemalan military took place, including the call-up of 10 thousand reserves. In tandem with this, there was the capture of 26 tons of arms at the Seawell Airport in Barbados. The arms were reportedly destined for Guatemala on board a plane belonging to an Argentine company, and were for use in the planned military invasion of Belize.[24] Once again, Britain was obliged to send reinforcements to Belize. The warship Achilles was dispatched, and a squadron of RAF Harrier jump jets placed on permanent station in the country.

Guatemala engaged in the ritual denunciation of British armed aggression, and the OAS called on the parties to begin talks with a view to de-escalating the tension in the region. In truth, however, with the dispatch of the British reinforcements, the crisis which the threatened invasion had precipitated quickly faded, and the so-called *frontera caliente* was at an end.

Throughout all these developments, negotiations between Great Britain and Guatemala, with the active participation of Belize, had continued in their on again, off again fashion. Each time the talks had ended inconclusively, with a solution seemingly as far away as ever. In March of 1981, however, after a sustained round of trilateral negotiations between Britain, Belize and Guatemala, a preliminary accord was reached which was at the time hailed as a major breakthrough representing the first real basis for a final settlement of the dispute. The accord, officially titled the Heads of Agreement (*bases de entendimiento*), consisted of 16 articles, and was signed by all three parties in London on the 11th of March, 1981.

In essence, the Heads of Agreement provided for Guatemala's recognition of an independent Belize, and Guatemalan respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the new nation (Article 1). The major concessions which Belize was to make in return for Guatemala finally relinquishing her claim, were contained in Articles 2 and 3 of the Heads. Article 2 contemplated the cession of so much of Belizean territorial sea as would ensure Guatemala "permanent and unimpeded access to the high seas," together with rights over the adjacent seabed. Article 3 gave to Guatemala for her "use and enjoyment" the Belizean cayes of the Ranguana and Sapodilla range, and such rights over the areas of the sea adjacent to the cayes as would be agreed.

The Heads of Agreement, on any reckoning, represented a significant withdrawal from the historical inflexibility of the Guatemalan position. Except on the one occasion when Urda Murillo had proposed associated statehood, Guatemala had always insisted on the total absorption of Belize. Her acceptance of the Heads of Agreement then, must be viewed as the end-result of a process in which her foreign policy had suffered sustained reversals.

It was tantamount to diplomatic surrender, an admission that Guatemala was salvaging whatever she could from amidst the wreckage of her previous designs. Accordingly, Guatemalan President Fernando Romeo Lucas Garcia was able to say to the Guatemalan people quite candidly on the 16th of March, 1981:

El Gobierno de la República considera que es prudente solucionar el asunto de Belice el cual debe ser visto en forma objectiva, realista, y a la luz de las circunstancias, que se eliminen los focos de tensión, y por el derecho de los pueblos a decidir libremente su destino.[25]

In the same vein, Guatemalan foreign minister Rafael Castillo Valdez had this to say:

Las negociaciones se iniciaron in 1962, en Puerto Rico . . . Las conversaciones se reanudaron en 1975, año en que también se hizo sistematizada la internacionalización del asunto en las Naciones Unidas por acción británica, en la que se sumo la activa gestión beliceña, principalmente entre los países que salían de la sumisión colonial a la vida independiente como estados soberanos, emergiendo por virtud del irreversible proceso de descolonización que ha transformado el mundo en los últimos 40 años. El efectivo despliegue de esa diligencia diplomática se extendió a los organizaciones de la Mancomunidad, Británica y de los países No Alieneados, donde en los últimos años se han repetido las resoluciónes en apoyo de la causa independiste de Belice y en contra de la reclamación guatemalteca. La gestión alcanzó asimismo la Organización de Estados Americanos que en el año pasado endosó la Resolución de la Asamblea General de las Naciónes Unidas, pese a declaraciones anteriores que daban singularidad al Caso de Belice y apoyoban a Guatemala.[26]

These statements constitute the clearest acknowledgement of the role played by world opinion and the Belizean determination to exploit it. The symbiosis between the two was, moreover, not a matter of serendipity: that it resulted rather

from a carefully conceived and deliberately executed strategy is a point well worth remembering.

BELIZE'S INDEPENDENCE

AS EVENTS HAVE NOW TURNED OUT, FURther negotiations held in May-June of 1981, in order to flesh out the Heads of Agreement into a binding treaty, failed. The ostensible reason for the breakdown of the treaty talks was a conflicting interpretation of the phrase 'use and enjoyment' contained in Article 3 of the Heads. The real reason more likely lay in the internal developments which took place in both Belize and Guatemala after the Heads. In Belize widespread opposition to the Agreement (which was characterized as a "sell-out" of Belizean sovereignty) soon grew into full scale rioting, culminating in a general strike which provoked the declaration of a state of emergency. In Guatemala, groupings such as the Frente Unidad Nacional, and Mario Sandoval Alarcon's Movimiento de Liberación Nacionál, called the Heads unpatriotic, an "unacceptable affront to the national dignity," and "the product of an erroneous and mistaken foreign policy."[27]

On July 24th, 1981, a joint United Kingdom/Belize release declared that in accordance with the U.N. general assembly resolution of the previous year, Belize would proceed to formal independence on September 21st, despite the acknowledged failure to settle the dispute with Guatemala.

The Mexican journalist Luis Suárez had written about the Guatemalan psychosis over Belize: *"Se considera que Belice es para los gobiernos militares Guatemaltecos un recurso de insuflado nacionalismo, acentuados en conyunturas nacionales convenientes a la politica, al poder militar, y a la crisis o dificultades economicas."*[28] Roberto Bardini, the Argentine, has this to say: *"Desde principio del siglo xx, Belice es la cortina de humo y la victima expiatora de los sucesivos regímenes de Guatemala. Se ha esgrimido la consigua Belice es de Guatemala en casos de descontento popular hacia el gobierno, huelgos de trabajadores, inestabilidad economica, corupción oficial y en el periodo previo a la realización de elecciones."*[29]

Mr. Bardini's thesis in particular seems to have been borne out by the fluctuating Guatemalan policy line which followed the July 24th announcement. At first, Guatemalan reaction was restrained. President Lucas García, while indicating that Guatemala could not accept Britain's unilateral decision to grant independence to Belize, also insisted that Guatemala had no intention of resorting to the use of force. Presidential elections were, however, due in Guatemala in March of 1982. Parties in opposition to the ruling coalition of the *Partido Revolucionario* and the *Partido Institucional Democratico,* quickly sought to make political capital of the issue. In particular, Mario Sandoval Alarcón denounced the loss of 1/5 of the national territory that the independence of Belize would mean. Faced with this kind of climate, the government was forced to toughen its stance, once again sealing the border with Belize, severing diplomatic relations with Great Britain, and expelling all Belizean students studying in Guatemala.[30] The rhetoric also grew increasingly bellicose, with General Anibel Guevara, the official candidate of the governing PR-P.I.D. coalition pledging his willingness to resort to force if necessary to regain Belize.

Nevertheless, the United Kingdom formally transferred power to the independent nation of Belize on September 21st, 1981. Despite a formal Guatemalan protest to the U.N. Security Council, Belize quickly secured membership in the world-body, the non-aligned movement, and the British Commonwealth of Nations.

It would appear that the only option left to Guatemala in the face of the legal and political *fait accompli* of Belizean independence, was a military one. And it is in recognition of this that defence arrangements have been concluded between Britain and the independent Belize. Under the agreement, British troops will remain in Belize for an "appropriate period". At this time, there was speculation of U.S. preparedness to underwrite Belizean independence and that the *quid pro quo* might have been some form of military presence in Belize. That is upon the departure of the British, U.S. Marines would have replaced them as guarantors of Belize's independence.[31]

This line of thinking was based on the following historical and contemporary analysis of the U.S. position. Since the time of its mediation efforts in the late 1960's, the U.S. had pursued a policy

of studied neutrality towards the Anglo-Guatemalan dispute over Belize. The reasons for the hands-off attitude were not very difficult to discern.

On the one hand, Britain was a long-time, traditional ally of the United States and a principal member of the NATO pact. On the other, the economic, ideological, and security concerns in Guatemala made the latter a valuable linchpin in the overall U.S. strategic design for the protection of her national interests in Central America. Accordingly, even the Webster proposals represented what the U.S. perceived to be an attempt to steer a middle course in the potential global/regional conflict of interests which the U.K./Guatemala confrontation posed for her. After 1968, apart from the occasional, formulaic pronouncement enjoining the parties to use all peaceful means to arrive at an equitable settlement of the dispute, the United States carefully distanced herself from direct involvement in the problem.

At the United Nations, this position resulted in consistent U.S. abstentions whenever the Belize question was put to a General Assembly vote. In the year 1980, however, in a sudden departure from traditional policy, the U.S. cast an historic "yes" vote in favour of the pro-Belize resolution of that year.

Two reasons suggest themselves in explanation of this. First, there was the perceptible cooling of relations between Guatemala and the Carter administration, engendered by the latter's human rights policy and consequential decision to discontinue arms sales to the military government in Guatemala. Second, Carter's earlier attempts to develop a positive and comprehensive policy towards the English-speaking Caribbean may also have served to sensitize his administration to the paramount importance which the Anglophone island nations attached to a sovereign Belize with all its territory intact. Thus, both the general philosophical orientation of the Carter administration and the particular development of certain policy specifics favoured the 1980 about-face on the question of Belize.

The advent of the Reagan administration, contrary to what might first have been expected, did not served to alter the novel U.S. commitment to an independent Belize. Clearly, however, this convergence of end-policy over Belize between the previous and the new administration, was arrived at, in the case of the latter, by way of entirely different strategic perceptions and calculations.

The Reagan administration's primary concern in Central America appeared to have been the forging of an ideological consensus to hold the line against Soviet/Cuban expansionism in the region. To this end, a rapprochement had been effected with Guatemala and a limited arms supply resumed. In her grand design, however, the United States conceived the Guatemalan role to be that of a buffer against the possible spillover of the Nicaraguan revolution, or Salvadoran left-wing insurgency. Accordingly, the Guatemalan government was to concentrate on shoring up itself against internal subversion, the better to act as surrogate area policeman. The last thing the U.S. desired was a Guatemalan military adventure in Belize that would have diverted Guatemalan resources, created a cause celebre for radical actors in the region, and provoked a possible Cuban intervention at the behest of a beleaguered Belizean nation. (As it was, a minority faction within the country's ruling political elite then projected an ideological profile decidedly in sympathy with "fidelismo." This phenomenon is admittedly atypical within the context of mainstream Belizean sentiment. And the group's freedom of action was severely constrained by the essential conformity which the dominant (democratic) model requires of anyone wishing to maintain electoral viability. Nevertheless, that a traumatic event such as an armed attack would have completely skewed normal perceptions and the balance of forces, could not have escaped the attention of the State Department.)

On the other hand, a stable Belize, firmly within the U.S. orbit, undisturbed by Guatemalan revanchism, and with U.S. military bases established on its outlying, offshore islands, could act as a first line in possible naval operations against the Havana government. At the very least, the U.S. presence would have ensured that the country was not used as a conduit for Cuban arms

to Central America.[32] It was this new perception of Belize's potential geostrategic importance that gave credence to the suggestion of U.S. preparedness to underwrite Belizean independence.

In any event, in the present overall context Guatemalan pretensions over Belize began to appear increasingly *passé*. The march of history has overtaken her claim. Altered U.S. perceptions of the area's geopolitics, and the place of Belize as a vital dynamic in the reconstituted regional equation, demand that a new *modus vivendi* be found. Now, if there is ever to be a "peaceful, honourable, and just settlement of the dispute," the process must clearly start from Guatemala's full acceptance of the irreversible fact of Belizean independence. §

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Herman J. Byrd

DEVELOPMENTS IN GUATEMALA AND BELIZE-GUATEMALA RELATIONS IN THE INDEPENDENCE DECADE

THE ANNOUNCEMENT MADE THIS PAST August by Guatemalan President Jorge Serrano Elias that Guatemala recognizes the right of the Belizean people to self-determination is a belated recognition of the independent Belize.[1] This dramatic shift in the long-entrenched Guatemalan view came on the eve of Belize's celebration of the first decade of independence and on the one hundred and ninety-third anniversary of the Battle of St. George's Caye. From a distinctly Belizean viewpoint, Belize's achievement of independence in 1981 radically changed the status of the "Belize Question" and ushered in a new period of Belize's relations with Guatemala.

The dispute was no longer between Great Britain and Guatemala over Belize. Now an independent Belize, that independence and right to self-determination having won global support, was faced with the responsibility and challenge of finding a resolution to the long dispute directly via bilateral negotiations with Guatemala, and not through a third party, the United Kingdom. Guatemala's belated recognition of an independent Belize without a complete abandonment of her historic claim has precipitated a new wave of negotiations and national debate in Belize that is unprecedented in the history of the dispute. While their final outcome remains undecided, it is clear that greater awareness of developments within Guatemala and their impact on Belize could bring clarity, insight, and an added resolve to ensure the protection of Belizean national interests in the effort to find a peaceful end to the dispute.

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This paper sets out to review developments within Guatemala over the last decade with the aim of providing some informative commentary on developments within Guatemala which could help to explain the dramatic turnabout of the entrenched Guatemalan refusal to recognize an independent Belize. Its aim is not to provide a comprehensive review of the status and recent developments in Belize-Guatemalan affairs nor is it a commentary on the issue of present national concern, the Maritime Areas Bill. The preceding review by Dean O. Barrow should complement my own meager efforts here, and hopefully together we offer the reader a wide, and enhanced perspective with which to evaluate current and forthcoming issues on the Belize-Guatemala agenda.

This presentation suggests that one has to look to the wider socio-economic and political issues in Guatemala to understand fully the reasons for Guatemala's recent recognition of an independent Belize. This wider view points well beyond the far-sighted leadership of Jorge Serrano Elias, and prior to him Vinicio Cerezo and, even beyond the belated realization by General Fernando Romeo Lucas Garcia, on the eve of Belize's independence, that the decolonization process had created a world in which a people's right to self-determination had triumphed irreversibly over any and all forms of colonialism and neo-colonialism,[2] to an emerging stream of socio-economic concerns in Guatemala within the last decade in which Guatemala has seen the increasing necessity for mutual cooperation with Belize. The debate in Belize will continue to gather a groundswell of opinions on the nature of forthcoming cooperation with Guatemala, on what concessions, if any, would be justified as an integral part of the ongoing diplomatic effort to reach a final settlement of the dispute, and whether such cooperation will indeed be mutually beneficial.

In the post-independence decade, among the numerous issues in Belize-Guatemala relations three seemed to have increased their importance: the continued Guatemalan effort to develop the resources of EL Petén, the inflow of Guatemalan refugees into Belize, and more recently, the activities of "narco-terrorists" operating in El Petén and along the western Belize-Guatemala border. All three intimately affect both Guatemalan and Belizean national interests. However, they are by no means exhaustive. As the negotiations continue new issues have emerged, among them the Maritime Areas Bill to delimit Belizean waters to three miles in southern Belize. Also, some attention should be given to how improved diplomatic relations could affect the increasing number of Belizean students who pursue university studies in Guatemala (those who returned home after the Guatemalan government revoked her scholarship program following the rejection of the Heads of Agreement in 1981 have been able to return to their studies in Guatemala, but without the assistance that improved diplomatic relations could provide). Reviews and assessments of developments in the Belize Question in the independence decade need to look beyond what were considered characteristic features of Guatemala's posture towards Belize in the decades before 1981, intransigence, belligerent and aggressive militaristic stance, and prolonged cries of reincorporation of *Belize* into the national territory, for an accounting and interpretation of significant events. The last decade saw nothing of the militaristic posturing of the Guatemala toward Belize which became so characteristic of Belize-Guatemala relations in the 1970s.[3] One could well argue, as will be shown below, that the Guatemalan military was preoccupied throughout the 1980s with internal strife and with reestablishing its control in the Guatemalan highlands where an upsurge in popular and revolutionary organizations during the period threatened to bring the nation on the brink of a major social upheaval.

Close scrutiny reveals a number of emerging important economic concerns in the 1980s in Guatemala in which varying levels of cooperation with Belize were seriously considered or at best projected. This has been one of the major reasons for the dramatic reversal of the ingrained Guatemalan stance towards Belize and it helps to explain Guatemalan efforts to improve diplomatic relations with Belize during the independence decade.

The decision on the part of the Belizean Government to move on to independence with suitable guarantees of British military presence occurred after the Heads of Agreement, a last ditch effort to settle the dispute before moving on to independence in 1981, were rejected in Belize in 1981. From a Guatemalan government perspective, the entire thrust of the document was to establish ways in which both countries could work together on mutual concerns. General Fernando Romeo Lucas Garcia, President of Guatemala at the time, pointed this out quite clearly in a public statement:

Las bases de entendimiento buscan fundamentalmente un acercamiento entre los pueblos guatemalteco y beliceño, mediante la colaboración mútua y la ejecución de programas conjuntos de beneficio común, esperándose que ésta vinculación, que esta hora no ha existido. [4]

Despite the obscure language referring to Belize's "traditional and existing" frontiers, Head 1 contained a major shift in the Guatemalan position with its proposed recognition of Belize's independence and territorial integrity.[5] Both indicated that in the early 1980s cooperation on social and economic matters were perceived as important as squabbling over a breach of the 1859 Anglo-Guatemalan Convention on the part of Great Britain. Nothing better demonstrated this than some of the key issues dealt with in the Heads of Agreement: the granting to Guatemala of an internal navigable channel in southern Belize (Head 2), the "use and enjoyment" of Ranguana and Sapodilla Cayes (Head 3), the granting of free port facilities to Guatemala in Belize City and Punta Gorda (Head 4), unimpeded transit of peoples and goods (Head 5), the construction of pipelines for exporting Guatemalan oil through Belize (Head 6), and cooperation in marine explorations, and cooperation on matters of security of mutual concern (Head 11).[6]

The failure of the Heads of Agreement to resolve the dispute must rest squarely on the Belizean public's rejection of what it perceived

to be its extensive concessions to Guatemala and fears of the long-term consequences of increasing cooperation with Guatemala.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EL PETEN

A PREEMINENT ISSUE WITHIN THE LAST decade for Guatemala has been the development of El Petén, and northern Guatemala,especially, an area known as *La Franja Transversal Del Norte* (The Northern Transverse Zone). This concern for the development of El Petén stretches well into the last century. Throughout much of the colonial, independence, and post-independent period, the department of EL Petén has been isolated and underdeveloped. Successive Guatemalan governments have attempted to tap the region's wealth for national development, but especially so within the last quarter century.[7]

The department makes up about 1/3 of Guatemala and covers an area of 36,000 to 37,000 square kilometers. In the mid 1960s, there were about 25,000 people in the department some 45% of whom resided in about twelve towns. In the early 1960s, the Guatemalan government opened El Petén to colonization and land distribution, and since then the population has increased tenfold. In 1986 there were 300,000 people in the department. According to Norman Schwartz, what had been an isolated and relatively peaceful area, had become almost overnight a highly-populated, turbulent new frontier attracting landless campesinos, well-financed cattlemen, foreign and local logging companies, revolutionaries, and above all foreign entrepreneurs eager to exploit the valuable mineral resources of EL Petén, principally oil.[8]

As a result El Petén was the recipient of massive inflows of foreign investments in oil exploration, nickel mining, and large-scale farming. The expected economic boom and profit windfall led to massive land speculation: large numbers of Indians, traditional owners of the land, where displaced by new foreign capitalists in league with their Guatemalan counterparts. Under the guise of counter-insurgency campaigns, the army carried out a string of massacres in the Guatemalan highlands throughout the 1980s.[9] It began with large scale repression under the presidency of General Kjell Laugerud (1974-78) in 1970s, and continued under General Lucas Garcia with the Panzós Massacre in 1978.[10]

In early 1981 massacres occurred in El Quiché, San Marcos, Quetzaltenango, Huehuetenango, Solola, and Chimaltenango. The situation continued especially under General Efrain Rios Montt (1982-85) who sanctioned aerial bombings in El Quiché, Alta Vera Paz, El Petén, and Huehuetenango. By the end of 1982 over 10,000 civilians had been killed, several hundred had disappeared, and over half a million were displaced within Guatemala.[11] Some observes within Guatemala have pointed out that the areas targeted by the army as Guerrilla strongholds were, in effect, regions where lucrative oil and mineral finds were expected. This was especially true of the areas targeted for oil exploration.

Guatemalan economic concern with the projected oil boom helps to account for the inclusion of Head 6 in the 1981 Heads of Agreement. In 1981-82 Guatemalan oil reserves were officially estimated at 2.4 billion barrels, and about $24-25 million dollars of petroleum was exported in 1981. One month after the Heads of Agreement was signed, the Texaco-Amco operation in the northern tip of El Petén reported a large oil strike, and at the time, it must have appeared feasible to export the oil from this reserve via pipelines running through Belize.[12] While oil exploration and exportation continued throughout the 1980s, the great oil boom in El Petén never materialized. The virtual collapse of the international fuel market and the destruction of oil installations by guerrillas capped all hopes of an oil bonânza. However, the government's desire to recover the region's oil wealth has not died, considering a recent government announcement that it had given concessions to some oil companies to search for oil in the Bay of Amatique.

An integral part of this Guatemalan interest in developing the resources of El Petén has been the belief that those resources could not be adequately developed without extensive cooperation with Belize, and that the establishment of such cooperation would have to be an important factor in any final equation resolving the dispute. In 1967 the American historian Wayne M. Clegern noted that "British Honduras continues to be the

geographical key to the development of El Petén, and it is unlikely that the Guatemalan government can rest until this circumstance is satisfactorily resolved."[13] He was in fact stating a point of view that had its adherents in the Colonial Office at least since the late nineteenth century, and so too its Guatemalan counterparts.

In the introduction to his work on the history of the dispute, Guatemalan historian José Luis Mendoza noted that:"The Maya Empire, 1,500 years ago, had a population of 10-15 million inhabitants. Nowadays, by contrast, the exceedingly rich Petén region falls short of 10,000 inhabitants, and its development is seriously impeded as long as its natural outlets to the sea remain in the possession of a foreign power."[14] At the end of his masterful review of developments in the dispute between 1946 and 1960, D.A.G. Waddell suggested that a breakthrough in the dispute might have occurred had the Guatemalan government considered "cutting her losses, and extracting what material advantage she could for El Petén from the presumable British desire to be rid of a vexatious international irritation."[15] This long-standing concern to obtain a "material advantage" for El Petén was an important factor influencing Guatemalan interests in resolving the dispute with Belize during the 1980s. Its most poignant presentation ever can be found in the Guatemalan Foreign Ministry document explaining Head 4 in the Heads of Agreement:

One of the many damaging things that the British usurpation caused Guatemala was the occupation of the coastline region of El Petén. There can be no doubt that in the main, the relative underdevelopment of El Petén must be attributed to the fact that its communications with the rest of the country are carried out on very long South to North lines that go across mountain ranges and other difficult geographic accidents. If communication with El Petén and, consequently, its development, could have been carried out on East to West lines, either through rivers or roads, most likely a more dynamic and efficient development of that region would have occurred. This in fact did not happen because of the British occupation that deprived El Petén of its coastlines, thus depriving it of this possibility of development.[16]

In Belize, no doubt, what will be debated is the extent to which Belize, particularly southern and western Belize, would benefit from the granting of concessions conducive to El Petén's development in treaties flowing out of the ongoing negotiations, especially since this could becoming an increasing concern on the Belize-Guatemala agenda in the 1990s.[17]

HUMAN RIGHTS AND GUATEMALAN REFUGEES

A HORRENDOUS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD became synonymous with Guatemala in Amnesty International's human rights thesaurus in the 1980s. The large-scale violation of human rights in Guatemala during the 1980s have displaced over a million inhabitants within the country, and have led some 200,000 Guatemalans to seek haven in Mexico. By 1984 some 4,000 Guatemalan refugees from central and northern Guatemala (especially the departments of EL Petén (Mopan Indians), Alta Vera Paz, and Izabal (Kekchi Indians),) had entered Belize.[18] A Belize Government publication in 1984 noted that "public concern had manifested apprehension about the number of aliens who recently settled in Belize; disquietude at the influence which the new wave of aliens has on our institutions, on our social values, and on the quality of life in Belize".[19] The Government announced an amnesty program in mid-1984—those aliens present in Belize on May 1st, 1984 were given ninety days within which to register with the Police prior to requesting a residency permit to remain in Belize.

A subsequent study of the "illegal alien" registration (some 6,305) showed that about 50% were from Guatemala.[20] Michael Stone's recent survey of the settlements of Salvapan, Las Flores, Rio Grande, San Martin, Sinai, and Ten Cent Creek showed that 70.5% of all Guatemalan household heads in those settlements resided in El Petén before coming to Belize. In 1988 35% of the refugee registration were from El Petén, and on a whole 18 of Guatemala's 22 departments were represented.[21]

Despite the emergence of two civilian presidents, Vinicio Cerezo and Jorge Serrano, there have been

little fundamental changes in Guatemalan politics over the last decade. Jim Handy has argued that the Guatemalan military held elections in 1985 not because it needed foreign economic assistance, or because it wanted a civilian government to take the blame for a worsening economic situation. He suggests that the main reason for its direct intervention in the political process had been removed: by the mid-1980s a more unified army had uncontested control of rural Guatemala. The army's long trail of counter-insurgency campaigns left scattered in its wake the strewn wreckage of municipal governments across the Guatemalan countryside. Any attempt by the civilian governments to make radical alterations in the socio-economic structure of rural Guatemala aimed at empowering the vast majority of the population, and in so doing threatening the enforced military preeminence, could lead to an end to the democratic experiment. The building of democratic institutions representative of the rural population and asserting of Indian rights will remain on the Guatemalan agenda as unfinished business well into the future.[22]

Michael Stone has suggested that the socio-economic conditions which led to the political crises a decade ago are still present today in Guatemala: wealth continues to be concentrated, the military remains in the ascendancy, and the authoritarian model of rural development continues apace. In his view, all these have combined to make rural Belize Guatemala's ultimate agricultural frontier.[23] If Stone's assessment is accurate we can expect continued refugee migration from Guatemala into Belize throughout the 1990s.[24] The nature of cooperation between Guatemala and Belize on this issue is largely a matter of conjecture as Belize, despite short and long-ranged limitations, remains committed to providing within those limits a haven to those fleeing political turmoil not just in Guatemala but in El Salvador as well.

CIVIL STRIFE IN EL PETEN

IN RECENT YEARS A NEW LEVEL OF DE-stabilization has entered the affairs of EL Petén, which has already had considerable impact on Belize. El Petén continues to be a based for guerrilla activities of the Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (FAR). Its activities have been aimed at crippling the region's oil installations, military and police outposts, and road construction equipment. In the early 1980s, the military declared an all out war on FAR and their sympathizers in El Petén, in the wake thousands of settlers were killed and many more uprooted from their homelands. The heaviest casualties were suffered by those in the southwestern and far western and east-central El Petén (in the municipalities of La Libertad and Sayaxché); incidentally, these were the core areas of oil exploration. The war peaked between 1982 and 1984, which explain the increase numbers of settlers fleeing the area into Belize during this period.

Recently some groups have turned to kidnapping,and drug trafficking making the Petén-Cayo border an area of unprecedented illegal activity, not unlike the Tabasco-Petén order area.[25] There is already some cooperation between Belizean and Guatemalan security forces operating along that border as was recently shown in the pressure that was brought to bear on those who kidnapped the Mennonite farmers at Chan Lemon, Cayo district, some two miles from the Guatemalan border.[26] The hope is that a resolution of differences would facilitate more cooperation between Belizean and Guatemalan security forces on this issue, somewhat like that recently established between Belize and Mexico all in an effort to contain the increasing flow of drugs into and through Belize.[27]

CONCLUSION

WITHIN THE LAST DECADE, SOCIO-ECONOmic developments within El Petén have become the major issues of concern, so much so that they have surpassed perennial Guatemalan concern with a settlement of the "territorial dispute", despite the fact that this is still presented as the major obstacle standing between full Guatemalan recognition of Belize's independence and sovereignty. In summary, the concern early in the 1980s was oil exportation from within El Petén; indeed, as late as 1989 when the talks were reopened, oil discoveries in El Petén was a major Guatemalan concern.[28] In the mid-1980s we saw an increased

number of Guatemalan refugees seeking asylum in Belize (the majority of whom originated from El Petén), and in recent years El Petén has become a base of operation for narco-guerrillas. Their actions have increased the flow of illegal drugs and weapons through Belizean territory, both of which have had a negative impact on Belize. It is not too far-fetched to suggest that these issues will retain their importance in the 1990s, and will provide much grist for negotiations, and bilateral cooperation.

Finally, a brief word on a health concern. It is still too early to ascertain just how the present outbreak of cholera in Guatemala will affect Belize. These outbreaks have been reported in the region along the Guatemala-México border. A Guatemalan newspaper reported in early August that the Suchiate river had been contaminated and several cases have been confirmed in the departments of San Marcos and Retalhuleu. However, some Belizean medical personnel who have worked in El Petén have indicated that the general unsanitary health conditions there are ideal for the spread of cholera, and it could be only a matter of time before its water supply becomes contaminated.[29] If and when this happens then the onset of the disease within Belize will become inevitable given the flow of goods and people from El Petén into Belize.[30] Obviously, there will be need for considerable action between Belizean and Guatemalan health personnel to contain the spread of the disease.

The issues discussed above are so important that even some conservative elements within the Guatemalan government and military are opened to finding a diplomatic umbrella to facilitate bilateral cooperations. It seems reasonable to say that in this decade economic, political, social, and health-related developments within El Petén and the Bay of Amatique region will continue to play an extremely important role in Belize-Guatemala relations, and in the continued quest for "a definitive settlement of the territorial dispute".[31] What Belize needs to consider rather carefully would be the political, economic, and social impact of closer cooperation with Guatemala, and above all, the extent to which such cooperation would indeed be mutually beneficial, especially in the long run. §

References

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2. See Dean O. Barrow, "Post-War Guatemalan Foreign Policy and the Independence of Belize," for a discussion of these developments in the 1970s in this issue of *Belizean Studies*.

3. See Dean O. Barrow, "Post-War Guatemalan Foreign Policy and the Independence of Belize," for a discussion of these developments in the 1970s. His work brings into sharp focus the external forces which helps to account for Guatemala's foreign policy towards Belize during the 1970s and early 1980s.

4. See "Discurso Pronunciado por El Señor General Fernando Romeo Lucas García, Presidente de la Republica de Guatemala, en la Conferencia de Prensa Referente al Caso de Belice." Guatemala, March 16, 1981., p.3. See also "Declaración del Señor Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, Ingeniero Rafael Eduardo Castillo Valdez, Respecto a Las Bases de Entendimiento entre Guatemala y La Gran Bretaña Sobre La Cuestión de Belice," Guatemala, March 16, 1981.

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7. Belize played an important role in efforts to develop the north-eastern departments of Guatemala throughout the 19th century. See William J. Griffith, *Empires in the Wilderness: Foreign Colonization in Guatemala, 1834-1844*, (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1965). For a more recent discussion see Herman Byrd, "Research in Belize-Guatemala Relations: Some New Concerns," (Belize City: SPEAReports 6, 1990); pp. 17-28. In 1834 the Guatemalan government made large grants of land to Marshall Bennett and Juan Galindo within the Belize settlement, and provoked a major crisis in the settlement. For further discussion of this crisis see Karl R. DeRouen, "Cockburn, Miller, and the Shift in British Policy in Belize 1834-1835," in this issue of *Belizean Studies*.

8. See Norman B. Schwartz, *Forest Society: A Social History of Peten, Guatemala*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990); p.11.

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10. For a discussion of the Panzós Massacre see Herman Byrd, "Oil in Guatemala: An Economic Factor in the Heads of Agreement," *Belizean Studies*, 15 (2):25-40, 1987.

11. See Thomas J. Maloney, "The Social Impact of the Franja Transversal del Norte Program in North Central Guatemala," in Indian *SIA: The Social Impact of Rapid Resource Development on Native Peoples*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Monograph, 1982) for a more detailed discussion of the effects of the economic expansion in northern Guatemala on the region's inhabitants.

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17. See the report "Petén Mayors write President," in *The Belize Times*, Sunday, November 3, 1991 for a summary of a declaration made by twelve municipal mayors from Petén at a meeting held in Corozal, Belize on October 13, 1991.

18. See M. Andre Parvenu, "Refugee Migration and Settlement in Belize: The Valley of Peace Project," Unpublished M.Sc. Thesis University of Wisconsin, 1986; p.32-40.

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20. See Joseph O. Palacio, "Illegal Aliens in Belize: Findings of the 1984 Amnesty," (Washington: Georgetown University, 1985); p.8-15.

21. See Michael Stone, "Backabush: Settlement on the Belmopan Periphery and the Challenge to Rural Development," *SPEAReports* 6, 1990; pp. 99-100.

22. See Jim Handy, "Resurgent Democracy and the Guatemalan Military," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol 18, No.2 (November 1986), pp. 383-408.

23. See Stone ibid., p. 101.

24. One observer has noted that the settlement schemes in El Petén during the 1980s have created an acute problem: massive deforestation. For a more detailed discussion see Norman B. Schwartz, *Forest Society: A Social History of Peten, Guatemala* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990); pp. 285-291.

25. See a report entitled "En La Frontera Tabasco-Petén: Trafico de Narcoticos y Maderas," in *The Reporter*, September 1, 1991:9.

26. See the lead story, " 'Nonite 'Nappers: Narcoterrorists?," in the *AMANDALA*, May 10, 1991. The report noted: "Guerrilla movements are traditionally known to use methods like kidnapping and bank robberies to raise funds to finance their operations, but guerrillas in South and Central America have in the last two decades also frequently resorted to traffiking in drugs because of the huge profits and the fact that their clandestine, paramilitary organization makes guerrilla movements ideally suited for this type of activity, and hence the description "narcoterrorists." There has been a marked increase of narcotics activity in the Petén area of Guatemala and the Cayo District of Belize, especially this year, and Mennonites, if only at the individual and family levels, are now widely believed to be players in the narcotics game." The kidnapped Mennonite farmers were eventually released apparently after considerable pressure from Guatemalan military forces in El Petén was brought to bear on their kidnappers.

27. See the report entitled, "Belice emprende una sociedad historica con México," in *The Reporter*, August 18, 1991:8.

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ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE BELIZE

Karl R. DeRouen
Cockburn, Miller and the Shift in British Policy in Belize, 1834-1835

"The Government of Central America has no power to resist the claim of Great Britain."
Supt.Cockburn to Lord Aberdeen
April 17, 1835

WHEN SPAIN FIRST COLONIZED THE NEW World in the 16th century she imposed administrative units known as Vice-Royalties and Captaincy-Generals. Present-day Guatemala and Belize[1] were located in the Captaincy-General of Guatemala. Thus Spain clearly laid first claim to the region that later came to be known as Belize, and had even placed it into a political unit.

Spain proceeded to exploit Middle, and portions of South America. The European power introduced her language, the *latifundia*[2] system, Catholicism and small-pox -in short, her impact was great. This impact, however, was not felt in what was later to become Belize. Spain did not venture into Belize because she was more interested in the plundering of Indian gold and the subjugation of the indigens in other areas of Latin America. Spain was not interested in trekking through the harsh Belizean mangrove swamps merely to make official their claim.

Great Britain became active in Middle America in the 1650s, and by 1655 Jamaica was part of the British Empire.[3] With a focus centered upon the seaports of Jamaica, British ship traffic increased in the Caribbean. Jamaica became an *entrepôt* for the rum, sugar and molasses sent to Europe, and for the West African slaves which were sent to other parts of the Caribbean and America.[4] The earliest reliable data on English and Scottish settlers in Belize go back to 1655 when some of the sailors and soldiers left Jamaica and went to Belize.[5]

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These first men were largely Scottish. There is no evidence to indicate that there was ever any large-scale pirating based in Belize. The main activity was the cutting and export of timber.[6] The loggers inhabited coastal areas along the Yucatán peninsula, south of the Republic of Honduras and came to be known as Baymen. After decades of interbreeding with the imported African slaves, the Baymen became a fiery hybrid who spoke with a distinct *patois*. At around the turn of the century the first settlement at the false mouth of the Belize River (Haulover Creek) was founded. The site was used to load the ships bound for Europe with the lumber that had been floated down the Belize River.

By the end of the 17th century the territory of Belize was still a *de jure* component of the Spanish Empire, but the British settlers had no allegiance to Spain, making the territory a *de facto* property of the British Crown. In 1690 the Governor of Jamaica realized the opportunities for trade that Belize presented, and made an urgent request to London that she recognize and colonize Belize.[7] London did not see the need to do so in 1690 just as it had not in 1670 when the second Treaty of Madrid was put forth in effort to settle territorial disputes between Britain and Spain in the New World. Herein lay the seed of the diplomatic dispute over the rights to Belize. If Britain had officially acknowledged Belize, the 1670 Treaty of Madrid would have released Belize from her Spanish,[8] and later, Guatemalan claims which were to be based upon the principle of *uti possidetis*.[9] In spite of the Jamaican governor's request, England was reluctant to make formal

claim to Belize for two reasons: first, Britain by "not officially recognizing the territory ... freed the settlers from the constraints imposed by the Navigation Acts and allowed them to trade with the United States." And secondly, "the lack of British recognition meant that the formation of a political body in the settlement would not be based on colonial rule, but instead on a local legislature that could be dominated by local interests."[10] Thus it was apparent that the decision by Britain not to make an official claim to sovereignty, was a well-calculated one. Britain, and her colonial elite, could profit more from Belize if the territory was not officially part of the British Empire. For this reason Crown Colony status was delayed until 1862 - when Guatemalan affrontery forced the Crown to take a more paternal stance towards Belize.

For the next 100 years the Baymen continued to ply their logging industry despite repeated attempts by the Spanish to remove them. The Baymen apparently never swayed from British loyalty, and in 1763 the Spanish Crown first recognized the rights of the Baymen to cut timber. Permanent settlement and agriculture rights were not recognized by Spain.

After the American War of Independence ended, the Treaty of Versailles (1783) "for the first time clearly defined the area in which the British had usufruct rights to extract logwood."[11] The territory stretched from the Hondo River in the north to the Belize River in the south. In the wording of the treaty, Spain did not relinquish sovereignty, and forbid the building of any fortifications. There was still no provision for agriculture to be carried out in Belize - agriculture seen as a sign of permanence. The Spanish concession was a result of the British agreement to abandon claim to territory on the Mosquito Coast. To show that they were serious about the agreement, the English had to agree to send the Mosquito shore settlers to that area of Belize between the Hondo and Belize Rivers.[12]

In Anglo-Spanish Convention of 1786, Spain first allowed non-plantation agriculture in Belize. The Convention also resulted in more land for logging activities in Belize. Negotiations had carried over from 1783 for two reasons. First, the English were willing to negotiate because they wanted to appease the disgruntled Mosquito Coast settlers who had been forced to move and were told they could only cut the now scarce logwood within the 1783 boundaries. They were forbidden to cut mahogany. The British government was able to increase logging acreage and secure the right to cut mahogany.[13] The Spanish remained at the bargaining table with the hope of somehow regaining Gibraltar.[14] The settlers' agriculture had been confined to lands on the Belize River. The new agreement meant that the settlers moved away from the coast for the first time and developed farming along fertile alluvial soils of other rivers and streams. *De facto* British sovereignty took an even stronger foothold after the 1798 victory over the Spanish at St. George's Cay. The credibility of Spanish claims began a steady decline after this failed attempt to capture the mouth of the Belize river. By 1819 Britain had still made no official claim to Belize and did not sanction agriculture in the region, but she did admit that Belize was under British protection.[15]

A major watershed in the history of the dispute took place in 1821, the year that Central America became independent of Spain. Britain (and Spain) refused to recognize the Federal Republic of Central America that formed as a result of the forfeiture of Spanish claims.[16] Soon after this, the Republic declared that she inherited the territory of Belize from Spain. Furthermore, the Republic claimed that since Britain had signed all treaties concerning Belize with Spain, the treaties were no longer valid. Britain countered by not recognizing the independence of the Republic and stating that negotiations over Belizean sovereignty would only take place with Spain.[17]

Superintendent Francis Cockburn, the head official of the Belize settlement, in urging Britain to take a more determined role in the affairs of the settlement, commented in 1833 that the Treaty of 1786 had been violated in every way except that the settlement had not been designated a colony.[18] But Britain steadfastly refused to allow the settlement to become a colony. The King's Advocate in 1825 stressed the Crown's intentions to adhere to the Treaties of 1783 and 1786, and that no land could be granted for the purpose of agriculture.[19] The settlement's population was growing and spreading, but London would not afford the settlers the protection of *de jure*

authority. The settlers wanted guarantees of security in light of increasing threats from the Central American Republic,[20] and they wanted the right to practice agriculture on a larger scale. To the latter end, Cockburn requested from the Secretary of State that the settlement be allowed to cultivate crops. The reply from the Secretary was "that it was not a favourable moment to discuss the question with Spain."[21]

On September 14, 1834 Spain sent word that it wanted to open talks with the newly independent Central American states concerning recognition of the latter. This event convinced Palmerston to seek a Spanish cession of Belize so as to weaken any further Republic claims.[22] Seeing a narrow window of opportunity, Palmerston wanted a transfer of sovereignty before Spain could negotiate treaties with the Central American states that might include recognition of the latter by the former. Palmerston had to walk a fine line. He could not allow Frederick Chatfield, the consul he had sent to Guatemala to negotiate a commercial treaty, to appear overly anxious in reaching an agreement with the Guatemalans because he did not want to suggest that Britain was seeking Guatemalan recognition.[23] Meanwhile, Cockburn was being told by Chatfield to request that London become more involved. Chatfield was motivated by two land grants Guatemala made in 1834 that the British settlers felt impinged upon their territory. Thus there were forces from two directions - Chatfield's and Palmerston's combining to precipitate negotiations with Spain. The Colonial Office and Cockburn were equally interested in the production of the definitive map of Belize - to be used both in negotiations with Spain and to regulate logging and land tenure in Belize.

Thomas Miller, appointed Clerk of Courts and Keeper of the Records of British Honduras on January 14, 1834,[24] was dispatched by Cockburn in 1835 to convince London, and later George Villiers, the consul in Madrid, that sovereignty was desired and necessary in the settlement. No such recognition was to be forthcoming. The aim of this research is to account for the events leading up to the Miller mission, and Cockburn's impact on the territorial delineation of Belize. This would result in a better understanding of why Britain began to gradually change her policy stance on Belize.

There has been very little published concerning Cockburn and Miller, save for brief mentions in Waddell's work on the Bay Islands, Humphreys' treatment of British Honduran diplomacy, and Rodriguez's book on Chatfield; Hayes' work on nineteenth century British diplomacy did not even mention Cockburn, Miller, or Chatfield.[25] Most of the work done on this period of British diplomacy in Belize has been undertaken from the point of view of the Colonial Office or the Foreign Office. This research attempts to describe the events and their genesis by considering the motives and actions of the local government.

I

THE MISSION COCKBURN SENT MILLER on was a direct result of the activities of three men: Chatfield, appointed consul to Guatemala in 1833 by Palmerston; Marshall Bennett, a land speculator and a Magistrate for 22 years;[26] and Juan Galindo, a Scottish born colonel in the Guatemalan army.

It was Chatfield in October, 1834, having been informed by Palmerston that Spain was preparing to negotiate with the Central American states, who first suggested to Cockburn "the advantages of consulting with Spain on the question of sovereignty."[27] Chatfield had been sent by Palmerston primarily to negotiate a commercial treaty with Guatemala - he was told implicitly to bargain over the status of Belize.[28]

Marshall Bennett is perhaps the name most often mentioned in the Archives of Belize as an early 19th century landholder outside the 1783 and 1786 treaty limits. He was awarded a huge land concession in 1834 by the Guatemalan government. The air of uneasiness that permeated 1830s Belize "was primarily the result of Bennett's woodcutting activities and grants to the south of the Belize."[29] The reason Bennett's actions caused such a stir in Belize was because a sizeable piece of his concession fell into what was generally considered to be British territory, and the British settlers were not content to sit quietly by and allow Guatemala

to sell portions of the land they considered to be under the jurisdiction of Britain.

Juan Galindo also received a concession from the Guatemalan government at about this time, and his concession covered approximately half of the territory generally considered to be British territory.[30] Galindo sent a letter to Cockburn in the summer of 1834 stating that he controlled as far east "as the junction of Black Creek with the Belize River, and ascending that River to the Source of the Brook of San Pedro."[31] This led Cockburn to inform Chatfield that he was prepared to defend the Belizean "border" against any force that aimed to remove British settlers.[32]

The Bennett concession infuriated many Guatemalans who felt that the English were exploiting the weak economy of Guatemala.[33] This rising Anglophobia served further notice to Chatfield that London must take some action. When the Guatemalan government suddenly cut off the negotiations for the commercial treaty that she had originally seemed to want,[34] Chatfield took it as a cue to warn Cockburn to seek assistance from London. The first thing Cockburn did was to declare the Guatemalan grant to Galindo to be "null and void."[35] Galindo, in order to gain support for his claim, made visits to the United States and to Britain.

Thus the Miller mission "which resulted from Chatfield's suggestion of October, 1834, was Colonel Cockburn's answer to Galindo's tour abroad."[36] Cockburn wanted a formal cession of sovereignty in order to dilute the effectiveness of Galindo's campaign in the United States and to Britain. By this time Galindo had begun his campaign of "engaging the Government of the U.S.A. to assist him in obtaining possession of the grant by protesting against the right of British subjects to hold those Settlements."[37] The Miller mission was also a product of events within the settlement. Cockburn and the settlers of Belize wanted the right to begin agricultural enterprises and the legitimization of logging claims beyond the 1783 and 1786 treaty limits - two goals that would only be allowed by the Foreign and Colonial Offices if Spain agreed to the cession of sovereignty.

II

COCKBURN WROTE TO THE UNDERSECretary of State on November 24, 1834 to introduce his envoy Miller and to request that his cause be considered. Cockburn wrote, "I take the Liberty of hereby introducing & of strongly recommending to give ... support & assistance, Mr. Thomas Miller, who holds office in this Settlement of Clerk of Courts therefore of Records."[38] Miller was speaking as a representative of all the inhabitants of the Settlement as he bargained for the Spanish release of sovereignty.[39] In addition to the primary goals of clarifying the Guatemalan land grant imbroglio and securing the right to grow crops in the settlement, Cockburn wanted Miller to broach matters of secondary importance. In particular, Miller was to seek, on Cockburn's behalf, the power to grant lands in perpetuity. Miller was also to ascertain the extent of Cockburn's powers to grant settler status to British subjects. Finally, Cockburn sought the protection of British Men of War due "to the unsettled state of the Republic of Central America."[40]

Miller arrived in London for the first leg of the mission sometime in February, 1835. Upon arrival Miller wrote the Secretary of State that "until Great Britain had a firmer and more secure tenure of Honduras the Central American Republic will endeavor ... to drive her from it."[41] Thus it was made clear that Miller and Cockburn's designs for Spanish cession were to thwart the Central American Republic claim to Belize - and not to appease Spain. Spain was being consulted merely as a courtesy.[42] Miller also addressed the fact that Belize was held by Britain in an anomalous position as compared to her other possessions, and that even the Central American Republic recognized this:

> "There can be no doubt that the Republic ... upon the supposition that because Honduras is not held by Great Britain under the same circumstances as the other Dependencies of the Crown, His Majesty's Government [next four words are illegible] to take it under their protection."[43]

While the last line is illegible, it would appear that Miller was pleading Cockburn's argument that Belize be given colony status[44] - an event that was to take place 27 years later in 1862.

In what appears to be Miller's first correspondence back to Cockburn, Miller explained that he had broached the subject of Bennett's land concession and company (Eastern Coast of Central America Commercial and Agricultural Company) which had secured the controversial 14 million acre concession from Guatemala that included land that Cockburn felt was under British control.[45] Miller wrote:

> "I addressed Mr. Gladstone [of the Colonial Office] on the subject, and had the honor of an interview with him. In this interview I detailed to him the proceedings of the Company, which he seemed to view as an important feature of the question and one, on which as he was uninformed, he requested me to submit to him in writing."[46]

This news that Guatemala was parceling out land considered to be under British control further impressed upon the Foreign Office the need for a Spanish cession. Miller himself viewed the grant as a "deliberate and insidious encroachment on British sovereignty."[47] On the question of agricultural rights, Miller wrote that Gladstone "fully concurred with me in the opinion that there were no prospects of an efficient system of Agriculture being carried on in Honduras until that question [cession] was finally set at rest."[48] Thus the settlers would not be allowed by the Crown to grow significant crops until Spanish cession was granted. Miller further iterated that "until it [cession] was settled he did not see that Lord Aberdeen would enter upon the discussion of the internal affairs of Honduras."[49]

It was clear at this point that if Miller was to accomplish anything, he needed to have his case heard in Madrid - for it was only after the cession was granted that Aberdeen (who had replaced Palmerston at the Colonial Office)[50] would consider granting such concessions as agricultural rights. To this end, Backhouse of the Foreign Office, after debriefing Miller, agreed to send word that Miller wished to visit Madrid, to Wellington (who succeeded Palmerston at the Foreign Office). Wellington concurred as Miller wrote:

> "... that His Grace [Wellington] had determined to convey Instructions to the British Ambassador at Madrid [Villiers], to enter into negotiations with the Spanish Government for obtaining a cession to Great Britain of the sovereignty of Honduras, as far south as the River Sarstoon . . ."[51]

In commenting upon the Backhouse interview the following day, Miller elaborated upon Wellington's message to Villiers to initiate negotiations. In the event Villiers was not able to secure a Spanish cession, he was to

> "... negotiate for the special reservation of the sovereignty question as one pending between Great Britain and Spain alone, in any deed which may be executed by Spain declaratory of the Independence of the Republics of Mexico and Central America."[52]

Again, to Wellington the urgency of the Belize issue was heightened by Spain's admitted intent of negotiating with Mexico and the Central American Republic over Spanish recognition of the latter. This was borne out by Wellington's conveyance to Villiers. It was in these letters that first mention was made of Miller traveling to Madrid to meet with Villiers.[53]

On March 11, 1835 Miller received a letter from the Colonial Office on Downing Street marked "Immediate." The dispatch informed Miller that Aberdeen "considered it advisable that [he] should proceed to Madrid without any loss of time" and that Wellington concurred.[54] Miller wasted no time. He departed London two days later on March 13 and arrived at Plymouth March 14.[55] While in Plymouth "waiting for the wind to come around," Miller dashed off a few lines in which he mentioned having discussed Bennett with Gladstone:

> "... Mr. Gladstone told me that Mr. [illegible] had transmitted a Memorial to the office

> from Mr. Bennett against the proposed law of zones on the subject of Mahogany cut to the Southward. This [illegible] the law you said was to be proposed at a Special Public Meeting.I explained the whole matter to him, but I think his impression still seemed to be that the law appeared something [ille-gible] like harshness towards one individual. I suppose this is the light Mr. Bennett has put it in."[56]

Bennett's clout, and the Crown's desire to allow the landed gentry to prosper unfettered by colonial rule, were evidenced by the fact that Gladstone seemed to take Bennett's side in this dispute over logging rights.

From Plymouth, Miller sailed for four days to Corunna, Spain and then made his way in six days to Madrid.[57] The journal entry for his first night in Madrid must have disheartened Miller for he found that the English ambassador to Spain "appeared to know nothing" of the present situation in Belize.[58] After a wait of three days Miller was able to meet with Villiers, the English ambassador to Spain, who informed Miller that he had been "so very busy with other matters that it was only last evening that he had an opportunity of reading the long paper transmitted by the Colonial Dept. & the Duke of Wellington."[59] Villiers told Miller that he had been instructed by Wellington to negotiate for the rights to

> ". . . everything that the settlers have occupied, from the Rio Hondo on the north to the Rio Sarstoon on the south, and as far west as Garbutt's Falls on the Belize, and a line on the same parallel to strike on the Rio Hondo on the north and the Rio Sarstoon on the south; also the waters, islands and keys lying between the coast so defined and 87° 40' west longitude."[60]

These boundaries had been recognized as the legal ones in Belize since an 1834 ruling by judges and magistrates in the settlement,[61] and are the boundaries within which Belize exists today. The note which Villiers eventually drafted and sent to de la Rosa, the Spanish Foreign Minister,

> ". . . pointed out to him that it had been out of deference and courtesy to the ancient rights and sovereignty of Spain in America, and particularly with reference to the manner in which the British had originally become the occupants of Honduras that His Majesty's late Minister [Palmerston] had thought proper to pay that respect to Spain by referring the matter to the Spanish Government."[62]

Villiers' letter, however, elicited no response from the Spanish Foreign Minister.[63] A later attempt by Villiers in 1836 was directed to the new Spanish Foreign Minister, Calatrava. Again no formal reply was ever received, and it marked the last time Britain was to seek Spanish cession through official channels.[64] By the time Miller had completed his mission, the only thing that had been accomplished was that Spain had received formal word from Britain that the latter requested cession. Villiers confided to Miller that "the affairs of Honduras rendered it necessary that more legislative enactment should be laid before Parliament."[65] Thus Britain now unwillingly had to take the initiative rather than sitting back and waiting for a Spanish cession to protect sovereign rights in Belize. Britain, through legislative actions, would be taking first steps towards declaring Belize a Crown Colony.

III

WHILE MILLER WAS IN EUROPE, Cockburn was busy constructing a definitive map of Belize. In particular Cockburn was working on a map sent to him by the Colonial Office with "a view to pointing out more clearly the errors it contains."[66] Cockburn felt that "the affair of boundary once settled ... should be notified to Central America & the sooner the better, as those which Great Britain is prepared & determined to maintain."[67]

Cockburn, as previously mentioned, during 1834 and 1835 had been acting in response to the Guatemalan land grants to Bennett and Galindo and Chatfield's subsequent warning. But there was another factor motivating Cockburn to seek a solution to the predicament. Since the Crown only

recognized and officially condoned logging excursions within the 1783 and 1786 lines, the logging works that operated outside these boundaries - and there were many - were not under the direct control of Cockburn. Therefore

> " ... in all the other parts of the Territory here so long claimed & occupied by the British, no regulations or restrictions has provided respecting the cutting of wood or the occupation of land & [illegible] the mahogany on the extensive tracts ... has been subjected to great waste & devastation ..."[68]

Cockburn iterated that a move by the Colonial Office towards awarding the Superintendent jurisdiction outside the treaty limits would therefore be a "protective encouragement to British settlers."[69] Further evidence that Cockburn was not satisfied with his level of authority came from Miller as he wrote that "He [Aberdeen] agrees as to the absurdity of your being called Superintendent."[70] It would appear that Cockburn was displeased by the fact that he could not take the title of Governor, and that he was compelled to keep the settlers within the treaty boundaries to which his authority was confined.[71]

George Hyde, a prominent Belizean magistrate who had undertaken to map the course of the Hondo, admitted to the Colonial Office that

> " ... the computation of distances in the Settlement beyond the immediate vicinity of the coast, is merely conjecture and that the conjectures are apt to be wide of the mark, owing to the improbable nature of the country in most parts of it."[72]

A Mr. Young of Belize, who accompanied Hyde on the trip to London, went on to mention that the 1786 boundary had at one time been demarcated by a stone set up by a joint British/Spanish Commission, but that the stone had washed away.[73]

The Colonial Office realized just how tenuous the boundaries of the settlement were and sent a map to Cockburn for his comments. Cockburn corrected the map with red ink in 1835 (see Humphreys [1981] Map 3). The line labelled "Western Boundary" on the map was drawn in by Cockburn. Cockburn recommended that the western boundary be drawn northward from the source of the Sibun - at approximately 89° 35'. This would place the western-most point of the British-held land about 26 miles west of the existing point at Garbutt's Falls.[74]

It is clear that Cockburn's artificial boundary would have afforded the settlement much more territory, but Cockburn felt justified in doing so stating that he only included land "as we can claim to have been in possession of when the Central American Republic declared its independence."[75] Cockburn warned that this artificial line must be drawn far enough to the east so that the village of San Pedro (see Humphreys [1981] Map 3) was not brought into British territory, for it was controlled by the Republic.[76]

IV

THUS COCKBURN, WITH THE AID OF Hyde and Young whom he had mentioned to Aberdeen,[77] further ensconced the borders that had been ruled British territory in 1834. He and Miller did not, however, succeed in gaining a Spanish cession of sovereignty and therefore extending *de jure* authority beyond the treaty limits. The status of the settlement was not to change significantly until the 1859 Anglo-Guatemalan Treaty legitimized the western boundary of Belize as a line drawn southward from Garbutt's Falls to the Sarstoon - which is what the Foreign Office had suggested. Cockburn and Miller had netted no immediate victory for the settlement themselves. They did, at the very least, maintain the *status quo* in Belize at a time when the Central American Republic could have subjugated the territory.

The years of 1834-35 were a threshold in the history of Belize. By 1837 Superintendent Alexander MacDonald (Cockburn's successor) had become empowered to make grants outside the treaty boundaries, and by 1839 the Colonial Office agreed to allow plantation agriculture.[78] During the two year period Britain, for the first time, acknowledged responsibility for the settlers of Belize. The primary motive behind the Crown's

change of policy in the isthmus was the Guatemalan granting of two land concessions that straddled British-held territory. The second force was the need to provide agriculture in the settlement. The settlers were desperate for the Crown to sanction agriculture - both to feed themselves and to diversify the economy. Thirdly, Cockburn's desire to increase his power base outside the treaty boundaries helped compel Britain to take action. These three factors, each a product of the mid-1830s, precipitated an end to the benign neglect of Belize by the Crown. §

Footnotes

1. For simplicity, the settlement will be referred to as Belize, and not Honduras or British Honduras, regardless of the date.

2. The *latifundia* system consisted of large agricultural works owned by a landed minority of direct Spanish descent. The landless peasants were exploited as labor on these landholding that existed from Guatemala to Chile. G.J. Butland, Latin America, (London, 1966), pg. 5.

3. A.R. Gregg, *British Honduras*, (London, 1968), pg. 8.

4. *Entrepot* means literally, "between ports." The *entrepot* functions as a break-in-bulk point of trade where the method of shipment is changed prior to further movement. Islands near a mainland often serve this purpose. For example, London is an *entrepot* between North America and continental Europe. R. Murphey, *An Introduction to Geography*, (Chicago, 1961), pg. 188. Kingston was such a port for Britain in the West Indies. British trans-Atlantic commerce, from the late 17th century until the end of the Napoleonic Wars, profited greatly from the movement of guns and trinkets from Britain to West Africa; from West Africa slaves were sent to Kingston; and from Kingston rum, sugar and molasses went to Europe, primarily Britain.

5. Some of these early Anglos, especially the Baymen, in Middle America were Scottish. Technically therefore, they were not British until the early 18th century.

6. Exotic timber was the *raison d'etre* of Belize. Logwood, used to make dyes, and mahogany, used to make rail coaches, were in great demand in Europe.

7. J.A. Zammit, *The Belize Issue*, (London, 1978), pg. 9.

8. W.J. Bianchi, *Belize: The Controversy Between Guatemala and Great Britain Over the Territory of British Honduras in Central America*, (New York, 1959), pg. 35. The treaty of 1670 was to determine the course of Anglo-Spanish relations in Central America for the next 100 years. With the treaty Spain relaxed its position on land rights in the New World and agreed to acknowledge British sovereignty over land occupied by British subjects at that time. However the treaty did not consider the tiny British enclaves at Belize and the Mosquito Shore. It is doubtful whether any of the metropole government elites even knew of the settlements at the time. In the 19th century when Britain finally made serious moves toward taking responsibility for Belize, it was argued that the 1670 treaty gave possession to Britain of all land then occupied by the British - regardless of formal recognition in 1670. Spain never compiled with this line of reasoning. T.S. Floyd, *The Anglo-Spanish Struggle for Mosquitia*, (New Mexico, 1967) pg. 27.

9. The principle, rarely recognized in modern international law, essentially meant that the Latin American Republics felt entitled to land that Spain held in the New World. Sir A. Burns, *In Defence of Colonies*, (London, 1957), pg. 202. See also Humphreys, *The Diplomatic History of British Honduras 1638-1901*, (Connecticut, 1981), Appendix II, pgs. 179-182.

10. N. Ashcraft, *Colonialism and Underdevelopment*, (New York, 1973), pg. 29.

11. Zammit, pg. 11.

12. Floyd, pgs. 163-4.

13. Ibid., pg. 164.

14. Ibid.

15. J.L. Mendoza, *Belize: An Anglo-Guatemalan Controversy*, (London, 1948), pg. 3. Quoted in Zammit, pg. 13.

16. Zammit, pg. 13.

17. Humphreys, pgs. 20, 26.

18. Cockburn to Sec. of State, Nov. 15, 1835, in Humphreys, pg. 25.

19. Humphreys, pg. 25.

20. Humphreys, pg. 26.

21. Sec. of State to Cockburn, April 15, 1834, in J.A. Burdon, *Archives of British Honduras*, (London, 1934) II, pg. 353.

22. Humphreys, pg. 37.

23. Humphreys, pg. 36. Guatemala was the state of the Republic that was most active in claims against the British Crown.

24. Cockburn to Clerk of Courts, Jan. 14, 1834, in Burdon, pg. 352.

25. D.A.G. Waddell, "Great Britain and the Bay Islands, 1821-1861, "*The Historical Journal* II, I (1959): 59-77. Humphreys, 1981. M. Rodriguez, *A Palmerstonian Diplomat in Central America*, (Arizona, 1964). P. Hayes, *The Nineteenth Century 1814-80*, (New York, 1975).

26. O.N. Bolland, *The Formation of a Colonial Society*, (Baltimore, 1977), pg. 164.

27. Rodriguez, pg. 92.

28. Archives of Belize (hereafter AB) Rec. 12,March 16, 1835, in Burdon, pg. 372.

29. Rodriguez, pg. 92.

30. Miller to Gladstone, Feb. 20, 1835, in Burdon, pg. 366.

31. Miller to Gladstone, Sept. 12, 1834, in Burdon, pg. 356. Humphreys (1981) includes maps that depict most of the geographical references made in this article. Unfortunately, the maps could not be reproduced here.

32. Cockburn to Chatfield, Sept. 13, 1834, in Humphreys, pg. 41.

33. Gregg, pg. 34.

34. Humphreys, pg. 41.

35. Gregg, pg. 34.

36. Rodriguez, pg. 92. Galindo's tour was not a success. His first stop was Washington where limited U.S. interest in Central America prevented him from winning any support. The British government showed no sympathy for his cause either, arguing that he was, in fact, a British subject, and that he was only looking out for his own self-interest. Galindo returned to Guatemala to a less than favorable welcome where he died in battle in 1840. Humphreys, pgs. 43-44.

37. Sec. of State to Cockburn, Aug. 12, 1835, in Burdon, pg. 378.

38. Cockburn to Sec. of State, Nov. 24, 1834, AB Rec. 6e, pg. 4.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Cockburn to Miller, Nov. 24, 1834, in Burdon, pgs. 360-2.

41. Miller to Sec. of State, Feb. [illegible], 1835, AB Rec. 11, pg. 72.

42. Miller to Cockburn, March 20, 1835, in Burdon, pg. 375.

43. Miller to Sec. of State, Feb. [illegible], 1835, AB Rec. 11, pg. 72.

44. AB Rec. 12, March 16, 1855, in Burdon, pgs. 371-2.

45. Humphreys, pg. 42.

46. Miller to Cockburn, Feb. [illegible] 1835, AB Rec. 11, pg. 140.

47. Miller to Gladstone, Feb. 20, 1835, in Burdon, pg. 366.

48. Miller to Cockburn, Feb. [illegible], 1835, AB Rec. 11, pg. 141.

49. *Ibid.*, pgs. 141-2.

50. *Ibid.*, pgs. 142-4.

51. *Ibid.*, pg. 143.

52. Miller notes, Feb. [illegible], 1835, AB Rec. 11, pg. 120.

53. *Ibid.*, pg. 121.

54. Colonial Office to Miller, March 11, 1835, AB Rec. 11, pg. 157.

55. Miller-Journal at Madrid, March 11, 1835, AB Rec. 11, pg. 321. Unfortunately most of this journal is illegible. Exactly how Miller went about trying to get de la Rosa to concede may never be known.

56. Miller to [?], March 14, 1835, AB Rec. 11, pgs. 160-1. It is not clear as to whom Miller was writing this letter. He may have been writing to Cockburn, but on page 161 he "sends his best regards to [?] Cockburn - it is unclear whether he wrote "Mr." or "Mrs." before Cockburn. There is no other reference made to the "law of the zones" in the archives. It would appear that the laws were aimed at regulating the cutting of timber south of the 1786 treaty limits.

57. Miller-Journal at Madrid, March 27, 1835, AB Rec. 11, pg. 321.

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Ibid.*, pg. 325.

60. Foreign Office Instructions to Villiers, March 12, 1835, in Humphreys, pg. 38.

61. Humphreys, pg. 38.

62. Miller to Cockburn, June 14, 1835, AB Rec. 11, pgs. 215-6.

63. Humphreys, pg. 40.
64. *Ibid.*
65. Miller to Cockburn, June 14, 1835, AB Rec. 11, pg. 216.
66. Cockburn to Aberdeen, April 17, 1835, AB Rec. 6e, pg. 23.
67. *Ibid.*, pg. 31.
68. *Ibid.*, pg. 25.
69. *Ibid.*, pg. 26.
70. Miller to [?], March 14, 1835, AB Rec. 11, pg. 159.
71. Murray to Cockburn, Oct. 28, 1829, in Humphreys, pg. 25.
72. Inward despatches, March 27, 1835, AB Rec. 12, ,pgs. 91-2.
73. *Ibid.*, pg. 93.
74. Cockburn to Aberdeen, April 17, 1835, AB Rec. 6e, pg. 27.
75. *Ibid.*, pg. 27.
76. *Ibid.*, pg. 28.
77. *Ibid.*, pgs. 28-9.
78. Sec. of State to Superintendent, June 29, 1839, in Burdon, pg. 408.

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CHRISTMAS AND BRAMMING IN BELIZE CITY

CHRISTMAS IN BELIZE CITY IS BEST understood by standing between the spirited, slightly off-key Police Defence Force Brass Band determinedly playing carols in the downtown park, and the seven foot loudspeakers on nearby Albert Street beating out Jamaican reggae, U. S. rhythm and blues along with Latin salsa, or the latest in home-grown punta rock. The police band does not stand a chance; while a dozen or so Belizeans linger for a moment to listen, hundreds more move to the rhythm of the commercial strip in a last minute flurry of shopping.

The police brass band is a vestige of a colonial past that is rapidly losing currency with old and, without doubt, young Belizeans. Since its independence from Britain in 1981 the country may have adopted the political model of "Westminster-Whitehall," but it is the competition of Caribbean-/Latin/U.S. style, for better or worse, that is increasingly felt. The purpose of this paper is to describe ritual and festive features of Christmas in Belize City [1989] some of which are borrowed, and others that are emerging as distinctly its own. Of particular interest, in addition to traditional holiday activities, is the "bram," a community based celebration that includes music, dancing and feasting. In interviews with older Belizeans, memories of "brammin" on Christmas day evoke strong responses whether the informants were participants or not. Younger Belizeans know the term, and remember their parents' and grandparents' stories, but re-define the merrymaking to fit with newer cultural realities.

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I

IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT BELIZE CITY, WHICH grew at the mouth of the Belize River on the Caribbean Coast in the mid-to-late 1600's (Everitt, 1986), was ever an elegant capitol. Now, however, with the national government's relocation to Belmopan in the center of the country, the port town has taken on an even harder and shabbier look, though certainly not abandoned or empty of life.

Most also agree that the city's present deterioration is a direct result of centuries of British colonialism and unchecked exploitation of natural resources. Clegern (1967), for example, states that for the majority of its history Belize was "a mere timber reserve surrounding the trading center called Belize City." By the late 1970's the export value in wood products had fallen to 2%, down from 90% in 1945. It is difficult to argue with Everitt's conclusion:

> The population in Belize City is poor, unemployed and underemployed, and many families only survive thanks to remittances from relatives in the United States.

There is also reason to believe that the cultural influence of Belize City is also in decline. While 75% of the city is Creole, only 38% of the country

remains so (Ministry of Education, 1984). Correspondingly, Anglicanism accounts for only 12% of religious affiliation. On the other hand, the Mestizo, predominantly Spanish speaking residents of the Northern Districts of Corozal and Orange Walk, and Western Cayo District total 33% of the population, and that percentage is increasing yearly. As a reflection of this change,Roman Catholicism is now practiced by 62% of the population. Other ethnic groups in Belize include East Indian (2.1%), Yucatecan-Mopan (6.8%), Kekchi (2.7%), Garifuna (7.6%), White (4.2%), and others (3.7%).

European religion has been an influence in Belize since the colonial period. The Ministry of Education writes; "Missionaries arrived from Britain and later from the U.S.A. and persuaded Belizeans to become Christians." Other sects in Belize include Methodists, Mennonites, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostals, Nazarenes, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Baptists. About these religious persuasions the Ministry offers this assessment; "During the colonial period the British-based churches taught Belizeans to be submissive and so accept the colonial system."

The same authors are kinder to Roman Catholicism. They declare; "Christianity---particularly Catholicism—has functioned positively in parts of Central America. Catholics have stressed that the real meaning of Christ's teachings is that God made all people equal." And to bring the relation of religion and politics home, the booklet concludes; "Archbishop Romero of El Salvador...fought and died in the struggle for social justice in the region,"(*Belize Today*, 1984).

II

BELIZE CITY AT CHRISTMAS, DESPITE ITS economic problems, is full of activity. While not emblazoned, obligatory strings of lights brighten the night. Almost every store sends music out into the street, and such is the mix that, within a fifty foot span, it is not uncommon to hear Bob Marley and Marty Robins offering different views on sheriffs, and someone or other singing "The Little Drummer Boy." Albert Street resembles, in scale, a Main Street souk choked with traffic until nine or ten at night.

Two large department stores compete for the more affluent customer, and though both are crowded the older and established Brodie's seems to be winning out. There is a brisk business in electronics, perfume and pens, and the ubiquitous athletic shoe is a prized commodity. Outside, amidst the newspaper boys, hangers-on and hustlers, pushcart vendors set up shop and sell cheap clothing and trinkets for the browsers. Christmas fruits such as apples and grapes are especially abundant. Squatting by a corner a Rasta man auctions off a live turkey he holds on a leash.

Down Albert Street, away from the swing bridge that divides north from south in the city, in the smaller stores crammed full of less expensive shoes and clothing, Chinese and East Indian merchants hold sway. A popular exception is Venus Photos and Records, specializing in reggae and rock, salsa and Belizean punta rock. Here, British-style, customers try out their tapes before buying. By way of decoration, Christmas album covers line the wall. The promotional pamphlet, *What's On In Belize*, notes that the two big "Xmas Hits" are "Little Christmas Tree" and "Pretty Papers," while "Watu" and "Punta Jam Session" top the local charts.

In Belize it comes as no surprise that Christmas and politics are intertwined. Christmas lights may be hit or miss in Belize City, but the current Prime Minister and the *Times* choose to embellish the metaphor to speak about progress in the country. Prime Minister George Price's message declares:

> The lesson of Christmas lights the way ahead for a people on the road to progress. It is a message of peace, of love, of compassion that brightens the darkness. A recent writer warned that our region may return to an era of darkness because of strife, violence, hatred of life and life's values. We must not let this happen. Christmas marks the Birth of Christ. His amazing grace lights the way.

And, perhaps, to account for the paucity of Christmas brightness, the *Times* editorial, "The Light of Christmas," follows up:

> The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...this light brought

them an abundant joy. Such is the prophetic message of hope that comes to us daily with the dawn of another day, but especially on Christmas Day. Today's science and technology give us suns, vast and little, that have their source of power in electricity. In Belize there are places where people await this artificial light and energy to provide power for household and farm appliances. The lighted way is there to travel and to build a country where the created goods are distributed among all people. Long ago Isaiah saw this light that delights all humankind in every age. It was a trumpet call to widen the arc of light to illumine the mountainside whence the messenger of peace can bring glad tidings of Christmastide.

III

NO MATTER THE UNDERCURRENT OF OFFicial messages, most Belizeans speak of Christmas fondly and expect to celebrate. Even the most cynical, or just plain tired, look forward to the day off. Now that many Belizeans live in the United States the kind and size of Christmas festivities often depends on whether relatives return or not. Many do, and if an airplane ticket is not purchased months in advance, it is impossible to fly directly into the city during the season.

Emigration is a central fact of life in Belize, and more so for Creoles than other ethnic groups. It is rare to find a Belizean in town who has not been, or does not have a relative in the United States. The annual birth and death rates of 3.9% and .5% (1980 Census) would indicate that the population should grow by 3 to 4% per year. However, overall the population has increased by only 1%, that figure explained by emigration. Further, Belize City itself stopped growing in the 1970's. Its population has declined as a percentage of the total population, from 33% in 1970, to 27% in 1980.

It is against this background that we began speaking of Christmas, past and present. As we were walking into Erlean and Clive Casasola's front yard, we met Ruby and Shirley, two lively, middle-aged women, who were just leaving. It was only December 22, but they were paying their respects and had dropped off a little something at the house on fashionable Regent Street. Throughout the week we observed Belizeans walking through the streets delivering foil covered dishes, along with brightly wrapped Christmas presents.

Ruby sums up a variety of themes as we talk in the front yard while the Casasola's wait patiently on the balcony above:

> (I've)...been away ten years and things are not like they used to be. My brothers they used to play the guitar and go from home to home and have a ball, but now they just you know... politics, politics...They used to go brammin before politics.
> ...They don't want to listen to that kind of music now, they get their radio and they listen to the American stuff and that.

Ruby warms to the subject and her eyes begin to glaze over. She remembers that as a girl she had fun watching, but the boys, "Of course they drank and we didn't, you know." Most women, she says, didn't want any part of bramming; "You see it wasn't nice for people to drink and smoke, women." In Belize, then, there was a part of Christmas that "wasn't nice," that had less to do with the light of Jesus than with shadier sides of human life.

How did the girls have fun? Ruby smiles:

> Oh, we had fun! We just went out you know being with each other, talking and gossiping. My brothers used to drink, but they never drank at the bars, they brought their liquor home. An they sit at the kitchen table and play the guitar, and everyone plays the mouth organ or the grater, and they sing and hit stuff.

Ruby can contain herself no more. She starts dancing in the yard and singing, "Good morning, Miss...." At this point, now back in her youth, Ruby begins to speak in a heavy Creole better suited to convey her emotions. Her brothers, she remembers, brought strangers into the house:

Wi don no dem an ooh...we mi di-wuda go un de kon up an de di-waak fani an de---say you layk to dans...wak in da hos da fi-mi, no badi no-bisnis da bramas aal nayt (claps her hands) de go aan alaa di-nayt, aala de-deh, from hos to hos.

There are other distinctions within bramming. In addition, to separate male and female participation, there is the notion that good, Christian families keep their distance. Shirley remembers:

As kids we didn't know what Christmas was like because we were living right here and my mother never allowed us to go out. Out there where all the action was on Albert. They parties down the street. Regent was very conservative.

But once Shirley persuaded her mother to allow her to wheel her doll carriage into the fray:

We beg and plead and next thing you know the drunken man fall and break up the doll and carriage, never again, she never allowed us. People were dancing, ooh...

Finally, Shirley believes, the effects of emigration and new culture have taken their toll:

But my brothers are scattered all over now... People are not interested in that kind of thing now. You can't do your brammin with that kind of music, rock and roll. It's not the guitar.

The Casasola's are a well known family in Belize City. They are both in their seventies now, retired in a newly built, spacious three bedroom house. Erlean was a respected schoolteacher in Belize City, and Clive held a responsible position in the prison system. Erlean apologizes for the lack of furniture in the house. Such are the new realities of Belize that while in storage most of their belongings had been stolen.

Erlean's kitchen table, however, is full of ingredients that go into the preparation of traditional Christmas dishes, and as the week is very busy she is starting early. Erlean is preparing gifts of food that will be distributed in the next few days, as well making sure her own Christmas dinner is on schedule. Specialties include black cake and white cake, and an egg nog-like rum po-po along with a pudding and rum sauce. Dinner is always turkey and ham, and a special potato salad.

This year the Casasola's will go to a large wedding on the 23rd, mid-night mass at St. John's on the 24th, host a noon-time Christmas day dinner, and then visit with neighbors later that evening and on Boxing Day, the 26th. All this activity is a bit wearing, and indeed Erlean reported that she napped during the mid-night mass.

Erlean has her own theories on the bram. She confirms Ruby's and Shirley's memories, and also suggests that, in general, the emigration has made Christmas a more private, family affair. Further, she believes that bramming suffers in comparison to conventional Christmas celebration:

Because they go away and they come back and think all of this is sort of primitive, I think that is why...Yeah I think so too... Our kind of native dance is a lot of bramming.

As distanced as Erlean appears from the bram, she does know something about its practice:

I'm sure as you hear the rhythm you feel like knocking up and down your feet and dancing and you always carry a broom-stick...Well they dance with that you know...They danced while they bang the broom to the rhythm quick like, up and down.

And just like Ruby, Erlean jumps up, grabs a broom, and executes a graceful demonstration of dancing and singing. And just as quickly, she returns to character to remind us of the bram's origins:

No No...I didn't participate. It was only a certain class of people that did, because in some of the groups, they lock up the doors

and it was said, I can't talk about it because I did not see, but they danced naked... I think that bramming started with the laborers from the chicle farms, the chicleros and the mahogany cutters and other laborers. So they would come into the city...They had their own holiday at Christmas...They'd get paid and come to town and bram.

Some pretty wild things went on behind the doors. Our boys used to climb the trees to see (she laughs), not the girls...The middle class would have parties and all run for their brooms and dance, but it was pretty calm party.

At this point, Carlton Fairweather, Erlean's brother, arrives carrying a ham. As we introduce ourselves, Carlton, a handsome, vigorous man in his seventies immediately warns us of the "rats" in Belize City. He is speaking about the muggers, robbers, and con men in town that have frightened resident and visitor alike. "This is what we've come to," he laments, "don't be let on."

Carlton remembers a different Christmas than now:

Christmas today as compared to what it used to be in my youth is a far quieter period. At that time we used to go out in the street and people would do their thing, but now it's more of a family thing...I'll be home by dark.

He, too, knows something of bramming:

As a boy...we used to go behind town what we used to call "wari-upan" and see the blokes, men and women, enjoying themselves bramming and drinking and screaming. Dancing you have a partner, and bramming, well, you all just do it, the difference is simply this.

And, like the others, Carlton maintains his distance:

I was always calm, nothing extraordinary mind you. I used to join the crowd in the street marching along...Instead of going for what I had to buy I'd march along and then get home late from Albert Street, and get a flogging...but apart from that...no no.

Shirley Smiling, the owner of a bookshop on Regent Street, sums up the point of view about Christmas and bramming in this neighborhood. She acknowledges that the holiday has become a family affair, with visiting among friends occurring on Boxing Day and the days after. We also learn that money, "especially for little old ladies," is an acceptable gift, as are baskets of fruit, ham and turkey.

On turkeys, Shirley has mixed feelings about the imported ones coming into the country. Years back children were responsible for the care and feeding of live turkeys bought a month before Christmas. To prevent it from being stolen, Shirley had to bring her turkey inside each night and, of course, "let it foul up your house." But, each year, she would become tied to her charge and argue against its demise---always to no avail. 'Now," she says, "it's rather impersonal. You buy a frozen turkey at the street, cook it and eat it, and no one gets attached to that."

Shirley is not sure why bramming is less visible. It is not simply that people are tired. Perhaps, she suggests, it is due to the emigration, the break-up of families and neighborhoods that has sent the celebrating indoors. Organized religion, too, has its effect. And finally, Shirley notes with some sadness:

When old come back they want to bram, but the young---I don't know. There is an Americanizing element. Old want to sort of recapture something, but the young have no inclination. They want to be American, not British.

Walking in a less fashionable section of town we discover Belizeans who have very different Christmas memories. Mr. and Mrs. Crawford live just off Racecourse Street, and are determined to keep up a bramming tradition, albeit a modified one. The family takes their bramming seriously,and boasts that even after the devastations of Hurricane Hattie in 1961, they were able to host a

party; "Wi in the darkness, baat we go ot...Wi mihaad wan kerfyu, baat wi go ot."

The Crawford's live in a small two room house. A few steps outside is a large room that is the "gas kitchen," and across the yard is the barbecue under a three sided lean-to. There is a great deal of activity in the household; on Christmas evening, starting after six p.m., the bram will be held, and over the next few days many preparations are necessary.

While hacking up frozen chickens Mrs. Crawford is exuberant about past holidays:

> Ooh...we partied, we'd go out boom and chiming...
> Da twenti-fort nayt, wi alaa we mit together an probabli wan weh, then we go fram tumoro nayt di-bring in Christmas maanin...Kom bak, wi di-ple hir in a fi-wi hom fo rofli, tri oh for hours, in di afternoon we change agen an go fra hos to hos...Ebribodi dat wi no, who fren-de,de kom join us an we go ot...into di hos, wi pled an pled and pled, an den we dans...ooh dat layk, we brammin and brammin.

A day later Mr. Crawford continues the story about bramming:

Mr. Crawford reminds us that "brammin's for Christmas only," and the procession used to go up and down the streets, but with the "decks" or tape players, among other things, the festivities have been confined to selected homes in the neighborhoods. He still visits relatives and close friends on Christmas morning, but "I come back and have mid-day and then we start to get drunk and the brammin starts."

Mrs. Crawford punctuates her husband's statement:

> Ooh, I'm telling you, we used to spend Christmas, big party, I'm telling you we still spend Christmas, because my husband very happy---happy,happy---he drinks, no fight, no quarreling. Christmas day and evening we will be partying.
>
> Wi no gwa du it layk before...wi gwa have wan paati, you know.

And they do. On Christmas Day the front yard is decorated with palm fronds and lights. More strings of lights are in the gas kitchen and bedrooms. Two very large loudspeakers, like those on Albert Street, dominate the dance space. A makeshift bar stands behind the speakers, and is filled with a wide variety including the ubiquitous rum po-po. By five o'clock twenty people mill about, but in a few hours a hundred more will join and the party takes off into the morning.

The Crawford's son is the evening's disk jockey. He stands in the gas kitchen behind an immense console,earphones on his head, peering out the door to sense the dance flow. He plays a grab bag of music that conforms to the ethnic diversity of the country; again reggae, salsa, calypso, U.S. rap and rhythm and blues, mix easily with Belizean punta. Dance styles and combinations also vary; men dance with men, men dance alone, some men dance with women, women dance with women, and women dance with children. At its height, the crowd is forced out of the yard into the street alongside the pungent, dried out canal.

This, then, by all accounts is the newest version of Belizean bram. It takes place in a working class neighborhood and everyone seems to be invited, and as the alcohol and music take hold, everyone begins to let loose. Mr. Crawford says:

> Some people are highty-tighty---they don't know how to have fun. They never bram---don't know how to party. You just pick it up, make up the songs as you go along—just pick it up and bram. You di-mov with the rhythm---nok you own ting dat da di-brammin.

IV

CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS IN BELIZE CITY are complex and syncretic statements, and the bram is no exception. There is a surprising similarity

in the reports about certain of its features, but depending on the age and class of informant, actual experience with the "classic form" varies widely. And like the ethnographer's dilemma, while there may have been some agreement on what was seen, some question remained as to what was meant by the performance of these festivities.

The bram was, and to some extent still is, a collective secular ritual. It has strong relation to Christmas, the term is used only during this season, but there is almost no religious symbolism in performance other than that previously associated with the holiday. There are some structural resemblances to carnival; in that festival, played out before Easter, class tensions are also dramatized, and rebellious behavior is sanctioned. Stewart's (1986) summary of Trinidad carnival could be describing a Belizean Christmas bram: "All feting is marked by abundant drinking, eating, and dancing to the season's calypsos, in an atmosphere of festive release."

The roots of bram are in the soil of Africa, medieval England, and the modern Caribbean. The bram most older informants remember was publically celebrated on the central Albert Street, and snaked its way through the neighborhoods. Today few people "bram," and if they do the reveling bears little resemblance to the gaiety of old.

It was suggested that the origins of the bram must be found with the early "chicleros" (chicle tappers) and hard wood cutters who dominated the work force until twenty five years ago. These men were considered "primitive" by the urban dwellers of Belize City, and the excessive possibilities of bramming were neatly laid at their door.

Why bramming is performed at Christmas was a thornier problem in the minds of Belizeans. Carnival's release, before the deprivations of Lent and the re-birth of Easter, makes both common and symbolic sense. But bramming's excess does not neatly fit into this religious pattern even though it is associated with the birth of Christ.

We would speculate that the coincidence of bramming with Christmas is related to the historical seasonal migration of the wood cutters, and is not a commentary on religious doctrine (it is, however, a commentary on other realities of wood cutting life). Belizean cutters ended their season in December and came to the city to celebrate and spend their pay, and finally signed up for the new season with the logging agents who resided in town. Thus it was well and good that proper people, especially women, stayed away from this group who had been isolated in forests for some months, and who were about to go out again.

The form the bram took, on the other hand, appears to be related to British yule-tide performances such as mumming, wassailing, and carolling. Each of these, in their early periods, was communal, invited excess, and revolved around dancing, drinking and eating. Features within mumming and its related form of wassailing show a similarity to those bramming. And each was an attempt by "have nots" to extract gifts from their wealthier neighbors. The parading through town was often rowdy, and like carnival merrymakers the mummers wore masks, and risked arrest. Coffin (1973) writes:

> Normally, mummers were male. With their followers they would move about the community, demanding gifts for their entertainments. (They)...have the right to enter homes and other areas that might otherwise be barred, and are able to disperse with dignity and politeness.

Wassailing was the most renown from of mumming, and its best practitioners were spontaneous song-makers who were spurred on their rounds by prodigious amounts of alcohol. "Wassail" derives from the Anglo-Saxon "waes hael," meaning to be whole or hale, and under the circumstances was easily transformed into the toast, "to your health."

In fact, the wassailing troupes were often drunk, and woe to the denizen who refused them another. Coffin notes a wassail of record:

> Wissleton, wasselton, who lives here? We've come to taste your Christmas beer. Up to the kitchen and down the hall, Holly, ivy and mistletoe: A peck of apples will serve us all. Give us some apples and let us go. Up with your stocking, on with your shoe, If you haven't any apples, money will do. My carol's done, and I must be gone, No longer can

I stay here. God bless you all, great and small, And send you a happy New Year.

Coffin suggests that wassailing was originally an important part of the agricultural cycle, a kind of fertility rite which, when merged with carolling, achieved its final form. In the north of England especially, this practice focused on the apple orchards in efforts to insure their survival through the winter, and their bounty in the spring. Carollers would dance from tree to tree, sprinkling each with ale or rum, singing incantations and firing guns to frighten away evil spirits. It is hard to ignore the idea that in Belize the logging rhythm that saw a break in the winter also brought forth similar expressions.

The saturnalian or dionysian features of bram are, of course, found in many ritual celebrations. Understood in the context of "transition" (Van Gennep, 1960), "limen" (Turner, 1964), or "ambivalence" (Rubenstein, 1980), chaotic features reinterpret relationships through performance. In England, wassailers consciously overstepped boundaries and gained entry into homes where they would normally be forbidden, namely those occupied by wealthy merchants, aristocrats and feudal lords. In the British Caribbean, Dirks (1987) notes that Christmas celebrations, and the dancing of "Jankanoo," the antics of the "actor boys," and the parades of "sets" were a "taking of leave" by the plantation slave populations. He states:

> ...it was a time for permissiveness; indeed throughout the islands, Christmas meant setting aside the very premise of inequality upon which relations normally rested and replacing it with a cordial and sportive;if at times somewhat tense egalitarianism.

In Belize, the bramming down Albert Street, the commercial and residential center of the elite, conformed to the same pattern. Logger would confront boss, and demand "payment" before being hired for the next season. In addition, brammers would find their friends in town, and be rewarded with black or white cake, and liberal portions of rum po-po. In this way the reciprocal relationships of both groups were tested and reaffirmed.

Despite its excesses, no attempt was made to curtail bramming in Belize. We suspect that there was no need to do so because the performance, while creative, posed no threat to the rigid social structure. Carnival, which also permitted license in all forms was, in socially turbulent periods, violent and potentially revolutionary and was often outlawed by local authorities fearing for civil order. In Venice, however, that most serene state, carnival was tolerated and actively enjoyed by the elite until the downfall of the republic when it was then banned.

Dirks (1987) describes a similar attitude toward saturnalias in the slave plantation economies of the Caribbean. There too, owners participated in the revelry, understanding, perhaps, that more was to be gained by allowing the performance, than by eliminating it. In fact, the Saturnalia "resulted in violence only occasionally if the participants were left alone, but tampering with their celebration guaranteed trouble." These celebrations, though threatening in tone, were all structured to channel disturbances into popular, harmless, and apparently satisfying ritual expression.

The performance of bram in Belize has another parallel to the earlier British traditions. By and large participants were men. Some women did participate, but they often were relegated to the audience rather than allowed on-stage. Both in the historical Belizean bram, and the one in which we attended at the Crawfords, women were in attendance, but confined to the sidelines. At the Crawford's, for whatever reason, men outnumbered women at the party four to one.

V

TODAY IN BELIZE THERE ARE REMINDers of traditional bramming, but it is the rare man that can spontaneously compose a "brukdown." The original instruments along with the rhythm-keeping broom have been replaced by the "deck" or "pick-up" stereo, and with a disk jockey whose skill is measured by his creative juxtaposition of tunes, augmented by synthesized sounds from an echo box. The Crawford bram, which is one of the last and biggest in Belize, seems tame by historical standards, and remains a private, family

and local community affair that neither threatens Albert Street, much less wealthier patrons.

Christmas in the wealthier Creole neighborhoods is also a time for family and friends, drinking and eating. Although now no one would dare think to sneak away for a look into the Crawford's front yard the way they hid in the trees a generation ago to spy on the old time brammers. Rather, Erlean and Clive and their group attended a packed midnight mass on December 24th, followed by quiet visiting and an early sleep to prepare for Christmas Day dinner.

There is still some carolling and "serenading" in Belize City neighborhoods. These walks are organized by church groups and traditional Christmas hymns are sung. Often carollers are transported on the back of flat-bed trucks to public facilities such as hospitals and community centers. Rarely are the singers rewarded with gifts. Occasionally, in wealthier neighborhoods, it was reported that serenading occurred, a kind of "sing for your supper" custom in which the group, along with children, was then invited in to eat and drink.

Finally, several informants excitedly spoke of a Christmas "boom and chime" band that wandered the streets in their youth, and clearly was related to the old musical accompaniment of the brammers. Playing guitar, banjo, accordion, drum and jaw bone of an ass, the boom and chimers were an integral part of the procession and always invited in along with the singers.

We found Herbert Peter's Boom and Chime Band on Christmas Eve in the upstairs bar of the Bellevue Hotel. The band, and especially the jaw bone man who knew what bramming was all about and had started his night drinking some hours earlier, played old time favorites along with U.S. rhythm and blues with great enthusiasm to the scattered applause of half a dozen locals and an equal number of British soldiers on leave. Soon having had enough of "folk culture" most of the latter left to join their comrades and stylish young Belizeans in the overflowing downstairs bar where the latest in punta rock was being belted out by a group called, "Messenger Baby." Mr. Peters informed us, however, that there were some aficionados left in Belize City, and that he was booked solid on the private party circuit.

CONCLUSION

BELIZE CITY IS CALLED A "CULTURAL black cake;" Christmas festivities reflect the heterogeneity of its population as well as its colonial origins. The new bram remains, for a segment of the population, a viable ritual whose features recall old English wassailing, Caribbean saturnalia, as well as the newer, international culture. Behaviors normally disapproved are permitted, and in some cases integral to the celebration.

The new bram serves to symbolically express the realities of life in Belize City, and the altered ritual is an expression of the rapid changes brought about through modernization. Young people look to American culture for their role models, and the community has been physically torn apart by the ever increasing emigration to cities throughout the United States. It is no wonder that the "pick-up" has replaced the "boom and chime," and that "rap" and "punta rock" have replaced the "brukdown." Further, the harsh realities of Belizean life replete with drugs, crime and poverty have diminished the performance of the Christmas bram, restricting it to private venues rather than the public thoroughfares. Instead of procuring rewards from their overlords and bosses, Belizeans now reciprocally exchange gifts, food and drink from their friends and neighbors; one measure, perhaps, of social isolation in the newly independent democratic nation. §

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In Times Like These

By Zee Edgell
Oxford: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1991.
$19:95 BZE

Reviewed by Fr. Charles T. Hunter, S.J.

The latest addition to Heinemann's Caribbean Writers Series is Zee Edgell's *In Times Like These*. The heroine, Pavana Leslie, returns to her homeland Belize after many years abroad bringing her children - their unwitting father now influential in government. She fights to come to terms with the ghosts of her social past, the spectre of her political present, and to face the phantom of her cultural future. Her feminist saga reverses the Middle Passage and moves full circle from Belize to London, from London to Somalia and from Somalia back to Belize where it comes to a closely knitted, if tragic, conclusion.

Belize is the heart of the novel's geographical setting, the chronological center of the story is the troublous times of the Heads of Agreement in the early eighties. In fact, Zee herself had expressed certain reluctance to go ahead with her reading of a couple of chapters of *Beka Lamb* for Radio Belize's program of "Our Belizean Stories" during those suspenseful days when the center of disturbance surrounded the radio station itself. Her caution was understandable, but the truth of the matter was that Edgell's record of the first stirring of Belizean independence in *Beka Lamb* was done with such sensitive impartiality as to have commended *Beka* to even the most partisan listener. With the restoration of calm, Zee later went ahead with the readings. The same equanimity that characterized *Beka*, characterizes her treatment of the petty politics of *In Times Like These*. Equanimity and truth are the tone of the whole novel. And in fact the underlying idea of *In Times Like These* is not unlike the theme of Mordecai and Wilson's anthology of women's writing from the Caribbean, *Her True-True Name*.

Pamela Mordecai sent me a copy of *Her True-True Name* with Zee and this note: "I am taking advantage of Zee Edgell's being here and shall ask her to deliver this to you. It was a pleasure to meet her. I am in fact on the way to my sister Betty's house where we are to have lunch. She read and responded to questions at the Creative Arts Center at UWI yesterday. It was very successful and thoroughly enjoyed. She is very funny in a special sort of way ... a wry humor that is gentle"(Dated: 16th February, 1990).

In that same volume is a note in Zee's hand. Which reads: "Betty Wilson and Pamela have really done an excellent job with *Her True-True Name*. I thoroughly enjoyed the extracts they chose, and particularly treasure the introduction to writers from Cuba, Puerto Rico and Haiti. I hope you enjoy reading *Her True-True Name*. P.S. I was invited to lovely lunch at Betty's. Pam was there, too. It was so good to laugh with the people who seem to find the same things funny ... I met Betty at a conference (Wellesley) in 1988. She and her sister are truly remarkable people ... quite *unstuffy*."

'Wry humor' and 'unstuffiness' well describe the tone of *In Times Like These* as could righteous indignation and deep resentment at the unequal treatment dealt out to the Caribbean woman, especially if she finds herself enmeshed in the socio-economic predicament of unwed motherhood. But 'true-true' selfhood is the quest of Pavana. She will not settle for less than authentic feminine identity for the Caribbean woman, together with a respectfully equal role with the West Indian man. She will have no Orwellian modification of the Creator's making all human beings equal, but creating men more equal than women.

One first meets the sincere search for 'true-true' selfhood in the very first chapter of *In Times Like These*.It is Christmas time in London. Pavana has just yesterday passed "the entrance to large department store displaying in its windows a representation of the stable as Bethlehem, with life-size figures of the infant Jesus surrounded by Mary, Joseph, the cattle, the shepherds and Maji The perfect

family, their example sculpted, painted or written about for nearly 2,000 years. 'Lucky Mary, and *so* intelligent,'Pavana had muttered to herself. She envied Mary, who on finding herself pregnant, was able to call the assistance of the Angel Gabriel and the Holy Spirit to help persuade Joseph that marrying her, and caring for the baby, would be the right thing to do. But those, Pavana consoled herself, must in many ways have been simpler times indeed. In this more permissive and complicated era, she had only her own judgement on which to rely"(p. 1,2).

Today, as she lay on the operating table in the "sterile" room of a private clinic, Pavana's private judgement reflects on the appalling ease with which it is sometimes possible to depart from one's values. With Christmas celebrating birth and life all about her,she announces to nurse and doctor that she has changed her mind about the abortion. The nurse tried to persuade her that a 'big girl' like her should not be afraid of a 'little operation like this.' "Now be a good girl and stretch those legs out as far as they will go." But Pavana has a mind of her own and she had changed her mind. Just past twenty-one she is the one who will speak to the father of the twins later as adult to adult. This is the first big value judgement she makes with personal freedom and personal responsibility and she will continue to make others. She sinks her teeth into the wrist of the doctor about to guide the needle beneath her flesh with the words. "It can't be too late. I've changed my mind, tell him, nurse. I've changed my mind"(p.4).

So starts the inciting and exciting incident which begins a series of value judgements that lead to Pavana Leslie's growth and development of her 'true-true' self. In their introduction to *Her True-True Name*, Mordecai and Wilson write: "Given the constraints of space, we address ourselves finally to three themes which seem to merit further discussion since they represent important foci in the extracts presented in this book: The relationship of men and women, the relationship of mother and daughters and the quest of a sense of identity and wholeness, ..."(p. xiii).

It is the restless quest for 'a sense of identity and wholeness', the search for 'true-true' selfhood that underlies Pavana's pilgrimage from Belize to the UK, from the UK to Somalia and from Somalia back to Belize. It is back in Belize that she explains to Alex about her decision not to abort the twins. It had been an act of self-protection, of survival, of trying to continue becoming the person she wanted to be. "She answered him adult to adult. 'I wanted, needed to have them. Maybe it was completely selfish, hard to tell, but somehow my decision felt like the right one, still does'"(p 148).

When Alex suggested that he would have been willing to 'keep' Pavana, as so many West Indian men do, she replied:"All my life I'd struggled against certain cultural patterns. I didn't want to end up supported by you but only while you approved of my actions and decisions, having more children with you, or, if you left, with somebody else, perhaps ending up with a patchwork quilt for a family. I wanted to be able to stand on my own feet".

When Alex asked her why she wanted to be so different, she replied: "I'm not different, but I wanted to be. I wanted some control over what happened in my life, not have its outcome dictated by what I considered to be a youthful mistake"(p 149).'True-true' selfhood, authentic Caribbean womanhood - that's what Pavana Leslie's story is all about. It is the theme announced in the concluding words of good advice given by Polonius during second scene of the first act of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*:

> This above all - to thine own self be true,
> And it must follow as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.

§