

*If you have faith as a grain of
mustard seed, you will say to
this mountain, "Move hence to
yonder place," and it shall be
removed and nothing shall be
impossible to you.
Matthew 17:20*



THE FAITH THAT MOVED THE MOUNTAIN

*A Memoir of a Life and The Times
by Sir Randol F. Fawkes*

A MEMORIAL EDITION



1977 book launch of the first edition of "The Faith That Moved the Mountain."

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The Memorial Edition Compiled by

Rosalie J. Fawkes
Assistance provided by
Francis and David Fawkes

Address for Orders:
The Fawkes Family
P.O. Box C.B. 13623
Nassau N.P.,
Bahamas.
email: fawkesfamily@yahoo.com

Text and picture sections designed by
Patricia Thompson

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To
My Wife,
Lady Jacqueline Fawkes

*My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep, the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.*

Shakespeare's "Romeo & Juliet"



PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

This is a study of our country's transition from colonial dependence to internal self government.

I have tried to relate the major milestones along freedom's road to my personal experiences in various movements. The personalities involved are, therefore, real; the dialogues, authentic; and the documentation, valid. In short, it's a true story.

When World War II ended, The Bahamas Government faced many problems. Black men were no longer contented with second class citizenship. They wanted good jobs and better education for their children.

These aspirations of The Bahamian masses led to the formation of various civic, political and fraternal, organisations which took up the fight for a higher economic standard of living and greater social justice. Our history books have paid little or no attention to what these organisations accomplished and the men and women who led them. Hopefully, this effort will reverse the trend.

I am grateful, beyond measure, to the *Nassau Guardian* (1844) Ltd., for printing my manuscript;

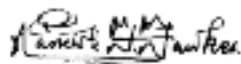
to the *Tribune* for the loan of a photograph or two; and to students and teachers who encouraged me, even with their letters, to finish this task.

My family, of course, must receive the lion's share of my gratitude for granting me the time to write this book. They realised, only too well, that once I had found my people, I could have no peace of mind until I had become a part of their struggle and transmitted their heritage to future generations.

About 399 B.C. Socrates in his search for moral truth, founded his school of philosophy. When a Court of Athens condemned him to death by poison because of his opinions, he said, "I would rather die having spoken after my manner and live. The difficulty, my friends, is not to avoid death, but to be sincere."

MORAL of the WORK

"If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain 'Move hence to yonder place,' and it shall be removed and nothing shall be impossible to you."



JANUARY 10, 1979

Let's We Forget

To those who knew Sir Randol and to those who are too young to know—these words and pictures from the pages of Bahamian history are presented in the hope that they will teach the uninformed, inspire the complacent and guide the dedicated to continue to labour with love in the vineyard of the Lord.

Randol Hawkes



"Arise Sir Randol"

CHAPTER I

* THE DECISION *

Tropic breezes cooled the environment on that late afternoon in June 1939. Shadows cast by a retiring sun, crept over the valley below and made the shade of the palm tree a place to be desired.

My parents, Edward and Mildred Fawkes, settled in their rocking chairs on the front porch of our home high on Fort Fincastle in New Providence Island.



Mr. and Mrs Edward Fawkes and family in front of their Fort Fincastle home in the 1920's.



The Fawkes family is shown during a picture taking moment in 1940. Above, seated are parents: Edward and Mildred Fawkes. Standing from left are the children: Bloneva, Bill, Coral, Randol (author) and Gertrude.

From there they greeted workers and children on their journeys homeward.

Interspersed between their greetings Dad and Mother talked about professional careers for their children.

“A good lawyer!” my father said, his eyes staring me in the face.

“Think of it,” he exulted, “if ... if you were to become a lawyer you will make plenty money and people will respect you. You can ... you can indeed.”

“Eddie!” my mother interrupted, springing from her rocking chair and pointing to the open road, “that’s Coral; she’s ... she’s crying!”

Coral, my senior by one year, was 16. With book flung over her right shoulder, she lumbered toward us. Upon attaining the security of the porch she tried hard to hold back the tears as she embraced Mother.

“What’s the trouble, Coral?” asked Mother.

“Mr. Woods, the headmaster,” she sobbed, “he... he insulted me today before the whole class.”

“What did Mr. Woods say? What did he do?” My father’s questions came with bullet-like speed.

“Mr. Woods said,” Coral quoted inconsolably, “‘Fawkes, you are a duffer. You cannot learn. It is typical of you and your breed.’”

There was an audible silence. A minute later Dad was pacing the floor as he pondered the full meaning, intent and effect of the words he had just heard. “‘Fawkes,’” he said slowly to himself, “‘you are a duffer. You cannot learn. This -- is -- typical -- of-- you -- and -- your -- breed.’”

Dad lapsed into a more somber mood than before. Mr. Woods had hit him where it hurts most -- his children.

I had seen my father with this “go-to-hell” expression on his face before. It was three years ago when Asa Pritchard, a member of the House of Assembly for Eleuthera, advised him to encourage my sister, Gertrude, to become a domestic servant rather than a chemist in the Bahamas General Hospital. In the parliamentarian’s words, “the commercial and professional fields are too small to accommodate both white and black.”

“Millie!” my father blurted out, “the time has come for us black folk to put a stop to this sort of thing. All my life I have slaved as a stonemason to send our children to high school. Is this the kind of treatment we can expect? Dammit! I am getting tired of this.”

At that very moment, a middle-aged cousin of ours, Leon Walton Young, joined us on the porch. He was a civic leader from Fox Hill, a backwoods village. Young’s thick lips, broad nose and woolly hair left no doubt about his



L. WALTON YOUNG
...local politician



ALBERT WOODS
...first headmaster GHS

African descent. Some called him Frederick Douglas, for with his broad shoulders, broad nose, and powerful intellect, he resembled that freedom fighter of black America.

Sensing uneasiness among us, cousin Leon asked, “What’s wrong Eddie? Has the world gone out of business?”

“You’re damn right! The world will go out of business unless this Englishman, Mr. Woods, stops fooling with my children.”

Dad then related Coral’s experience to cousin Leon. While those two discussed how to handle this problem, mother and Coral withdrew into the dining room. I remained on the porch with the rest.

Albert Woods, the first headmaster of the Government High School, was a product of English colonial snobbery. He was recruited and brought to The Bahamas in April 1925 by the white minority Government to appease the persistent demands of the black majority for secondary education for their children. After his arrival, his main preoccupation was extolling the Englishmen’s civilization and lampooning the cultures of Africa. In 1939, there was only one other high school in the Colony, the Methodist Queen’s College, but to gain entrance there, one needed nature’s passport - a white skin.

Finally Dad and Cousin Leon agreed to send a letter of protest to Mr. Woods. Who would write it? Who would tell the chosen one that he was wrong?

Dad’s literary knowledge extended only to the political backchat of the evening newspaper, the *Nassau Daily Tribune*. Leon Walton Young, however,

was a seasoned politician. Although only a carpenter, he was reputed to have read the whole of the Bible and all twelve volumes of the *American Educator*. In November 1928, when Marcus Garvey was denied entrance into The Bahamas by the white minority Government, it was cousin Leon who successfully intervened on his behalf and assisted him in launching his “Back to Africa Movement” at a mass rally on the Southern Recreation Grounds.

Dad and cousin Leon combined their talents and after much travail, the following letter was born:

*A. Woods Esquire,
Headmaster,
Government High School,
Nassau, Bahamas.*

Sir,

My daughter, Coral, came home from school yesterday in a very fretful condition as a result of unkind remarks addressed to her by you in school because of her failure to at once understand certain instructions you gave her.

She feels that she was not deserving of this treatment by you, and although our information of the matter must be second-hand, our feelings are the same as hers, as we have confidence in our children that they will at all times conduct themselves in a satisfactory and proper manner with all whom they may come in contact, and especially so, with the Headmaster of the Government High School where they are in attendance. They are very anxious to make good in their studies and in every way to be pleasing to you and to gain your favor, for only so, can they bring satisfaction to their mother and myself.

As this is the only school in the country of its kind where such children as ours are admitted, we have to send them to you. We can have no choice otherwise, and therefore we respectfully request of you such reasonable treatment of our children as will enable us to wholeheartedly co-operate with you in obtaining the maximum results. We have had both of our eldest children at your school and I am sure their conduct in every way has been good as was seen by their reports from you, and there is no reason why the two that are there now should not be the same.

I desire to take this opportunity of thanking you for your past favors and in anticipation of the future.

I am, Sir, Very Respectfully,

Edward R. Fawkes.

This letter was handed to Coral for delivery to Mr. Woods. At six on the following evening Dad called the family together and read Mr. Woods' reply:

#2.6.1939

E.P. Dankes lag

Dear Sir,

I am very glad that you brought this matter to my notice. No doubt your daughter was justified in feeling as she did; but there was no intention to produce any such effect, and I regret to learn that, in fact, such was the case.

The records of your children here have, as you suggest, been most favourable.

Yours faithfully
A. Woods

Mr. Woods' letter

In the past, many a parent had been rebuffed by Mr. Woods when they complained about his highly uncomplimentary remarks to their children. Therefore, it was easy for Dad to regard this letter as an apology. Many hours, months and years later, however, I pondered the implications of the whole incident.

“Could it be that Mr. Woods’ opinion of Coral’s intelligence was based on racial prejudice?”

“But are we not all God’s children?”

“Did not God make of one blood all nations of men?”

While searching for answers, other questions persisted:

“Why could not people of our own kind eat at the City’s Grand Central Restaurant?”

“Why were my friends and I required to sit on the southern aisle of the Kirk Presbyterian Sunday School and the white children on the northern?”

“Why was there in Marsh Harbour, Abaco, one graveyard for the whites and another for the blacks?”

“Why were there no black faces employed at the Royal Bank of Canada?”

“Is the worth of a person really determined by the colour of his skin? Why? Why?”

As these questions raced through my mind they built up in me a boiling resentment against a system that would assault the sensitivities of one so young as my sister.

Hitherto, I had no idea what the future held in store for me, but at that very moment of Coral’s insult, I caught a vision of what my life should mean to the Bahamian masses.

On retiring that night, I confided in my brother, Bill, that when I grew up I would become a lawyer and fight for a just society in which each child could grow up with self-confidence and dignity, secure in the knowledge that the colour of his or her skin would make no difference.

Before I fell asleep I prayed, “Lord, help me to keep my eyes on my goal and to overcome the obstacles along the way.”

* * *

CHAPTER II

* IN SEARCH OF MEANING *

I made my first acquaintance with the King on May 24, 1930 – British Empire Day. I marched from Eastern Preparatory School with a motley crowd of barefooted, rag-and-bone children waving the red, white and blue Union Jack to the martial strains of:

*Rule Britannia! Britannia rules the waves,
Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.
We don't want to fight to show our might,
But when we start we'll fight! fight! fight!*

CHORUS:

*In peace or war you'll hear us sing
God save the flag, God save the King
To the rest of the world the flag's unfurled,
We'll never let the old flag down.*

Our mile long journey ended at Eastern Senior School's sports field on Shirley Street, the focal point of many similar processions from other directions. After each group had taken up its position, a motorcade led by a long shiny white limousine wormed its way through an enthusiastic crowd and stopped at the platform. Amid great pomp and circumstance, His Excellency, The Governor, fully regaled in all the accoutrements of a General of His Majesty's Army, alighted from his Rolls Royce. There was a clash of cymbals as the drums of the police band rolled in a rising crescendo and then returned to a whispering pianissimo. We stood erectly; heels together, chests expanded and heads held high as we sang again in slow and measured tones our National Anthem:

*God save our gracious King,
Long live our noble King.
God save our King;
Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious
Long to reign over us,
God save our King.*

What a day! What a song! There was no melody in the whole-wide world more revered than this. Let others draw the contrast between the singers and the song. On that day we prayed fervently for the welfare of our all embracing, all loving, great, white Father and King.

After a brief introduction by the Headmaster, His Excellency stretched himself to the limit of his six feet two stature and, like a mighty colossus, strode towards the microphone. Yesterday, His Excellency encouraged the caucasian children of Queen's College to study hard to show themselves worthy of becoming the rulers of the land. We therefore harbored great expectations from his visit.

"Boys and Girls," His Excellency's stentorian voice pierced the silence, "I bring you greetings from the King and Queen of merry old England.

"Today, in every part of the globe, young people are rededicating themselves as His Majesty's loyal subjects. Although The Bahamas may seem to be only a small part of that vast Empire on which the sun never sets, I hasten to assure you that in His Majesty's crown you are one of his most precious jewels.

"You must work hard, for only in this way can you become good maids and laborers in the future Bahamas.

"And now by virtue of the power vested in me, I hereby declare all Board of Education schools closed for two days."

The effect of His Excellency's speech on pupils and teachers alike was electric. We shouted wildly and waved our flags energetically. After the cheering had died down each child marched home with a picture of the Royal Family securely tucked under his or her arm, feeling assured that since the King was on his throne in England all was well with the world.

My three sisters, one brother and I were reared under the influence of a great family tradition. Our mother led us every night in family Bible reading and prayers. Dad was seldom present to share in these devotions because of his lodge meetings which seemed to be in session almost every night. At the close of every night's reading, we all kneeled around Mother's bed and we would bring Dad before the throne of grace and ask forgiveness for his sins.

In order to supplement Dad's wages, Mother kept a petty shop in the front yard. We sold corned beef, ice, lard, kerosene oil and sardines to the people in our neighborhood. One of our specials was the selling of raisin bread every Saturday morning. To cope with the demand, we would knead the dough at

about seven in the evening. At 2 a.m. we were awakened by our parents to share in “the rolling off” - the cutting of the dough into loaves and buns. The batter was then left to rise again. About three hours later, the whole batch of dough was baked over a charcoal fire in a tin-lined box oven in the back of the yard. Sometimes, the whole oven caught fire and all labor was lost.

A few months after we opened our petty store, a Conchy Joe (Bahamian white) started to sell ice about one hundred yards down the road from our shop. One of our regular customers immediately transferred his business to the new merchant. Later, when this former customer stopped by for a chat, Mother inquired, “Joe, why are you purchasing your ice from another shop?”

“Well, Ma’am, you see it is like dis,” he stammered, “the white man’s ice is a little colder dan the black man’s.”

There was, however, another aspect to shop keeping which played an all-important part in the molding of our characters. Shop keeping gave us our first real contact with all classes of people. Today, I still hear my mother saying with all the wisdom of a Dale Carnegie counselling on how to win friends and influence people, “Speak to everybody, Randol; speak to everybody.”

We all attended public schools. Although none of us were brilliant, we struggled to lead well-balanced lives. “Get education!” became the watchword among black folk. After a mountain of effort, my eldest sister, Gertrude, became the first female pharmacist in October, 1937; Bloneva, the first Bahamian Apex beauty culturist; Coral rose to the profession of a senior school teacher and Bill, after his honorable discharge from the 99th Fighter Squadron, became a postal clerk in New York City; and I, the youngest, remained a dreamer for many years - dreamer of The Bahamas - the glorious homeland that was to be.

Being the last child had its advantages. Not only was I to inherit all the books of my brother and sisters, but it seemed to me that by the time I became a teenager, my mother had acquired an insightful wisdom born of years of reflection and prayer. She taught me how to read when all others gave up in despair; she directed almost every act of mine by remote control.

But I inherited more than books and good advice. Once while attending Western Senior School, a classmate, Howard Chipman, approached me with a challenge. “Randol, I bet the pants you are wearing are not yours.”

My pride was wounded. I clenched my fists and rushed toward him.

Sensing that I was hurt, Howard held up his hands in an apologetic fashion and queried further, “Then, why are the two back pockets joined together?”

Howard left me without words in my mouth. I was floored and I knew it. The pants originally belonged to Dad before they were passed down to my elder brother, Bill, and then later to me.

In school, almost every day, I played all games: football, cricket, tennis with a wooden bat and wrestling with George Robinson and Malcolm Mackey. I was seldom happy unless I was fighting somebody. My mother once remarked, “I am so busy praying for Randol’s sins that I almost forgot to pray for my own.”

Once during an inter-school sports meet, I acted as anchor - the eleventh and back up man in a tug-o-war contest. At first, the opposing team was winning. Suddenly, the spectators broke into laughter. To my surprise, I was the center of all eyes. This immoderate behaviour of the spectators so distracted the other team that they became careless and slackened their grip of the rope. We took advantage of the upset and slack and thereby ran away with the victory.

Later, when I asked the reason for their laughter, one of the fans replied: “Written on the seat of your pants in bold red lettering are the words 98 pounds net weight.” This of course was the inscription on all Robin Hood Flour bags. In my day, flour bag pants were a national dress and one pair was known to serve more than two generations.

In Western Senior School, two teachers – Miriam Cash and Kenneth Huyler, indelibly etched their personalities on the minds of their students. The soft-spoken Miss Cash restored order in her class of ruffians merely by her appearance. Young and fresh with the highest honours from Government High School, she was what everybody imagined the perfect teacher would be. We tried very hard to earn her praise, for in the cathedral of our hearts we all – Edwin Minnis, Harold DeGregory, Gene Cancino and I, carried a little flame for her.



Miriam Cash...the boys' favourite



Kenneth Huyler

The girls maintained a similar crush on Kenneth Huyler. His impeccable English and his pianistic virtuosity impressed them. Whenever he made his grand entrance into the classroom, the girls lapsed into a fit of daydreaming.

Our world of fantasies, however, was shattered one morning by the news that our heroine and hero had each become engaged and later to be married respectively to Mr. Dean and Miss Coral Russell. The boys recovered quickly from the trauma and found new interests but the girls swore, "Never again."

By the time I entered Government High School, Mr. Albert Woods was preparing to retire. Before his departure, G. H. S. became the focus of a massive campaign to upgrade the curriculum. Local white politicians worried that too much learning would make the black folk difficult to rule and impossible to enslave. At the end of the town meetings, general science was added to the list of subjects taught.

In my youth there was no Black history, no black heroes or nations past or present. No streets or schools were named after any black person. The popular phrase of the day was: "If you are white you're just all right; if brown, you can come around; but if you're black, stay back!"

The next headmaster was Dr. A. Deans Peggs. We called him "A. Beans Leggs." He was a young, energetic and extremely ambitious professor who taught mathematics and general science with an enthusiasm that was contagious. He too, however, wore his English chauvinism like a halo over his head, but this trait was tempered by a deep Christian commitment.

One of Dr. Peggs' first acts was to throw out a challenge to the top form to select a motto



*Dr. A. Deans Peggs ...headmaster,
1942-1958*



VIKINGS SPORTING CLUB - Front Row: Left to Right Addington Cambridge, Ralph Bartlett, Berkeley Armbrister, Walter Wisdom, Charles Linwood Austin. Second Row: Jack Ford (Empire), Harcourt Bastian, Caduwell Armbrister, Calvin George Cooper (Captain of Cricket Team), Randol Fawkes (President of the club), Rufus Ingraham, Winston Davis (Sports Officer). Third Row: Stanley Blair (Vice President) and Collymore.

for the school. Many were the offerings:

“Labour omnia vincit,” (Labour conquers all) I shouted.

“Honesty is the best policy,” responded another.

Dr. Peggs then scribbled on the blackboard, “Nisi Dominus Frustra” (*Except the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain that build it*).

“Why this motto in preference to all others?” inquired one student.

“Because,” replied Dr. Peggs, “until you find God, your life will have no beginning and all your past efforts will lead to no meaningful end.”

Although I thought I understood what he meant, the full impact of his words was not brought home to me until some thirty years later.

Dr. Peggs was a great innovator. The prefect system, the Students’ Representative Council, the school’s magazine, hymn and prayer - they all bore his mark. During his regime, the student body was divided into two houses: Nassau House of which I was the first captain, and Montague House, the captain of which was a brown-skinned boy, Kendal G. L. Isaacs.

My high school and post-high school experiences were enriched by my acquaintance with Dr. Harry G. Brown, Pastor of Kirk Presbyterian Church. Besides being a scholar, Dr. Brown lived up to the Scottish tradition of being a good storyteller. I could always tell when an anecdote was about to happen in his sermons. A shaking of his great mid-section usually preceded it. This would evolve into a genuine chuckle accompanied by a twinkle in his eyes.

On this particular Sunday morning, Dr. Brown took his text from Galatians Chapter six, verse seven: “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Midway through the sermon, Dr. Brown seemed even to taste the delightful flavour of his humour as his audience prepared themselves to share his enthusiasm. “Once a pastor was invited to fill the pulpit of a backwoods parish church,” he began. “At the entrance of the church there was a collection box into which each person was invited to put his offering. As the visiting preacher entered the church, he deposited a fifty-cent piece into the collection box. After he had preached the sermon, the visiting pastor was informed by one of the deacons that it was the custom to pay the visiting minister out of the offering in the box. It so turned out that the only thing in the box was his fifty-cent piece, which was then handed over to the pastor.

“While the pastor was walking home with his son, a most observant lad, the youngster looked up into his father’s face and said, ‘Say Dad you know something?’

“The father looked in the direction of the boy and inquired, ‘What is it Son?’

“The youngster replied, ‘Well Dad you see, if you had put more in, you would have gotten more out.’”

What an experience it was to ponder the moral of that story. A thousand sermons can be preached on that theme without exhausting its meaning.

Dr. Brown developed his text by going on to the Parable of the Talents.

In his lips, it became a testament. He claimed that life itself was a loan to us by the Master and that we would be rewarded in proportion to our service. It was then that I understood the real meaning and purpose of life.

“STEWARDSHIP!” my heart exulted. At last I had found it. The key to successful living was to be a steward instead of an owner, which was simply to surrender one’s rights of oneself to Him who cleansed us with His blood. Whatsoever one does, should be done for Him. Only then can one achieve his full potential in a life free from disappointments and failures, because he knows that in the final analysis, all things will work for good for those who love Him and serve Him above self.

Armed with this new insight into Christian Stewardship I pressed toward the mark, realizing that my reward was sure; if not here, certainly THERE.

The following day, I formulated my own success plan. Firstly, I decided what specific goals I wanted to achieve in the next twelve months. Secondly, I devised a timetable governing my daily actions from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. Thirdly, I purchased a pocket diary. Every day, I pursued my goals with missionary zeal. Every night, I checked my diary to measure progress and to set new targets for tomorrow.

One of the hobbies that brought me considerable pleasures and profits was the collection of autographs of famous people. When a local or international personality did something worthy of praise, I sent him or her a congratulatory note. About three weeks later, I was rewarded with a typed or handwritten reply thanking me for my kindness. One even expressed the hope that his

“future conduct would continue to merit my approval.” Later I read the biography of my new friend and selected him as my role model.

In 1940, during his visit to The Bahamas, I asked the renowned gospel singer, Edward MacHugh to let me have the most profound thought he ever formulated or read. He snatched my autograph album and wrote three words: “The Twenty-Third Psalm.” He then invited me to have coffee with him. “And what is your occupation?” he inquired.

Trying to be as impressive as possible I replied, “I hope to make my contribution in the fields of law and politics.”

“Then you had better listen to this story. Once there was an elocution contest between a young man and a more elderly person who had also reached the finals. As part of the program, each was to repeat from memory the words of the “Twenty-Third Psalm.”

“The young man trained in the best speech techniques and drama, in the language of the silver-tongued orators, commenced, ‘The Lord is my shepherd...’

“When the young man was finished, the audience clapped their hands in approval. They even asked for an encore so they might hear again his wonderful diction.

“Then came the old gentleman, leaning heavily on his cane. He stepped to the front of the same platform. In a voice trembling with age but, nevertheless, rich with understanding he repeated the words, ‘The Lord Is My Shepherd...’

“When the old man was finished, no sound came from the listeners. They seemed only to pray. In that kind of silence the Chairman arose and made the observation:

“Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to explain the difference. The young man knew the Psalm, but the old man knew the Shepherd.”

In September, 1944, two Bahamians, Cecil V. Bethel and Anatol C. Rodgers, joined the permanent staff of the Government High School. I immediately



*Cecil V. Bethel
...introduced author to “logic”*

befriended Mr. Bethel and was rewarded with a book, "Creighton and Smart on Logic." He counseled, "Never accept any opinion without proof. The only reason for believing anything or any person should be that the facts and facts alone require you to do so."

The limits of logic and the control of emotions were brought home to me by an incident that occurred in our family. Dr. Jackson L. Burnside commenced writing for the newspaper, the *Voice*. In one of his articles, he excoriated the Commissioner of Police and left it with my eldest sister to read. Gertrude read

i t



Anatol C. Rodgers ...former G.H.S. headmistress



Author at 16

and condemned it as absolute nonsense. Later Gerts and Jack fell in love with each other. She then re-read the same article and concluded that it was the greatest piece of literature in the world.

Anatol C. Rodgers, who later became the first female Headmistress of Government High School, was a no-nonsense woman. With her, it was high school first, high school second and, if any energy was left, it was high school again. An excellent Latin scholar she was. It was typical of her to use one of the Romance languages to communicate what touched her most. On June 19, 1943, I handed in my autograph album to her. She wrote,

*Not the rage of people pressing to hurtful measures
Nor the aspect of a threatening tyrant
can shake from his settle purpose,
resolution to succeed.*

On many occasions in my life, I returned to this advice and took heart.

Three months after my graduation from high school in December 1942, my father indentured me to Mr. T. Augustus Toote, a Barrister-at-Law. Under the Articles, I was to serve in his Chambers as his law clerk for a period of five years. For this privilege, my father paid Mr. Toote one hundred and fifty pounds in three installments. In exchange, Mr. Toote, my master, was to teach me all the principles touching the science and practice of the law. At the end of my apprenticeship, I was to write examinations set by a panel of lawyers appointed by the Chief Justice. If successful, I would be “called” to the Bar as a Counsel and Attorney in my own right.

Mr. Toote’s practice ran the gamut of the law: from divorce and matrimonial matters to Common Law and equity actions; from small causes and minor traffic offences in the Magistrate’s Court to civil suits involving millions of pounds in the Supreme Court; from conveyancing and cases on the admiralty side to the defense of the disadvantaged caught in the web of crime.

Mr. Toote was one of the first black Bahamian lawyers to carry briefs for white aristocratic Bay Street merchants. His reaction to the principle of “majority rule” for the Bahamas was always the same: “Touch not the Lord’s Anointed.” Although he and I eventually became “brothers in the law,” in politics we remained poles apart.

Despite this difference between mentor and protégé, I thoroughly enjoyed my association with Mr. Toote. All the facilities of his busy offices were placed at my disposal. His up-to-date library was dukedom large enough for me.

With my knowledge of shorthand and typing, I made a lot of money for my master. At no time during my period of service did my master give me so much as a small stipend or Christmas card. However, the more useful I became to him, the faster I advanced toward my goal. I did his “devilling” and found much law covering cases for presentation before the Supreme Court.

My duties were not limited to the law office. I assisted Mr. Toote in the drafting of bills for the House of Assembly when he was its Legal Adviser. From this vantage point, I was able to observe the law from its birth in Parliament straight through to interpretation in the Courts. I discovered the truth of the Chinese proverb:

I listened and forgot;

*I saw and remembered;
I did and understood.*

The five years I spent in Mr. Toote's Chambers passed quickly. This was because in addition to reading law, I read the Bible and took a number of correspondence courses from tutorial institutions in London. Further, my interest in the classics never died. I have never forgotten the moment of high drama in Plato's "Apology and Crito" when Socrates confessed to being a "gad-fly" and promised the tribunal to continue to be a disturber of the peace and the peace of mind of all those who were afraid to think. I thought of Mahatma Ghandi and many a West Indian leader who was being tried even in our modern times for daring to speak the truth.

During my studies for the Bar, I found it helpful to form a mental picture of the type of man I wanted to be. Always five years hence in my imagination, I pictured a man that is my future self asking me, my present self, "What kind of life will you hand up to me? Will it be one whose past has been wasted in pursuing trifles, or one dedicated to the attainment of some lofty purpose?"

Naturally, I responded affirmatively to the latter question and this burning ambition helped me to find my mission in life. Every day I worked feverishly toward my goal of becoming a fighter for the civil rights of the oppressed until all obstacles faded into nothingness.

Late in 1944, Dr. Harry G. Brown decided to leave The Bahamas because of certain race and colour prejudices held by the governing board of the Kirk Presbyterian Church. I met him shortly before his departure and inquired if there was anything I could do in the way of payment for his lessons in history, philosophy and literature?

Dr. Brown replied, "Yes, indeed. You will repay me every time you help someone else."

To this I replied, "Amen."

* * *

CHAPTER III

* DUKE OF WINDSOR *

THE POLITICIANS AND THE PAUPERS

After the fall of France to Nazi Germany in 1940, the United Kingdom feared an imminent invasion. In desperation, Britain got scrap-iron from her Colonies and begged and received from the American Navy Yards 50 old destroyers in exchange for a series of bases in the West Indies and The Bahamas.

On June 6, the Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill addressed the House of Commons, "We shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not believe, this Island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British fleet would carry on the struggle until, in God's good time, the new world, with all its power and might steps forth to the rescue and liberation of the old."

The gateway to that brave new world of which Churchill spoke was The Bahamas. It consisted of an archipelago of some 700 low lying sprawling islands and over 2,000 reefs and cays stretching in the sapphire Caribbean sea from the southeastern coast of Florida to the northeast of Cuba. New Providence, although not one of the larger islands, was the most important because it contained the capital, Nassau. In 1940 the people of New Providence constituted approximately one third of the total population of 100,000.

Eighty percent of the people of The Bahamas were descendants of African slaves; ten percent, Caucasians. Between these two extremes, intermarriage had produced every possible combination. There were the mulatto, the white and the black; the sambo, the black and the mulatto; the octoroon, the white and the quadroon; and the "Conchy Joe," the Bahamian white. "If Britain were annihilated," Churchill reasoned, "Germany would seize these islands and the naval bases to hold the United States in awe. If we go down, Hitler has a very good chance of conquering the world."

So in August 1940, by a strange set of circumstances, the former Liege Lord, Edward the Eighth, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain and Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India, etc., etc., etc., became the fifty-fifth Governor of The Bahama Islands.



Edward
1940

Harriet Windsor

This was the second exile for the embattled Duke of Windsor. On December 10, 1936 this uncrowned Monarch, having abdicated the British throne for the woman he loved, adopted France as his new home rather than return to England and be pushed into the bottom drawer by the high society of Buckingham Palace. Later, when France collapsed under the muddy heels of Germany's storm troopers, Winston Churchill offered and the Duke accepted the post of Governor of The Bahamas.

The Duke's regime in The Bahamas was the best advertisement the Colony ever had. Many an American tourist came to our shores to get a glimpse of His Royal Highness and his Duchess in their island kingdom. However, when the United States of America entered World War II in response to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the tourist business dried-up and Bahamians looked to the local armed forces principally and elsewhere for employment. Shortly after the Duke's arrival, news came to The Bahamas from the West Indies of the people's demand for universal suffrage and a larger voice



This picture shows His Royal Highness, the Duke of Windsor, being sworn in by Sir Oscar Bedford Daly, K.C., L.L.D., when beginning his term of office as Governor of the Bahama Islands.



HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE COUNCIL – A typical Colonialist Cabinet circa 1948-1953. Left to right: the Hon. R.R. Farrington, steamship agent; the Hon. C.W.F. Bethell, rum merchant; the Hon. Eugene A.P. Dupuch, lawyer and author; the Hon. Donald B. McKimney, lawyer; the Hon. R. T. Symonette, bootlegger, rum merchant, shipbuilder and businessman; the Hon. K.M. Walmsley, Colonial Secretary; Chief Clerk (standing); the Hon. G.W.K. Roberts, merchant and shipbuilder; the Hon. L.A.W. Orr, Attorney General; Hon. William Sweeting, Receiver General and Treasurer; and Attorney, the Hon. Harry P. Sands.

in the government of their home affairs. Bahamians then began to question the irony of their fighting on foreign soil for rights and liberties which they themselves did not enjoy in their own homeland.

Hitherto, the reaction of England to the principle of majority rule for the Colonials was similar to that of a nursemaid who tried to persuade a patient, well able to walk independently, that he was fit only to be wheeled about in a chair.

Although the American people came to the rescue of Britain, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was determined that American aid should not be used to bolster up any Empire, be it British, French or Dutch. He felt that “unless dependent peoples everywhere were assisted towards ultimate self-government and were given it ...they would provide kernels of conflict.” On one occasion the President confided in his son, Elliott, “I’ve tried to make it clear to Winston and the others that while we are their allies and in it to victory by their side, they must never get the impression that we’re in it just to help them hang on to their archaic, medieval empire idea. Great Britain signed the Atlantic Charter in 1941. I hope they realize that the United States Government means to make them live up to it.”

From Churchill, however, the President could extract no firm assurance about Britain’s colonial possessions. Churchill later replied, “Mr. President, I believe you are trying to do away with the British Empire. We mean to hold on to our own. I have not become the King’s first Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.”

The Duke of Windsor was caught in the crossfire of Churchill’s imperialism and Roosevelt’s idealism: the one, advocated, with some pain and anguish, self-government for the Colonies within the British Commonwealth; the other, espoused a world of peace without spheres of influence or regional balances of power. Added to these problems was the extreme conservatism of the Bahamian white oligarchy and the awakened masses ready to shed their chains.

On May 24, 1942, approximately two years after his arrival in Nassau, the Duke of Windsor reflected this change in the British colonial policy as he addressed the school children and teachers on Empire Day. “When you sing *Rule Britannia*, you say, ‘Britons never, never shall be slaves.’ These are not mere words but a very definite challenge which has been upheld by the bravery and devotion of generations that have gone before.” There was an effective pause to prepare teachers and children for what was to follow. “This heritage

of freedom now is in the very course of being contested again and when it is handed down to you, as surely it will be, we should look to you with confidence for its safekeeping.”

America’s entry into World War II in Europe and the Far East created a shortage of manpower on its farms. Therefore on May 27, 1942, the Duke flew to Washington to negotiate with President Roosevelt for the recruitment of Bahamian farm labor and to arrange for the further involvement of The Bahamas in the total war effort. A few days after the Duke’s departure, a social upheaval erupted in New Providence the rumblings of which are still heard today.

It all started when the United States and the United Kingdom governments decided to build an airport at Oakes Field in New Providence. Without any kind of prior consultation with any of the representatives of Bahamian labor, the two contracting powers fixed the wages for Bahamian workers at four shillings (US\$1:00) per day. Upon the announcement of the new project, workers from all the Out Islands flocked to Nassau in search of employment. Among them came the Exumians with a report that the American Government had previously employed them in similar construction work for eight shillings (US\$2:00) per day. On hearing this, their fellow Bahamians in Nassau concluded that their employers were handing them a “squeezed lemon.”

The contract to build the airport was awarded to the United States Pleasantville Construction Company who, on learning of the workers’ grievances, decided to raise the wages to eight shillings (US\$2:00) per day. The Bay Street merchants and local building contractors, under the leadership of Karl Claridge and others, were horrified at the mere suggestion. They claimed that such a large wage would upset the economy of the Colony and make the “niggers” unmanageable. Under increasing local pressure, the Pleasantville Construction Company withdrew its offer of eight shillings per day and conformed to the wishes of the powerful white minority Government.

At the time of the construction of the project, there were two trade unions: the Bahamas Labour Union, headed by Percy Christie, a Bahamian white “Conchy Joe,” Osborne Kemp and Caleb Gibson and the Bahamas Federation of Labour governed by an Executive Committee consisting of Charles Rodriquez, Gerald Dean, Harold Fernander, Eustace Ford, Charles Fisher, Bert Cambridge, Dr. Claudius R. Walker and Samuel C. McPherson. After the commencement of the project at Oakes Field, the Bahamas Labour Union

merged with the Bahamas Federation of Labour for greater solidarity, and it was this united organization -the B. F. of L. - that finally represented the working class.

The only laws relating to trade unions at this time were the infamous Combination Acts of 1825 and 1859, but the English laws on which our local codes were modeled had been repealed over seventy years ago. Under our local statutes it was still illegal for workers to combine to force any employer to pay a higher wage. The very thought of pressuring Government into a change of heart was out of the question.

Despite this encumbrance, the Executive Committee of the B. F. of L. on May 1942 made representations to the Labour Officer for the stated increase in wages for laborers. Government and the local contractors were adamant in their stand: "Four shillings a day. Take it or leave it!"

Upon the workers' decision to "leave it," the English Attorney General, Sir Eric Hallinan, threatened to import foreign labor. The workers regarded this as an insult to their already injured dignity. And so on June 1, this grievance exploded into a "wild cat" strike. Dad did not go to work at Oakes Airport on Monday, the first day of June, 1942. The night before, I overheard him telling Mother, "I'll walk with Randol to school tomorrow morning. He'll think that I am only going to the market."

The reason for Dad's concern for my welfare soon became very clear. When we reached the corner of Marlborough and Cumberland Streets, we heard a loud shout. On looking towards the hilltop, we saw hundreds of ragged, black workers moving downhill towards us. I thought all the gates of hell had opened and all the demons let loose. Some walked swiftly, blowing whistles. Others ran in zigzag fashion. Some carried sticks; others swung machetes as they sang out aloud:

"Burma Road declare war on the Conchy Joe. Do nigger, don't you lick nobody."

I did not remain in school that day. I left shortly after the first period to watch future developments.

The workers wanted a wage increase so they could put more bread on their breakfast tables. They wanted their children to have the same opportunities to a good education as the white. Since all deputations, petitions and arguments for a better standard of living and working made and sent on their behalf to

the Government had met with no success, it was hoped that this demonstration would cause the authorities to take their pleas seriously.

When that mob marched on that early June morning, they took upon their shoulders the common burdens of all Bahamians – those who protested, those who were silent and those who did not even realize the indignity of their status. This teeming mass of rags, sweat and bones marched for all of them and, in doing so, they marched themselves straight into history.

As the news of the demonstration re-echoed throughout the villages, streams of workers poured into the cul-de-sac of Bay and George Streets. This done, the laborers found themselves hemmed-in almost on every side: on the north by the open sea, on the west by the high walls of the British Colonial Hotel and on the south by a stampeding mass of perspiring humanity unmindful of the congestion of the area. Their only escape was east along Bay Street, but that too was blocked by detachments of British soldiers and volunteer defense forces - all armed with fixed bayonets. The malcontents swiftly cast in their minds whether to allow the militia to bring the battle to them or to attack. The first option would mean certain defeat; the second, certain slaughter.

Slowly, the workers moved eastward along Bay Street like the ebbing and flowing of the waves on the beaches while the armed forces marched in orderly fashion against them. Suddenly, the sound of a smashed glass windowpane sent the mob into a wild orgy of looting all the department stores. Like a mighty river that had burst its barrier and in full flood had come tearing onward, so did the laboring masses storm the main thoroughfare of the capital city. Bottles from an oncoming soda truck provided ready missiles with which they pelted the police, some of whom, on observing the spoils, bolted their ranks and joined the looters.

Above the sound of the disturbance, a command went out from Colonel Edward Sears, "Arrest the shepherd and the sheep will disperse!"

In the hand-to-hand scuffle that followed, Corporal Pinder captured Leonard Green, the ringleader. The sight of their leader helpless in the web of the law so infuriated his followers that they flung caution to the winds. With one daring thrust into the militia, the workers snatched Green out of their grip.

In the face of mounting tension and industrial unrest, a state of emergency was declared. The Riot Act was read. A curfew banned all processions and required all people to be off the streets between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

But confrontations continued throughout the night and day. In the struggle, fifteen gunshots were fired. Four of the rioters were killed, seven seriously wounded and forty suffered minor injuries. Only one soldier was hurt.

Finally, the militia pushed the workers back over the hill and into their villages. There, the frenzied mob pillaged all the more. Everything that represented the white man's wealth was sacked. Grocery and liquor stores were burglarized; pharmacies and libraries extensively damaged while fire engines and ambulances were overturned and set aflame. The big iron bell atop the Southern Police Station was wrenched from its position and placed in the belfry of the nearby St. Agnes Anglican Church, and thereafter used to summons saints to worship instead of instructing officers to arrest the poor and the oppressed.

Alfred Stubbs, alias "Sweet Potato," burned the Royal Family in effigy. Napoleon McPhee, a short, limping stone-mason, when asked why he destroyed the Union Jack, responded, "I willing to fight under the flag. I willing even to die under the flag; but I ain't gwine starve under the flag."

That night the ultra conservative press, the *Guardian* editorialized:

It is felt on all sides that the labourers had legitimate grievances to wage.

There has been considerable evidence of dissatisfaction which has grown steadily during the past ten days. Surely it must have been realized by the authorities that the matter would have to be settled in some way. We cannot but feel that it has been badly handled.

There has been more than enough time for a thorough examination of the cause for really constructive negotiations at a much earlier date, and for a conference in which all parties concerned, including Government would have been represented. But what has been done this morning cannot be undone. But we hope and trust that no possible avenue will be left unexplored to find means to avoid a repetition.

Milo Butler, a political firebrand; A.F. Adderley, a conservative lawyer and Percy Christie, a shoe merchant turned labor leader, tried to bring representatives of Capital and Labour together to conciliate their differences. When all these efforts failed to restore law and order, the Acting Governor, The Honorable W. L. Heape, cabled Washington. On the following day, the Duke of Windsor was back at the helm of the ship of state.



Charles Fisher
...Union Leader



Milo Butler
...first among radicals



Albert Stubbs
...Sweet Potato

The Duke's return to Nassau was greeted with much anticipation by the laboring masses who had not forgotten his Empire Day message which had been given a few days prior to his departure. Furthermore, who had not heard of the Duke's sympathy for the poor and underprivileged of England?



Dr. Claudius R. Walker
- his intellect encompassed the world

Arrangements were immediately made to have the leaders of the B. F. of L. meet with the Duke's Committee. The workers selected their most articulate spokesman, Dr. Claudius R. Walker to state the case on their behalf. If you were black in 1942, regardless of age, your first name was "boy," and your second name was "nigger." "Doc," as he was known to white and black, was an exception to this rule.

Doc was a roly-poly, bald-headed, goggle-eyed, flat-nosed, thin-lipped Afro-Bahamian, who had chosen to live and work in the heart of the black belt than to be among his Afro-Saxon colleagues on the north side of the hill. He was short of stature - 5 feet - but his intellect encompassed the world.

Doc obtained his B.Sc. degree from Howard University in Washington, D. C. and his M. D. from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. Any evening after office hours, his was a familiar blue-serged, rumpled, double-breasted figure under the sapodilla tree, matching wits with the common people of the neighborhood.

If the high school student had a mathematical problem or encountered difficulty in translating German, French, Spanish or Latin, he would turn with con-

fidence to the Doc Should the carpenter run afoul in cutting the beams for a gabled roof, Doc using the street as a blackboard and a stick for chalk, would give him a lesson in angular geometry, cut the lumber on the ground and then explain to him why, according to the law, the gables must fit.

In the late 1930's, Doc laid the foundation for adult education for those who were discriminated against by the establishment. He presided over many symposia. His classrooms became the center of intellectual activity for the whole of the Southern District.

Doc had a monstrous vocabulary and was a genius at phrase making. Once at a public meeting at the Western Senior School, he was the butt of caustic criticism of a hothead who sought to embarrass him for refusing to act precipitously during the riot. After the young upstart had called Doc everything but a child of God, one of the audience members stood up and said, "Well Doc aren't you going to say something in your defense?"

With characteristic calm, Doc looked at the opponent searchingly from head to toe and down and up again and replied, "Why? Is it not obvious to you that this man is suffering from a severe attack of diarrhea of words and the constipation of thought?"

With the exception of Dr. Walker's immediate family, I was closer to him than anybody else. I was his Boswell. Many a Sunday morning I sat at the bottom of his bedstead and listened to tales of high adventure about the struggle of the black folk in America for recognition as human beings.

On Wednesday June 3, as Doc rose to address the Duke and his Court, all heads turned in his direction:

"Your Royal Highness, Gentlemen:

"The underlying causes for this social unrest are manifold. We are in the majority but we have minority problems. We are poorly housed, poorly fed and poorly educated. Truth to tell, we are the wretched of the earth." With those opening statements one of the workers, who had come to listen to this modern Gamaliel, was heard to remark, "Talk ya talk, Doc! talk ya talk!"

"Many years ago," Dr. Walker continued, "English and American missionaries walked among us intent on 'souls to save and bodies to enslave' until one day my brother was forced to remark, 'Fader, when first you come to Bahamas, you got da Bible and we got da land. Today, fader, we got da Bible and you got da land.'

"Land is an important factor in the production of wealth. When strangers grab the land of the natives, they are tampering not only with their economic existence but with their cultural and political lives as well. That is why 'land

snatching' as it is practiced today is the most concrete proof of the thorough enslavement of a people to an alien will.

"For over 200 years," continued Dr. Walker, "a locally based Governor vested with autocratic powers, directed the affairs of The Bahamas on behalf of the British Crown. He did this through a wholly appointed Executive Council, a wholly appointed Legislative Council and a House of Assembly, the members of which were elected once every seven years on a male franchise hemmed in by property qualifications, company and plural voting. All males were required to vote openly, or face victimization if their choice of candidates displeased their employers. More than half of the population – the women - could not vote at all. The general elections are not held on one day but are spread over a period of three weeks in order to give the monied interest an opportunity to travel from island to island and vote wherever they, or their companies owned or rented one or more lots of land.

"This iniquitous electoral system secured the political and economic supremacy of the white landed gentry. They owned and managed both land and labor through numerous attorneys, priests, accountants, foremen and skilled artisans.

"Next on the social pyramid were the merchants. The high prices of this middle class group played havoc with the poor on whose shoulders fell the full burden of an administrative system in which the rich paid no income taxes whatsoever.

"Warrants for the arrest of ringleaders - would be social reformers - were frequently issued for the most trivial of offences. In this way the law was made a weapon to club the natives into submission. Since there was no Bahamian Court of Appeal from a conviction on an indictable offence, the English judges with the help of their 'special' (white) juries often meted out draconian sentences against the black people."

At this point a smile came over Doc's face. This signaled to those who knew him well that he was about to treat his audience to one of the stories heard under the sapodilla tree.

"Your Royal Highness, Gentlemen," Doc continued to recount, "recently, my brother told me the other day that when Columbus made his historic voyage to the New World, the English simultaneously dispatched two ships from London. The name of the first ship was Law; of the second, Justice."



BASTION OF POWER. Parliamentarians gathered before the House of Assembly. Front Row (from left to right): Harrold Johnson, R.R. Farrington, Neuton Higgs, C.W.F. Bethel, Marcus Bethel, Etienne Dupuch, Roland Symonette, Secretary George Johnson, Speaker Asa H. Pritchard, Clerk Jack Smith, Alvin Breynen, Roy Solomon and Dr. Claudius R. Walker (at the extreme right); Second row: Bert Cambridge, Donald McKinney, Peter Bethel, Raymond Sawyer, Eugene Dupuch, G.W.K. Roberts, Frank Christie, Harold Christie, Philip Bethel, Stafford Sands, Basil McKinney and Henry Milton Taylor.

The Duke then craned his neck in an effort to gain the significance of the story. After a dramatic pause, Doc continued, “The ship, *Law*, arrived safely into port, but, Gentlemen, *Justice* was lost somewhere in the mid-Atlantic.

“But something equally as precious as *Justice* was also lost and this was the real tragedy. Untold millions, uprooted from their native cultures in Africa, were scattered as slaves in North, Central, South America, in the Caribbean and elsewhere. Diaspora, which means a scattering or dispersal of a people, originally referred to the Jewish historical experience, has never been more descriptive than when applied to the children of Africa.

“We Bahamians, are the sons and grandsons, the daughters and granddaughters of those who arrived. We seek today to reclaim that which was snatched from us over 300 years ago - our dignity and self-respect as human beings.

“During the interval between then and now, we have become the most brain-washed people in the world. We were made to believe that we were not fit to govern ourselves. You see, teachers and missionaries did not tell us that there was a period in ancient history when Rome was barbarous and Greece slept but Africa flourished with its own governments, economic systems, military forces, religious and social organisations. Indeed, in the very beginnings of mankind, the African nation of Egypt occupied a central role in world history.

“We were taught that our ancestors contributed nothing to the advancement of civilization. Yet it was common knowledge that Africans were the first to practise agriculture - the first of the cultures – along the banks of the Niger River. Africa was the place where mankind first fashioned tools -a significant step in the evolution of civilization. Neither did they tell my people, Gentlemen, that the earliest known pottery was created in Africa more than thirty thousand years ago, during the Paleolithic (stone) Age.

“It is a tragic fact that Bahamians have suffered many a serious social and psychological trauma from the decades of contempt and calumny which characterized traditional Western historical thought on the subject of Africa. Most of our fathers and mothers were compelled to live out their lives in submission to the dominant cultural values and attitudes of the hostile whites. They were forced to tolerate the racist ideologies of their white countrymen in order to survive. It is a psychological truism that an oppressed and rejected people soon come to see themselves through the eyes of their oppressors. As a result, the

black man soon learned how to hate himself and others of his own race.

“In the past, the schoolroom was not primarily an educational institution but a political one which sought only to maintain the power base of the white colonialist society.

“The Emancipation Act of the United Kingdom Parliament, though designed to come into force in the Colonies on August 1, 1834, did not immediately give the slave his freedom. There was a compulsory ‘apprenticeship’ period similar in all but name to indentured labor. Now over one hundred years after the Emancipation Act, the colonial bosses offer sons of former slaves four shillings per day! O ye nominal Christians! Might not the son of an African slave ask you ‘Learned you this from your own god?’ Is not the laborer worthy of his hire? What dignity is there in slaving for a dollar a day?

“Can a man maintain his self respect when he cannot feed himself and his family? I think not. Can a dollar a day man pay his medical expenses if he falls ill on the jobsite? I think not.

“Can the poor purchase enough food to strengthen him to perform the heavy duty labor efficiently? No, Gentlemen. No!

“Poor wages mean a poor community and a poor community is the breeding ground for crime and disease. Furthermore, if these laborers are not paid a decent wage, they will not have the purchasing power to buy the goods in the Bay Street stores.

“Gentlemen, your own self-interest should persuade you to give my brothers a decent wage!

“Will the laborers return to their jobsite for four shillings per day?” This was the burning question the Duke and his panel wished to know but before Doc could reply, a voice from the audience blurted out,

“Never!”

“Why should men who worked for four shillings yesterday want eight shillings today? Pray, let me tell you a story.

“My eldest son’s bitch had a litter of pups. One day a neighbor came and asked the price for one.

“My son replied, ‘One shilling for each puppy.’

“The following day, the same lady returned with a shilling to complete the purchase. On approaching Roland, she was rebuffed. ‘No, no,’ he said, ‘the puppies are now two shillings each!’

“Yesterday puppy, one shilling; today puppy, two shillings!’

“‘How come?’ she inquired.

“‘Well you see, Ma’am, yesterday the puppies’ eyes were closed; today, their eyes are opened. Yesterday, they were blind; today, they can see.’

“Gentlemen, the scales have been peeled of the eyes of the laborers. They now see opportunities beyond the status quo. They have discovered new insights - new strength in unity - and no one can purchase their labor now for so cheap a price as four shillings a day. The winds of change of World War II have blown in their direction and they have inhaled the air of freedom. Once they have tasted it, they can no longer live without it.

“And now I wish to conclude with a personal word to His Royal Highness, the Duke of Windsor himself.

“Two years ago when the radio waves brought the news of Your Royal Highness’ appointment as Governor of The Bahamas, the deaf heard, and the dumb spoke, the blind saw and the crippled leapt for joy. Your reputation as a humanitarian and King had preceded you.

“‘Surely,’ we said to ourselves, ‘the Duke of Windsor will not allow us to continue to live amidst social inequities that sap our self respect and prevent us from attaining our full status as first class citizens.’

“Fifty-four Governors have preceded Your Excellency, but not one ever brought a ray of hope to the poor and oppressed.

“We believe that you are not just another Governor for one class of people but the Governor for all colors and classes of people.

“In faith believing, I ask on behalf of all my brothers and sisters, ‘Art thou He that cometh or look we for another?’”

An aura of silence hovered over the room after Doc had resumed his seat. When he started to speak, the Duke and his panel looked down on him; when he was finished, they looked up.

The Duke walked across the room, shook Doc’s hand and said, “Both in form

and substance the case for the working man was well presented. We shall consider your recommendations and report back as soon as possible.”

The Duke proceeded to leave the hall. On reaching the door he swung around and returned to Doc and said, “I wish to explain that the decision to pay local rates for wages was made in accordance with high policy far beyond the power of this Government to control.”

“Well, Your Royal Highness,” the Doc replied, “we have gone to great pains to explain the reasons for the increase. You, yourself, have seen the mood of the workers. With due respect, I don’t think we can get them to work without an assurance from you that something will be done to help them. Furthermore, freedom from want was one of the basic guarantees of the Atlantic Charter.”

“Tell your men,” the Duke exhorted, “that I shall go back to Washington and place the matter of wages before the Anglo-American Conference. I feel that I will not return empty handed.”

On June 4, the laborers reported for work on the jobsite. A week later, they received one shilling per day raise in their pay plus free meals during the luncheon breaks.

What price is freedom? In addition to all the blood, sweat and tears, 128 persons were prosecuted in the Supreme and Magistrates Courts for their involvement in the riot. One hundred and fourteen were convicted. Among those imprisoned were Harold Thurston, Malcolm Mackey, Joseph Rolle (alias Joe Billie), Thomas Green (alias Giant), Bertram Rolle and Albert Stubbs (alias Sweet Potato). Most of these national heroes died without even realizing that LABOUR DAY, the first Friday in June would be named for them. However, Albert Stubbs (alias Sweet Potato) is still alive. In an old rocking chair on the porch of the Geriatrics Hospital, he sits alone and blind; blind and alone with his thoughts.

If my writings shall count for anything, no day shall ever erase the names of our brothers from the memory of time. Thank you, Sweet Potato, Giant, Joe Billy and others. As long as our beloved Fort Fincastle rests on that immovable rock in our capital city, parents shall tell their children and their children shall tell their own of the saga of Burma Road.

Out of the agony, a Commission of Inquiry was born, consisting of Sir Allison Russell, Herbert McKinney and Herbert Brown. This Commission, which was appointed by the Duke of Windsor, later interviewed some ninety-nine witnesses, of which my dad, Edward Ronald Fawkes, was one, and made



THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN SESSION (1945). From left Honourables Eric Hallinan- Attorney General; A.F. Adderley, Dr. J. Bird Albury, President; Sir Walter K. Moore, C.O. Anderson (speaking), A.K. Cole, Hon. M. Latnelle, Receiver General and Treasurer. "A first taste of tokenism after the 1942 riot."

the following recommendations:

- (1) That labor legislation should be brought in line with modern standards;
- (2) That the life of the House of Assembly should be reduced from seven to five or four years;
- (3) That the Out Islands should be represented in the House of Assembly by the residents of those respective constituencies (local government);
- (4) That permanent officers in the Civil Service should not participate in active politics. They should be above suspicion that they have been influenced by purely political considerations;
- (5) The imposition of a fair system of income tax and death duties should be thoroughly considered by the legislature with a view to placing the burden of taxation on the shoulders of those best able to bear it;
- (6) The land should be reserved for Bahamian cultivators and that no such land should be allowed to be sold to realtors without approval of Government and subject to conditions as may be laid down;
- (7) The Out Islands in the past had been treated as "poor relatives." Government should introduce as soon as possible a realistic development plan; and
- (8) That universal suffrage be introduced, based on the principle of one man one vote.

Lofty as the recommendations of the Commission were, they did not please the white professional and merchant class in the House of Assembly. Accompanied by my father, I sat in the visitors' gallery of the House for the first time on the evening of September 10, 1942. From that vantage point, I was able to observe the Bay Street political machine at work.

Promptly at eight o'clock in the evening, the drama began unfolding with the Messenger's striking of the wooden floor with his wooden staff three times and shouting, "House!" Everybody stood as the procession entered the main Chamber led by the Sergeant-at-Arms bearing the mace, the symbol of the Speaker's authority. Immediately behind him was the Speaker, dressed in a black robe and black knickerbockers, a long white wig, and a facial expression to match the mock solemnity of the hour.

The Speaker ascended the stairway and sat on the elevated bench on the north side of the House. From those Olympian heights he surveyed the lesser mortals as the roll was called. There were the SOLOMONS, Aubrey K. and Eric V.; the SANDSES, Stafford L. and Harry P.; the ROBERTSES, George W. K., and John W.; the BETHELLS, Charles W. F., Geoffrey A. and Philip G. D.; the CHRISTIES, Harold G., Frank H., and Percy E. These Machiavellian princes were ably supported by their fellow white parliamentarians: Richard R. Farrington, Alvin R. Braynen, Richard W. Sawyer, Asa H. Pritchard, Roland T. Symonette, Frederick J. Pinder, George Murphy, W. Brice Pinder, L. Gilbert Dupuch, Ralph G. Collins, Godfrey W. Higgs, Gurth Duncombe and Basil H. McKinney. These families held the economic and political destiny of The Bahamas in their hands. No one could rise without their consent.

Against this bastion of white power was pitted the wits of four black parliamentarians: T. Augustus Toote, a Barrister-at-Law in whose Chambers I was to serve as an articulated law clerk, Bertram A. Cambridge, a musician and a taxi-cab driver, Milo B. Butler, a firebrand, and W. G. Cash, a salesman.

The principal actor that night on the legislative stage was a white young politician/lawyer/businessman of 29 years known as Stafford Lofthouse Sands. He moved with teutonic thoroughness to demolish the progressive recommendations of the Governor's Riot Commission.

On the Agenda there was a motion for a Select Committee "to take into consideration all matters relating to, connected with, and arising out of the June 1st disturbance with a view to preventing a recurrence thereof with power to send for persons and papers."

The majority of the members of the House of Assembly did not trust the Duke of Windsor or his advisors and they said so in no uncertain terms through their official mouthpiece and minion, Stafford Lofthouse Sands. Universal suffrage, the reduction in the life of the House from seven to five years, the introduction of a system of income tax and local government seemed an unwarranted liability to their selfish political ambitions. Over the years they had ignored the depressed areas in the Out Islands which were hopelessly mired in economic stagnation, heavy unemployment and social decay.

As Mr. Sands rose to speak, an aura of silence descended upon the House. Every head turned in his direction - so great were his histrionic powers. Sands had only one good eye, the other was made of glass but among those pompous Cyclops, this one-eyed giant was King. "House Members," he began, "have no doubt heard of T.B. Barnum's famous phrase, 'A sucker is born every minute.'" There was a ripple of laughter.

"Mr. Speaker," he continued, "I sincerely trust that The Honorable Members will not allow the Governor, the Duke of Windsor, to think that this House falls within Barnum's category.

“When Barnum operated his first show in New York, one of the most prominent signs was an arrow with the words: ‘This way to progress.’ The trusting members of the public who followed Mr. Barnum’s pointing arrow soon found themselves in the street without having seen the show.

“We, Mr. Speaker, know the difference between ‘progress’ and ‘egress.’ Our way represents ‘progress.’ The Governor’s report points to the ‘exit,’ that famous ‘exit’ of all our ancient rights and privileges. Mr. Speaker, I say, ‘No!’ to His Royal Highness’ request for a Select Committee.”

The House reverberated: “No! No! No!”

With those words, Stafford Sands and his colleagues rejected the Duke’s request for a Select Committee and proceeded to appoint their own clique which would be responsible not to His Excellency, but to themselves - the Bay Street oligarchy.

This new Committee sat for a few weeks and recommended that all merchants who had suffered any loss or damage during the riot be compensated out of public funds.

The “mountain” conceived and labored and produced a grain of sand. Not one piece of legislative reform or social or economic programme aimed at alleviating the plight of the poor was passed or even discussed that night.

When viewed from afar, the Sandses, the Symonettes and the Solomons stood out like mountain peaks amid the surrounding landscape, but as I moved closer and closer to them, they, unlike the physical phenomena, became smaller and smaller.

Oh! How I wished I were a member of the House of Assembly; if only for that night to be the mouthpiece for the poor, a trumpet for the oppressed.

* * *

CHAPTER IV

* MY CALL TO THE BAR AND MARRIAGE *

Monolithic columns rose from massive four-cornered pedestals to encase the oblong two-story Law Courts building. Here in the center of the public square in the City of Nassau, colonial architecture distinguished itself by making pillars and shafts into elements of beauty as well as structural support. The function of the external colonnade was to uphold the eaves and relieve the inner walls of the weight of the gabled roof. Above the columns was the superstructure of the edifice. The architrave carried a simple painted molding topped with cornice. Even the roof, with its red overlapping slate tiles, was a work of art. It enhanced the brilliance of the structure and under a Bahamian sky, it brightened the way from the villages to the city. Perhaps, some day, contemporary art will be as beautiful.

On the left-hand side of the northern foyer, large mahogany doors opened into the Supreme Court Chamber. Half of the floor space was filled with long wooden benches - a reminder that justice was a public affair. In front of these benches was the prisoner's dock and beyond - a raised platform with chairs for the jury, the lawyers and the press. Overlooking the whole scene was the elevated Chief Justice's bench and the witness stand. On the wall behind the bench hung the British coat of arms with the inscription DIEU ET MON DROIT - God and my Right.

Promptly at 10:30 on the first Wednesday morning in July, 1948, the grand entrance of the Chief Justice was heralded by the black robed Deputy Provost Marshal, Jonah F. Greenidge. The packed courtroom stood and remained standing throughout the traditional chant. "Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! All manner of persons having anything to do with His Majesty's Supreme Court of the Bahama Islands, draw near and give your attendance and you will be heard. God save the King!"

The Judge, the Commissioner of Police, the lawyers, the officers of the Court and then the public sat. Only one Counsel, the Honorable T. Augustus Toote, remained standing. On gaining the eye of the Chief Justice, he bowed and said, "My Lord, I have a very pleasant duty to perform this morning."

"Please continue Mr. Toote," responded the Judge.

"This morning I present the petition of Randol Francis Fawkes. He prays

that he may be admitted to practise as Counsel and Attorney of this ancient and honorable Court and every other Court in the Bahama Islands.

“My Lord, during the past five years, Mr. Fawkes has served as an articulated law student in my Chambers. He has faithfully read, marked, learned and inwardly digested all my instructions touching the principles and practice of the law. Today, Mr. Fawkes, having successfully written the Bar Examinations, seeks an honored place at the end of the table with other ‘learned friends.’

“My Lord, Mr. Fawkes hails from a well-known and highly respected family in this community. I feel certain that he is a fit and proper person to be called to the Bar.”

The Chief Justice then responded, “Mr. Toote, I accede to the prayer and invite Mr. Fawkes to subscribe the Oath of Allegiance and the Roll of Court.”

Having signed both documents, I robed and adjusted my small white wig. The Clerk of the Court then placed a Bible in my right hand and required that I repeat after him, “I Randol Francis Fawkes, do swear that I will truly and honestly demean myself as Counsel and Attorney of the Supreme Court, in that and in every other Court in which I shall practise in the Colony, so help me God.”

The Chief Justice, Sir Oswald Lawrence Bancroft, a Royal Knight, resplendent in flowing red and black traditional gown and long, curly, gray wig, maintained the atmosphere of forensic austerity.

Just as His Lordship’s long gray wig symbolized that he was worldly wise and particularly learned in the Law, so did my short white wig bear proof of the smallness of my brain and my youth.

Gazing down his aquiline nose at me, Sir Oswald said, “Mr. Fawkes, I congratulate you on having successfully written the Bar Examination. Although you can never plead ignorance of the Law or any part of it, you must never presume to know it all.

“In the certainty of the Law lies the safety of us all, but we have Courts which err and in England there is the Privy Council, that infallible institution to correct the mistakes of our Supreme Court. Perhaps, someday, even the Bahama Islands will have a Court of Appeal.

“The Law is an all-pervading part of our social system. To be useful it must

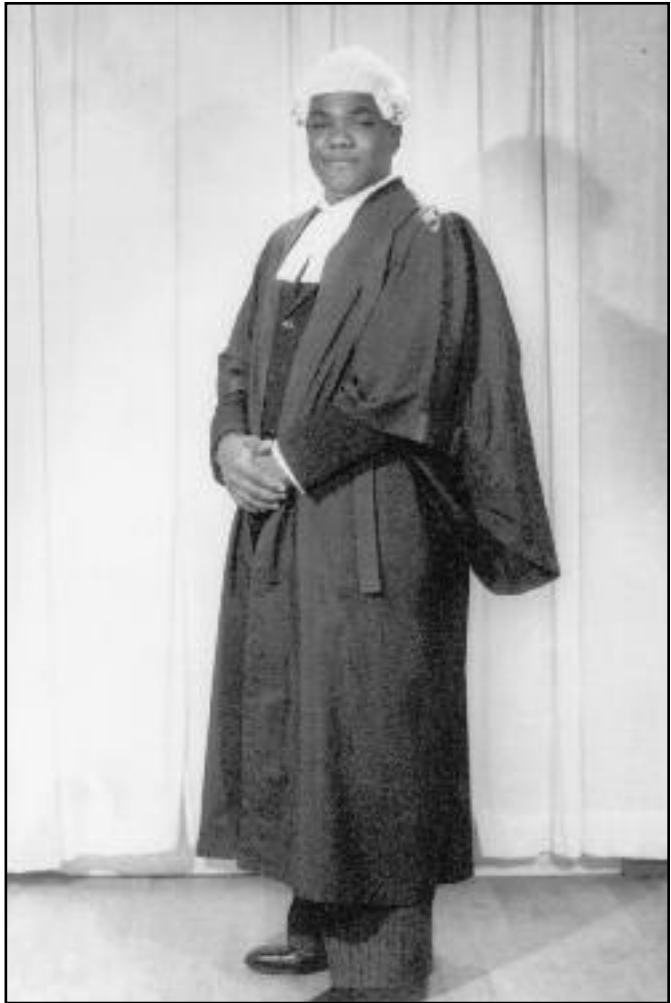
be a dynamic force forever struggling to keep abreast of the changing patterns of social life.

“You will have many an exciting moment in your chosen profession but there will never be a more anxious time than the night before the morning of your first case. However, never despair when you lose a case, for there will be times you will win when you know you should have lost.

“I wish you every success in the service of the Law.”

After a few congratulatory remarks by the Attorney General and the leaders of the Inner and Outer Bars, I stood to my full five feet eight stature and, with a heart bursting with enthusiasm, I responded, “May it please your Lordship, firstly, my veneration; secondly, my duty; and thirdly, my speech. My veneration is due respect for this court which has a long tradition for fairness. My duty is to strive for perfect obedience to perfect law; and my speech, an expression of gratitude to your Lordship, and to the members of the Inner and Outer Bars.

“To my parents who have sacrificed so much for so long, I offer conduct that will bring them no remorse. To the Bahamian people for their encouragement



*The Author at 24
“...my cup runneth over.”*

over the years, I give them, in return, nothing less than a lifetime of service.

“With regard to our own Colony, I venture to say that the years ahead will un-doubtedly offer a challenge to our traditional standards and prejudices. However, we may find consolation in the fact that there can be no stronger guarantee of good government than the sacred adherence to British Justice and the free and fearless expression of its principles.

“In conclusion, I desire to assure you, your Lordship, that I shall at all times be willing to co-operate with both the Bench and Bar in their efforts to establish a land of righteousness based on justice.”

My maiden speech was enthusiastically received by all, including my family and friends, who came forth after the ceremony and shook my hands vigorously. Among those who came was my eighty-five year old grandmother, Julia Ann McKinney, of Lewis Street. She had watched me grow from infancy to manhood. At the end of each year of my studies she would inquire, “Randol, when are you going to become a lawyer?”

The answer was always the same, “Soon, Grammy, soon.”

As Grammy hugged and kissed me that morning, my mother approached her, “Momma, how you feel?”

Throwing her proud head back and opening her arms to their full extremities, this five-foot small old woman replied, “I feel big so.”

A few days later, Grammie breathed her last and became a part of yesterday’s



Grand Ma Julia A. McKinney
“...I feel big so.”

six thousand years.

I opened law offices on the corners of East and Shirley Streets. One block north was Bay Street, the street of contracts, where one could find the most influential lawyers of the day.

Upstairs, on the southwestern corner of Bay and Parliament Streets was the Honorable A. F. Adderley, the black embodiment of Daniel Webster. He received his legal education at Cambridge University, England and wore this distinction like a halo over his head. As the leading Barrister in 1943, Mr. Adderley assisted the prosecution in the celebrated case against the Count Alfred DeMarigny who was charged with the murder of his father-in-law, Sir Harry Oakes, the multi-billionaire.

On the northern side of Bay Street was Stafford Lofthouse Sands, the originator of that growing institution, the suitcase company. Sands was a young attorney who dealt in deals. His wealth and political influence grew with each passing minute.

Opposite Sands' office were the chambers of his mentor and guide, Sir Aubrey Kenneth Solomon. He had served on every government board and at times acted as Magistrate. Oliver Wendell Holmes, the famous American Jurist and Solomon were the only two men on whom the honour of King's Counsel had been bestowed without their having previously enrolled as students in one of the Inns of Court in England.

Also on East Bay Street was that swashbuckling character who, having made a fortune in the rum-running and bootlegging days, established a large shipyard that bore his name: Roland Theodore Symonette. The Sands, Solomon and the Symonette families, "the three S's," as they were called, controlled the wealth and politics of the Colony. In business, the professions or in politics, a crusader was bound to confront these power brokers sooner or later.

At age 24, I was gearing up to go! One day it was an indenture for the sale of land; the next, personal injury suit for damages. Whether the case was embezzlement, arson, assault and battery or murder, I was ready to do battle in any court. I defended a minister of religion on a charge of rape of one of his parishioners, and won. With the aid of the Writ of Habeas Corpus, I obtained the freedom of a Turks Islander who had been wrongfully imprisoned. The cases in which I appeared covered every aspect of the human drama. At times I was a psychologist, a sociologist, father confessor, as well as a friend and brother. Fascinating!

It was not long after my call to the Bar that I had my first clash with the Chief Justice. The incident centered around a youngster who was caught red-handed breaking a show window of Kelly's Hardware with intent to commit a felony.

At the opening of the 1948 October sessions of the Supreme Court, I informed the Judge that I represented the young man and requested a date when I might plead on his behalf certain extenuating circumstances. The Court agreed. Notwithstanding this agreement and entirely without notice to me, the Chief Justice later sentenced my client without giving me the right to address the Court prior to the sentencing. I therefore sent a petition against the sentence to His Excellency, The Governor, the Queen's representative, praying for a pardon or reduction in the sentence on the grounds that my client was denied his right of representation by Counsel. The petition was strongly worded and extremely critical of the judicial system. All of this annoyed the Chief Justice. He regarded me as an upstart.

On January 12, 1948, Sir Oswald Lawrence Bancroft, the Chief Justice had this to say:

“You will notice that I have caused to be put up in the passage in the Courthouse a notice board. I now ask the Attorney General, at the close of each day's sitting of the Court, to inform the Registrar of the case or cases which will be tried on the following day and that the Registrar will post the Cause List on the notice board. I should like to emphasize that it is not now and never has been, so far as I know, any part of the duty of this Judge to hunt out Counsel and remind them that they must be in Court at such and such a time to do their duty to their clients. After the last sitting of this Court an attempt was made by a junior Counsel to throw the blame on me when that Counsel did not attend on the day his client was sentenced. I am not objecting to petitions being presented by anyone to anyone but they should be couched in respectful language. THE LAW OF CONTEMPT STILL EXISTS.”

This notice board was the first basic reform in our judicial system for a long time. This Cause List still stands today in the northern entrance of our Supreme Court.

I was not overly perturbed by the Chief Justice's hostile attitude. To me, my reactions were justified. Further, I had just read a book, *You Can Change the World*. Its author, James Keller, sent me charging on a knight's errand with



HIS HONOUR, Sir O.L. Bancroft, K.C., M.A., Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Bahama Islands, inspects the Guard of Honour at the opening of the

spear raised and visor down, in defense of the weak and oppressed. His book fired my imagination with the idea that a single individual can become a powerful force for good through meaningful participation in local organizations. I, therefore, joined every club, lodge or friendly society that would have me. Although considerably shaken by some of the initiation procedures, soon a political career loomed big before my eyes. "God willing, come 1956, I shall contest a seat in the House of Assembly," I told myself.

From then on it was speeches, speeches and more speeches. Every Sunday afternoon I was a number in a forty or fifty-item programme in some Baptist church until the name of Randol Fawkes became a household word. Some speeches were written in advance so that whenever the occasion arose, I was prepared to address the crowd without notes. The people liked what I had to say and always returned for more.

As President of the Old Scholars' Association of the Government High School, I launched the movement for participation of The Bahamas in the University Scheme of the West Indies. Although the white minority in 1946 had spurned the invitation of the United Kingdom to become associated with the project, it was felt that the time had come for the younger generation to demand reconsideration.

The University project had an auspicious beginning. In January 1944, the West Indies Committee of the Commission for Higher Education in the Colonies was appointed by the Secretary of State for the United Kingdom "to review existing facilities for higher education in the British Colonies in the Caribbean and to make recommendations regarding future university developments in those Colonies."

In accordance with the terms of reference, the committee, under the chairmanship of Sir James Irvine Sc.D., LL.S., D.C.L., F.R.S., journeyed to the West Indies and there thoroughly investigated the possibilities for higher education. It was discovered that during the greater part of the history of the West Indies, higher education of any kind had been almost the monopoly of a small group, despite the fact that most of the Colonies had been populated well over two hundred years.

After careful consideration of all the evidence collected, the Committee recommended the establishment, at the earliest possible date, of a single University of the West Indies which should provide initially for five hundred students, both men and women; that this University should teach the basic

subjects leading to degrees in art and science and should include a Faculty of Medicine. Generous scholarships and maintenance provisions should be made and there should be a fund in the control of the University to assist deserving students. It was generally considered that, besides the cost of higher education being reduced for the benefit of students, such a university would be the headquarters of an important department of extramural studies through which its influence might be extended into all corners of the West Indian society.

The West Indian University was formally opened on February 16, 1950 when Her Royal Highness, Princess Alice was installed as Chancellor. The Bahamas, by its own choice, was not represented, for our white minority Government on January 28, 1946 passed a resolution that "in view of its financial situation, our Colony could not participate in such an educational project." As a result, Bahamian students who had applied for places in this University were refused admission. Of course there was a greater loss - the contributions which those educated minds might have made to our homeland.

As President of the Old Scholars Association of the Government High School (1949 -1950) much correspondence had passed between me and Messrs. Philip Sherlock B. A., and H. W. Springer M. A., two of the West Indian members of the Committee on Higher Education. They advised that the most convenient course for The Bahamas to take now if it were desirous of associating itself with this University was for the Government of The Bahamas to agree in principle to its participation, and later the necessary information that would enable The Bahamas to decide whether such a step was worthwhile in practice could be obtained from authorities.

On Monday evening, April 3rd, 1950, a heavily signed petition by a number of civic and fraternal organizations was debated on the floor of the House. The motion for a Select Committee to reconsider affiliation of The Bahamas with the University of the West Indies was made by Gerald C. Cash, a member of the Old Scholars' Association and seconded by another member, Marcus Bethel. Supporting speeches were made by Messrs. Eugene Dupuch, Dr. C. R. Walker, William W. Cartwright and Bertram A. Cambridge. The opposition was led by the Deputy Speaker A. R. Braynen and others.

Some of the reasons given by the white minority Government against The Bahamas' affiliation with the U. W. I. were that we were not a part of the West Indies geographically; that a university in this area was premature; that The Bahamas should concentrate on elementary education and finally, that the university would become a breeding ground for young communists.

At the end of the debate the Speaker, the Honorable Asa H. Pritchard, referred the petition to the Finance Committee consisting of Messrs. A. R. Braynen, F. H. Christie, Stafford Sands, P. G. Bethel, B. H. McKinney, R. Solomon and Dr. C. R. Walker where it died. Later a motion for a Court of Appeal suffered a similar fate.

Undaunted, I wrote and published *You Should Know Your Government*, an eighty-page booklet subtitled: *A Study in Citizenship*. It was an immediate success. In the introduction, the Honorable A. F. Adderley wrote, "It is most important for every citizen to have an intelligent knowledge of his government, for without such knowledge, how can he carry out his duties, recognize his responsibilities and thereby enjoy his rights? I am encouraged after reading this commendable effort of Mr. Fawkes to hope that his treatise will be read and studied by young and old because it presents in concise form the story of the government of our Colony."

Schools adopted *You Should Know Your Government* as a text for courses in civics. The lodges of the Elks and Masons used it as resource material for their elocution contests, while the people of the Southern District used it as their political Bible. Soon I was invited to lecture at St. John's College and G. H. S., my alma mater. Later these talks were supplemented by tours for school children of government departments.

Of course, my crusading was not done in a social vacuum. Around this time, a group of public-spirited men had formed themselves into the Citizens' Committee which would serve as a watchdog for government abuses. Its chairman was Maxwell J. Thompson, an attorney, and among its members were Dr. Jackson L. Burnside, Dr. Cleveland Eneas, Kendal Isaacs, Edgar R. Bain, Charles Roderiquez, Rev. A. E. Hutcheson and I. This civic committee was the spontaneous outgrowth of Government's refusal to allow Bahamians to see three American movie films: *No Way Out*, *Lost Boundaries* and *Pinky*.

These three movies were powerful and poignant stories enacted on a high dramatic level. *No Way Out* described the struggle of a young Negro doctor for recognition as a human being in a white hospital. The doctor was portrayed by none other than our own native son, Sidney Poitier, a young man who lifted himself from poverty to one of the highest positions in legitimate theatre. The other two pictures - *Lost Boundaries* and *Pinky* were both eminently successful in exploring that phase of the Negro problem which deals with Negroes light enough in color to gain acceptance as white persons. An extremely delicate and touchy problem was involved when these Negroes



Sidney Poitier - Star of "No Way Out." Sidney was the son of Bahamian parents.



Attorney Maxwell J. Thompson, Chairman, the Citizens' Committee.

within *Lost Boundaries* were discovered and characterized as Negroes.

The Citizens' Committee protested against Government's denial of the people's right to see these films and, at the same time they invoked the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to which the United Kingdom Government was a signatory. After strong representation, the Film Censor Board reversed its decision and the Bahamians saw the film.

The next stride in the direction of freedom was the formation of the People's Political Party, spearheaded again by Maxwell J. Thompson. This party, however, was short-lived. It lacked strong grass root, labour union support. Further, the leaders themselves were not prepared to make the necessary sacrifices; their homes having been already encumbered by second mortgages to the Bay Street merchants, they feared becoming victims of the economic squeeze.

And as if we were not sufficiently burdened already, in 1948, when Hugh Springer M.A., the Jamaican Registrar of the University of the West Indies was enroute to London, he stopped overnight in Nassau with two of his white colleagues; he, alone, because of his color, was denied accommodation at the British Colonial Hotel.

On learning of this incident, Jamaica's Chief Minister, the Honorable Alexander Bustamante demonstrated remarkable restraint. "The Bahamas," he said, "needs to develop a healthy public opinion."

Representative Roy Lyndo, however, was not as kind. He exploded, “The Bahamas is a festering pimple on the backside of the Caribbean.”

After completion of work in my law offices one afternoon in the month of December, 1950, A. Leon Mckinney, an insurance manager, dropped in for a chat. “You know, Randol,” he said, “we black people will never earn the respect of the white man until we control some finance. Economics, man - economics is the thing. We need our own savings and commercial institutions.”

“What are you suggesting - a bank?” I inquired.

“Exactly. We have the biggest population, the biggest lodges, the biggest group of wage earners, yet in the business community we count for nothing.”

“True,” I replied. “Bay Street will lend you an umbrella when it isn’t raining, but as soon as the rain starts to fall, they’ll take it away. Man they’ll lend you money only if you can prove that you don’t need it.”

“My banker makes me cringe whenever I request a loan,” Mr. McKinney remarked. “The other day I saw him make a customer seated on the Mourner’s Bench almost tear up his own hat before granting him an overdraft to cover an emergency.”

“Man, I never got that far. My banker shouts, ‘No,’ to me right across the counter. Be that as it may, Mac,” I continued, “we should be able to find twelve black men in the Bahamas to help us launch the venture.”

“Yes, let’s compile a list right now,” he said pulling his note pad out of his pocket.

“Wait man! Hold your horses! There is something you should know.”

“What now?” inquired Mac detecting a negative tone in my voice.

“You see Mac, you see I’m getting engaged to be married. Man the condition I’m in right now, I cannot concentrate on a bank. Come back in the next six or seven months when I am not so dizzy.”

“Man, you engaged?” Mac gazed at me incredulously and then continued, “I thought you were engaged to the building of this Colony. Well, well, I’ll be damned. Randol’s in love.”

There was a long pause between us. “Who is the lady responsible for your



Jackie at 18.

condition?”

“Her name is Miss Jacqueline Bethel,” I responded.

“You mean Lennie Bethel’s daughter who lives just one block east of your home on Fort Fincastle?”

“Yes indeed,” was my quick response. “You know the commandment.”

“Commandment? What has the commandment to do with it?” Mac inquired.

“Well you see the Commandment said, ‘Love thy neighbour.’”

With that Mac smiled, jumped on his bicycle and rode away into the sunset as he shouted, “See you, my friend, in the next several months!”

I was always a shy youngster when it came to girls, but I felt that somewhere in the big wide world there was a companion just for me. I prayed

about it unceasingly. Ever since my nineteenth birthday I searched among the bebies of womanhood for the good and strong wife that God wanted me to have to help me carry out his purpose in these Bahama Islands.

It was a June afternoon in 1948 when I first met the young woman who was to share my adventure of living. As I descended the stairs of my father’s home, I overheard a conversation coming from the direction of the porch. “For four shillings you can buy a set of four blocks for a new school building in St. John’s College,” proposed a voice, which I did not recognize.

“Mark me down for four blocks,” my mother replied.

As I opened the door, mother motioned to her teenage visitor and said, “Meet my son. He has just passed his law exams.”

Turning in the direction of the young lady, I said, "Hello, and what's your name?"

She smiled demurely, "Jacqueline Bethel, but my friends call me, Jackie."

After she had spoken to me, there was a pause during which our eyes focused on each other. I tried to display no emotion, but truth to tell, I was terribly upset; almost out of control.

After regaining my composure, I tried mightily to make an assessment of this newcomer in our neighborhood.

Miss Bethel stood five feet four inches in height. Her vital statistics were 34-24-36. Her large luminescent eyes were filled with youthful curiosity. She wore a multicolored dress complete with bolero, which caressed a well-formed torso.

"What do you hope to do after graduation from high school?" I inquired in an effort to break the silence.

"I hope to become a secretary. I have already completed my commercial course. Today, however, I am selling your mother some blocks for our school project."

Mother then handed her a four-shilling note, which she accepted with a curt, "Thank you." In a moment she was out of sight, but not out of mind.

The next morning at 8:15, among the passing parade, I observed Miss Bethel as she stepped briskly to school. She hailed as she passed under my window. I kept the image of her with me the whole day long.

Alas, I understood how a chance smile from the little girl, Beatrice Portinari, stimulated Dante to marvelous achievement in the field of literature. How throughout all his political struggles and banishment from his beloved Florence, Dante never lost his idealistic love for Beatrice and how in the end, she became his muse. In like fashion I was influenced and inspired by Jackie. From then on, I wanted to please only her.

Providence had a hand in bringing us together. When, as valedictorian at St. John's College, Miss Bethel counseled her fellow graduates that they "had just begun to write the first page in the first chapter in a book whose pages are infinite," I was there. When I opened my law offices, she was my first secretary and she remained with me until I was established in the profession.

June 2nd 1909

My dear Josephine,

I hope the small present
may be useful to you both.

My father's greatest blessing
will be for you both in your new life. I am
sure you are going to be very happy and in
things not only to me and the best of my father
too. It will be to be for the better in his
interest to have the good fortune of being
another generation of Bahamians like us to the world
being through St. John's College.

If you feel free to write
occasionally when I am in London I shall always
be very glad to hear.

My father bless you.

Yours sincerely
R. C. Hooper

TYPED COPY OF FATHER LLEWELYN'S LETTER:

*St. John's College
Nassau, Bahamas*

June 2, 1951

My Dear Jacqueline,

I hope this small present may be useful to you both.

May God's richest blessing rest upon you both in your new life. I am sure you are going to be very happy and a blessing not only to me, but to many others too. It will have to be for Father Cole or his successor to have the good fortune of seeing another generation of Bethels' like unto the old passing through St. John's College.

If you find time to write occasionally when I am in India, I shall be very glad to hear.

May God bless you.

Yours Sincerely,

R. C. Llewelyn

In the spring of 1950, Miss Bethel left the law offices and went to work with K. M. Cross, a Certified Public Accountant. Later in October, she returned to execute a document. It was then that we agreed that if this mutually warm feeling persisted between us for another year or so, I would ask for her hand in marriage.

Jackie's father, Leonard George Bethel, was a member of the Old Testament school. Among his family, consisting of a wife, six girls and four boys, he was regarded as lord and master. No daughter of his was going to walk in the streets with a man unless he, the father, held something in black and white.

Two months after Jackie's departure, I wrote two letters: one to Mr. Bethel seeking permission to visit his home, another to her personally which read:

*Dear Miss Bethel,
Will you marry me in May, 1951?
(Sgd.) Randol F. Fawkes*

Two weeks later, I received an equally laconic reply:

*Dear Mr. Fawkes,
I will not marry you in May, 1951; but will marry you in June.
(Sgd.) Jacqueline Bethel*

Our engagement was announced on January 17, 1951 at Jackie's twenty-first birthday party. And what a time it was! Never did I think it possible for one to experience such romantic bliss. The next morning I awoke with song.

Jackie and I were married on June 3, 1951 at St. Agnes Anglican Church in the Southern District of New Providence. We left for New York that same evening on a two-week honeymoon. In New York we were like two children on Christmas morning. Everyone seemed so hospitable - so happy for us two. Alas I discovered that there could be beauty and purity in people, like the purity you sometimes see in the sky at night.

When I took hold of Jackie's hand it seemed as if all our dreams for us and our country were possible. As we walked down the streets of Times Square at night, I felt that if she wished for a star, I was tall enough to reach up and deliver it to her as a bouquet. We returned home on Sunday, June 17.

On the following day, we were in the reception room of our law offices when in stepped none other than Mr. A. Leon McKinney himself. He and I retired into my private chambers and there we hammered out all the details for our



Mr. & Mrs. Fawkes...I HAD AN IDEA - A West End, Grand Bahama girl.



Mr. & Mrs. Faukes, Mrs. Susan Wallace (nee Berbel).



The People's Penny Savings Bank Ltd.

project: the Bank. Mission accomplished, we were standing at the front door when Rev. Walter Albury, the African Orthodox preacher rode up on his bicycle and joined the conversation on the proposed bank.

“Surely you will support our bank in your weekly newspaper, *The Sun*?” inquired Mr. McKinney expecting an affirmative reply.

“Me? Support you all in the formation of a bank?” he queried. “Man you all are two biggety Bahamians. You need to have your heads examined. You form a high school and call it a college. You hold a meeting and call it a convention and now you want to form a sharing society so you call it a bank - the highest form of financial institutions in the world. Yes, indeed, some people need to have their heads examined.”

Rev. Albury’s severe doom did not discourage us. We continued to make plans for the formation of a mutual savings bank which would teach “thrift” to the people.

Mr. McKinney and I met regularly with others in my law offices. Each man



FIRST DIRECTORS - People's Penny Savings Bank Directors. Above, are from left in front row: Percy Hanna, Clinton H. Deveaux, A. Leon McKinney, Dr. Cleveland V. Eneas, Edgar Bain and Randol Fawkes. From left, back row, are: Wilfred Bowe, Pemmie Hanna and James Russell.

was required to save not less than one pound (U.S.5.00) per week. Every Friday night we started to lay the foundation for THE PEOPLE'S PENNY SAVINGS BANK - an all Bahamian owned organization.

The capital was to be six thousand pounds divided into six thousand shares at one pound each. Of course, provision was made in the Articles and Memorandum of Association for increased capitalization whenever the need should arise.

The officers were: A. Leon Mc Kinney, President; Dr. Cleveland W. Eneas, Vice President; Edgar R. Bain, Treasurer and I, Legal Advisor and General Secretary. Also numbered among the founders were: Percival Hanna, a printer; James A. G. Russell, a restaurateur; Clinton H. Deveaux, a carpenter; Vincent Marshall, a stone-mason; Eardley A. Moss, businessman; Wilfred Bowe, merchant; Leroy Hanna, businessman; Clarence A. Bain, salesman/politician; Vincent O. Martin, insurance agent; Shadrach Morris, businessman; Cyril Trynes, businessman; Clement T. Maynard, chemist;

George Grimes, insurance agent; George Hepburn, building contractor; Samuel C. McPherson, tailor; and Rev. A. E. Hutcheson.

On April 5, 1952, the Prospectus proclaimed the formation of the People's Penny Savings Bank Limited. Its entire holdings consisted of a lot of land and a dilapidated house on the corners of Market and McPherson's Streets in the Southern District of New Providence. We invited the public to purchase shares in the project which we felt was bound to play an important role in the economic life of the community.

The same zeal we exercised as members of the Citizens' Committee was employed in seeking depositors for our bank. We traveled by truck, boat, cycle, foot, and plane. Wherever we went in New Providence and the Out Islands, people responded to the gospel of "thrift." They brought their pennies by the hundreds and hundreds of thousands.

The first minutes of the company shows that we scheduled the grand opening of the bank's premises in the next ten years. But eighteen months after that meeting, we broke ground for the erection of the bank's home.

The plans for the building were drawn by Percival Hanna, the printer/director, and its construction was supervised by another founder, George Hepburn.

Many people wrote letters in the newspapers in praise of our efforts. The letter of July 5, in particular, provided the necessary motivation. It read:

"The deed was done. Overnight the little bank building sprung out of the ground. The colonnade front with its centre door and two French windows, each appropriately spaced between four sturdy columns had an irresistible appeal to the imagination of the people for whose benefit the bank was founded. At the apex of the gabled entablature was a large community clock with the legend: *It's time to save.*"

The structure was a decided asset to the particular locality. To the north was St. John's College campus; to the east, Purity Bakery; to the south was the new Capitol Theatre and on the other side of Market Street was an arbor of trees preserving the natural boundary of the Southern Recreation Grounds. The bank was a vigorous, photographic representation of the value of "thrift." It sounded a clarion call for the little people to pool their resources for greater economic strength through a united effort. A bank owned and operated by colored people was an idea whose time had come.



Dedication Ceremony

At the dedication of the People's Penny Savings Bank, the secretary and solicitor of the Bank, Randol Faukees, tells the story of its birth and progress.

On November 21, 1952 we dedicated the bank's new home with great fanfare in the presence of one government official, representatives of the Royal Bank of Canada and of Barclays Bank (D.C.O.), the Honorable and Mrs. A. F. Adderley, Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Dupuch, and men, women and children from all the villages. It was a beautiful Friday afternoon and the warmth of the reception given the launching of the bank was equaled only by the sincerity of its founders.

"We are not seeking what is profitable for the few," said our first President, Mr. McKinney. We are thinking in terms of the many. We are not seeking our interest alone, but those of our neighbors as well.

"This institution, at present, does not boast of being a bank but rather a school of "thrift" where any man, woman or child may take the first step towards self-sufficiency by opening an account with an amount as small as a penny."

After Mr. McKinney had told the story of the inception and growth of the Bank, Dr. Cleveland Eneas, the Master of Ceremonies, requested me to make my contribution.

"There are four prerequisites for a solid social system," I began. "They are: economic provision, civic organization, good moral standards and an appreciation of the arts and sciences. A nation may have a lofty moral code and a flair for the forms of art, but unless its finances are organized, its people will not be able to reap the full benefits of civilization.

"The prime purpose of this bank is to help people help themselves and to encourage them to save systematically for the rainy day which sometimes happens in the lives of the best of us.

"We hold this bank as dear to us as our own children and it is our fervent hope that it will be instrumental in rearing a new generation conscious of the value of thrift and willing to tell the story of its birth and growth to others.

"On behalf of the directors of the Bank, I thank so many of you for encouraging us with your prayers and presence. But this ceremony would be incomplete if we were not to acknowledge the patience of our wives. We owe them a debt of gratitude that would be hard, if not impossible to repay. By their quiet inspiration and understanding they have helped us to plant a flower on the grave of Booker T. Washington."

The doors of the bank swung open. The tellers' cages rang out with the business of new accounts. We taught people of our own kind how to amass a fortune with an amount as small as a penny.

At the end of the dedication, the short, stocky, bespectacled man of the cloth, Rev. Walter Albury, ran up and pumped my hand as he said, "Man, I always knew you all would make the grade. Congratulations!"

That night when I retired, I requested my young wife, Jacqueline, that if I were to die before morning, she should pillow my head with the Articles and Memorandum of Association of the People's Penny Savings Bank.

Through the assistance of the bank, new homes were built, new shops established and many of today's business and professional men were able to get their start on the road to independence.

The deposits for the first month surpassed our wildest dreams. If we had to do it all over again, however, I am sure all of the directors would have preferred opening in January, 1953 instead of November, 1952. As Christmas time approached, there was a steady stream of people returning to the newly formed bank to make withdrawals for their holiday shopping. These withdrawals, big and small, became so frequent that they began to worry Mr. McKinney, the Manager.

At about 10:00 a.m. on a mid-December day, I was summoned to an emergency directors' meeting. I experienced some difficulty getting into the bank's offices; so crowded were the entrances.

When the security of the President's office was attained, Mr. McKinney turned to me nervously and said, "Well, you are the legal advisor. If this run on the bank continues, then we will have to close down before we've really started."

There was a deafening silence as all my fellow-bankers awaited my sage advice. I took another look outside and saw that the crowd was increasing. I looked at my colleagues and reflected how full of hope and promise they were only a month ago. Now they were crestfallen.

The directors started to perspire more and more with every knock on the office door. I too took out my handkerchief. I had even more territory to mop up because my hair had already started to recede into baldheadedness. It was then that Jim Russell, the restaurateur/plumber, remarked, "And I thought we

were all going down in history.”

Dr. Eneas replied, “If we don’t go down in history, we are sure going down in jail.”

After each director had engaged in his own silent prayer, it was decided that Mr. McKinney would hold the fort while each one of us would go and fetch whatever money he could find, borrow, rake or scrape up and return to the bank as fast as possible. Some traveled by bicycle, others by car. Some walked, others ran. In the space of thirty minutes we were all back. We gave Mr. McKinney our offerings. When the last customer had left we breathed a sigh of relief.

In a way it was good that this had happened at so early a time in the life of the bank. From that moment onward, we took adequate precautions by special resolutions to have certain percentages of our liquid cash set aside to take care of any future emergencies.

The People’s Penny Savings Bank Limited lasted for over forty years until in 1992 it became a part of the Government’s national savings institutions.

* * *

CHAPTER V

* MOTION FOR SUSPENSION AND EXILE *

In 1950, the Bahamas Bar Association consisted of a majority of white and a few black men who regarded the colonialist regime as the best of all possible worlds. During my few years as a practicing member of the Bar, I observed three fundamental problems in the legal system which cried out for reform: the unequal access of the poor to representation before the legal system; the lack of appreciation, even among lawyers, for the law as an instrument for social and economic change; and the urgent need of a Court of Appeal, within the financial reach of Bahamians, to correct the mistakes of the Supreme Court. Towards all these needs the Bar Association adopted a band-aid approach.

Perhaps I had been reading too many biographies, but while I was young, I wanted to do as much as I could to advance the freedom of my people. The big question was, "Where do I start?"

My heart answered, "Start right where you are, the Judiciary. That branch of government is as much in need of reform as any."

Through the courtesy of Norman Washington Manley and Basil Rowe, I obtained a copy of the constitution of the Jamaican Bar Association and adapted it to our own local situation. These new rules were later examined by a committee consisting of Frederick Southworth, the Bahamian Attorney whose background included colonial service in Africa; A. K. Solomon, King's Counsel; the Honourable A. F. Adderley, a leading advocate at the Bar; Donald Bruce McKinney, a socialite member of the House of Assembly and myself. On May 18, 1953, the constitution was finally adopted and a number of committees appointed to study various aspects of legal and social reforms.

For a while it appeared as if new life had been infused into the old body. Members of the Bar seemed to understand that positive social and economic change meant more than legal services to help the poor resolve their mental problems, more than settling their personal injury claims and the compromise of land and tenant disputes. They appeared willing to tackle issues of broader socioeconomic impact such as consumer protection, labour unions, co-operatives, companies, taxation and inheritance of real and personal property. I was encouraged to believe that they would take a stand for social justice.

But this new spirit was short-lived. After the adoption of the new constitution, the Bar Association began to drag its feet on such questions as the Court of Appeal, women on juries, the abolition of the special (white) all male jury

system and legal aid to the poor. I therefore decided to sponsor three petitions: one to the House of Assembly, one to His Excellency, The Governor-General and finally an urgent request to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II herself.

On November 13th, 1953, the *Nassau Guardian* carried the following story:

FAWKES PETITION ANSWERED

EFFORT IS UNDERWAY TO ESTABLISH APPEAL COURT FOR BAHAMAS.

“Every effort is being made at the present time to establish a Court of Appeal in The Bahamas in a form suitable to the requirements of the Colony and within reach of the Colony’s resources,” the Acting Colonial Secretary, Mr. R. N. Noad, stated Tuesday in a communication to Mr. Randol Fawkes, a Nassau Attorney.

The letter was a reply to a petition Mr. Fawkes had forwarded to His Excellency, The Governor, addressed to Her Majesty, The Queen on the subject of the establishment of a Court of Appeal in the Colony.

CAREFUL CONSIDERATION

In his letter to Mr. Fawkes, the Acting Colonial Secretary stated that he had been directed to inform Mr. Fawkes that “your petition has been laid before Her Majesty who has referred it to the Secretary of State for the Colonies who has, by Her Majesty’s Command, given careful consideration to it.

“The Secretary of State is advised that appeal may be made to the Privy Council in Criminal matters as a result of the granting of special leave to appeal,” the letter stated.

“Furthermore, every effort is being made at the present time to establish a Court of Appeal in The Bahamas in a form suitable to the requirements of the Colony and within reach of the Colony’s resources.”

One result of Her Majesty's response was a public discussion of the possibilities of affiliating The Bahamas with Bermuda in an Appeal Court, the costs of which could be shared by both Colonies. An alternative proposal was that The Bahamas should be associated with the West Indian Court of Appeal. But neither of these proposals was yet to be.

The crying need for an Appeal Court other than the Privy Council in London was dramatically brought home during the trial of a postal civil servant for allegedly stealing thirteen thousand pounds from the Post Office Savings Bank to which he had the means of access by reason of his employment.

In those days the Post Office Savings Bank was housed in two small rooms measuring 12' x 12'. The lighting was poor, ventilation, poor, and heavy books of accounting were usually strewn all over the place. In Nassau, the Government maintained a central accounting office and scattered throughout the Out Islands there was a network of branch postal banks operated by the local Commissioners.

When deposits or withdrawals were made in the branch banks on the Out Islands, the Commissioners sent the monies to the Public Treasury in Nassau and the advice notes or withdrawal slips to the Postmaster so that the depositors' accounts could be credited or debited with the respective amounts.

This system worked well when the pace of life in the Bahamas was slow. But with the disruption of the Second World War, the working classes shifted from the Out Islands to Nassau and from Nassau to the American farms. This mobility of labour caused a sudden increase in the bank's business. It placed an extra burden on the limited staff and the old-fashioned bookkeeping and auditing facilities. Added to these woes were the frequent delays in the sailing of the mail boats which brought the Out Island ledger sheets and money-boxes to Nassau.

The end result was that passbooks of Out Islands depositor showed balances different from the amounts of money standing to their accounts in Nassau. To reconcile these differences, a tremendous amount of posting and leg and shoulder work had to be done in comparing the Out Island advice notes or withdrawal slips against the amount of money received by the Public Treasury.

The accounting system of the Public Treasury fared no better than that of the Post Office Saving Bank. On April 29, 1949 the *Nassau Guardian* editorialized:

Seldom has public's confidence in a Government Department been so shaken as by what transpired in the Wells' case ... That in this connection 'checks' of the Labour accounts were made only to the nearest one thousand pounds is a statement that would have been greeted with derisive incredulity had it not been in evidence taken under oath in the court. While all allowances will be made for the difficulties under which the treasury like other Government Departments carries on its work, owing to shortage of staff, the public will find it hard to believe that the lamentable state of affairs revealed in the Wells' case can thereby be justified. It is clear THAT THE SYSTEM OF BOOK-KEEPING USED AT THE TREASURY HAS BEEN THE MAIN CAUSE OF THE TROUBLE.

Now three years after the Wells' case, another Bahamian was indicted.

I was drawn into the new case like iron filing to a magnet. It would require my putting the whole system on trial. It was the kind of David and Goliath struggle for which I was born to set aright. When in 1953 this second accused person could find no defense counsel, I accepted the brief with alacrity.

The first week of the case went extremely well. I entertained thoughts of a sensational victory for the defense. During one of my luncheon breaks, however, A. Leon McKinney, the manager of the People's Penny Savings Bank, whispered, "Randol, I must see you outside court. It's urgent."

Noticing that Mac was overly upset I said, "Control yourself man or else you'll go to pieces."

"Man, I have just heard from one of the editors of the newspapers that the bosses decided at a dinner party last night that you will be disbarred after this case."

"Disbar me? For what?"

"Man, I don't know," Mac replied, "but you are sure one short li'l man who got some big, powerful enemies. The big boys are now searching the records from the day you were admitted to the Bar to see if they can find something - anything to pin on you."

"Let them search. My life is an open book," I replied. "I am going to do my duty to my client and let the facts speak for themselves."

"Be careful, Randol," Mac advised, "because I understand that the Attorney General and certain senior members of the Bar are trying to pin a charge of unethical conduct on you."

I returned to the courtroom with renewed energy. Throughout a rigid cross-examination, I impaled the Postmaster on the sharp points showing not only that his department was understaffed and overworked but that the posting of accounts for Out Islanders and Bahamians on the American farms was not up to date. The Postmaster admitted that the true picture of any alleged fraud could not be given until all posting was finished. While the Postmaster was admitting that the accounting and auditing systems of both bank and public treasury were at fault, I dragged him forward and backward in bleeding condition until the prosecution was forced to seek leave to amend its charges against the civil servant. I objected, but to no avail.

In the colonial system of justice, the Crown always had the last word. After all the witnesses for the prosecution and the defense had given their evidence, I addressed the jury on behalf of the accused. The Solicitor General followed. The Chief Justice then gave his summation of the law and evidence, after which the all-white special jury retired to consider their verdict.

Within a few hours they returned. In a hushed courtroom the Registrar of the Court faced the jury and asked, "Mr. Foreman, Gentlemen of the Jury, have you arrived at a verdict?"

The foreman stood and replied, "We have, Your Honour."

"How say you? Is the accused guilty or not guilty?"

"Your Honour, we find the accused guilty on all counts. Unanimous."

I could not believe my ears. But I must have heard correctly, because the Judge then proceeded to pass a sentence of thirteen years imprisonment.

As my client came out of the prisoner's box, he shook my hand and said, "Thank you. I am satisfied that the public got to know the whole truth."

In his left hand was a little Bible. On examining it I found within its pages a sheet of paper on which was scribbled, "Daddy, I know you didn't do it. We shall always love you."

The next day, funds were hurriedly collected to finance an appeal to the Privy Council in England. That afternoon as I ran upstairs to file the Appeal in the Registry, I was stopped in my tracks by Jonah F. Greenidge, the bailiff. "Mr. Fawkes, the Attorney General wants you to have this," he said as he served me with a folio of papers on the back of which was printed, "Motion for Suspension." A. Leon McKinney was right. The word had gone forth -

“Fawkes must be stopped.”

The Court was swift to move. I objected to the former Chief Justice, Sir Oswald Lawrence Bancroft trying my case because of his hostility towards me during the battle for the Cause List. I took my protest to the Governor but he spurned my objections. I sought the help of my Anglican Bishop, Spence Burton. He refused even to say a prayer with me.

After two days of arguments in court, I demanded a trial by jury. “Why ask for a jury, Mr. Fawkes?” Sir Oswald queried. “I took an oath of office this morning. I intend to give you justice.”

After this plea failed, I took my life into my own hands and said, “Your Honour, it does not matter how many oaths you have taken or how high the stack of Bibles on which you swear, you cannot do justice in this case. Every inch of me revolts against this.”

One could have heard a pin drop. The Judge was shocked. The coloured people who had packed the courtroom held their breath.

Never before had they heard a black man speak to an all-powerful judge of the Supreme Court in this manner. Further, Sir Oswald called my remarks “contemptuous.”

Gentle Reader, guess what happened? That’s right. I was suspended from practicing law for two years. As I heard the Judge pronounce my doom, I experienced a feeling of utter despair and almost total bewilderment. I felt faint.

In a few years at the bar, I had won the admiration and respect of the masses as an honest and fearless fighter for social justice. Many had remarked that I had shown promise of becoming one of the great leaders of the country. But now my whole world seemed to be caving in on me. When I finally snapped back to reality, I discovered that the nightmare was fact, not fiction.

Calling upon my untouched reserves of endurance, I gathered my books and proceeded slowly out of court, still despondent, still dejected, still crestfallen. Early that morning, I stood ten feet tall but now I wished I were invisible. In desperation I prayed, “Lord Jesus, Help me!”

His answer was immediate. Suddenly, on approaching the eastern exit of the Supreme Court, I heard thunderous shouts, “WE WANT FAWKES! WE WANT FAWKES!!”

As I entered into Bank Lane, I was confronted with a sea of smiling black faces running toward me from every direction. Among them were Robert Maxwell Hanna of Ross Corner, Richard Johnson of Jail Alley, Edgar Bain of Baillou Hill Road, and Martin Luther Rahming who led the chorus of voices and acted as their spokesman, "You have dared to be a Daniel! We want you to speak for us in the House of Assembly the same way you spoke to that judge. We want you to ask the world, 'Who gave the white man the right to sit in judgment over the black?'"

I was overwhelmed by their sincerity and the realization that their agenda coincided with my own plans. As I promised to be available for the General Elections of 1956, I felt a lump rise in my throat and goose pimples all over my skin. I knew that try as I might, I could not hold back the tears. I rushed home to acquaint a little lady of the day's happenings.

The news had preceded me. When I opened the door there was Jackie with our two young babies, Francis and Rosalie. As we all embraced one another she whispered, "Ran, we heard how courageous you were. We know that you will win a seat in the House of Assembly in 1956."

I sighed as I queried, "Really?"

In an effort to drive her point home she added, "There is only one path for us to travel now and that's upward."

Jackie then went into the kitchen to prepare dinner. While waiting, I reflected on the surprising show of camaraderie at the courthouse that morning and Jackie's unshakable belief in our future. Happy indeed is he who can find so much peace and love under his own roof.

But the Powers-in-Being had not yet run their course. They were still demanding their pound of flesh. "Overkill," was the word. Within a few days His Excellency, The Governor, Lord Ranfurly, revoked my Notary Public License. A week later my cousin, Ted Glover, the Headmaster of Western Senior School, informed me that the Board of Education had refused to approve my election as Chairman of the Parent-Teachers' Association for the year 1954.

On the evening of February 18th, after I had loaded all my office furniture on the back of a truck, I took one last nostalgic look at my legal aid clinic in which I had shared so much adventure with so many people. As I closed the door I heard a voice, "Randol."

Upon turning in the direction of the sound, I saw my cousin Leon Walton Young. He had grown weary with age. "I want you to have this," he said as he handed to me a letter.

I looked at the envelope but before I could thank him, he had turned the corner and vanished out of sight. I re-entered my office, locked myself inside and in the silence of the night, I read:

Nassau, Bahamas

February 18th, 1954

Mr. Randol Fawkes

Nassau.

Dear Randol,

Without entering into the merits or demerits of your recent case in the Court of the learned C. J. Sir Oswald Bancroft, please let me tender my sincere congratulations on the manner in which you acquitted yourself against the Bahamas Bar and the learned Attorney General. You have made history with a big "H."

I haven't been privileged to follow the case in Court as my ailments do not allow me to go around, but I, knowing our country quite well, was able to read between the lines of the press reports and get a fair line up of what happened from day to day.

But the foregoing is not the object of this script, and if I might dare suggest to you, I would not change any of the recent past for any thing I can think of at this moment, for you have been able to make yourself (in the handling of that case) the PEOPLE'S HERO OF THE DAY and the first place in their hearts and minds is yours for the taking. There is absolutely no doubt about their feelings about you, and if you capitalize upon that as I know you can, when the two years expire, you can be a very much bigger man legally, politically and, with corresponding influences in your country than if this thing hadn't happened to you.

The world, this country needs MEN. They long ago had the sign out WANTED MEN. They have now declared in no uncertain terms that they have found a MAN, RANDOL FAWKES.

You owe gratitude to the fates that sent this thing to you - this very

good thing. Thank them and purge your heart of any hatred or bitter feelings against anyone. Such can only retard and hamper the progress I visualize for your immediate future among your people. Doubtless, you will be embarrassed somewhat to find your level. But it's there and you are extremely capable.

Two years, except maybe financially, need not be a very great setback to you even professionally, for many things you can continue to do during that time. Get the people around; those who need advice and information; fix a reasonable fee for such services (that they can't get today). Go among them, to their meetings, societies, cultivate them; they need you, want you. Do not let them want you in vain. Do not lose the opportunity and hold high your head. How I envy you, your age and what your future can be.

Let me remind you in all your undertakings to put your hand in God's. Go to Him at nights secretly in your prayers. Let Him be your Chief Guide in all matters and undertakings. Be not afraid; lean heavily upon Him. He will guide you safely. In my whole life I have never found Him wanting in any of my problems. He is our very best investment. Take your time. Build securely.

God bless and keep you is the sincere prayer of your oldest living relative on your father's side.

Sincerely,

L. Walton Young.

I now saw a new world of fantastic dimensions. That letter lifted me out of the valley of depression and placed me on the mountain top of hope. I began to believe that, despite the recent past, I could still lead my people out of Colonialism into the broad sunlight of freedom and human dignity. I felt a kinship with St. Paul when he wrote to the Philippians: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

While the Duke of Windsor was Governor of the Bahamas, I spoke to him only once. As was my custom, I asked him for the greatest thought he had ever heard. The Duke replied, "Place your hand in the Hand of God, that shall be to you better than a light and safer than a known way."

Now nine years later, a backwoods village carpenter, a soapbox orator with-

out any formal education offered the same sublime counsel. I framed the letter of L. Walton Young and re-read it whenever I was in need of motivation.

At the time of my suspension, Jackie and I had reached only the belt course in the construction of our new home on the corners of Glinton Square and McPherson Street. This project had to be abandoned because of a lack of funds. We finally decided that I should leave immediately for America and that Jackie and the kids would join me later. So decided, so done.

Many a day did I roam the streets of New York City broke and bereft of even one friend. I had a heavy heart as I trudged among the alien skyscrapers, shivering in the coldest of winters and covered in one of the second-hand coats from Joe's basement of the Bowery. This picture differed radically from that of our honeymoon of June 3, 1951.

At first I eked out a meager existence as an iceman with the Knickerbocker Ice Company of Brooklyn. Sometimes I manned two jobs; one as common labourer with the Continental Ribbon Cutting Company during the day, and another during the night as a typist with a Wall Street magazine. When I saw an immigration officer enter the plant by the front door, I left through the back door for I had no work permit. The next morning I would search for another job.

During the year I spent in New York, I visited many employment offices. I knew just which benches creaked and which did not. One day Times Square Employment Agency, which by then had grown weary of seeing me, gave me a card with circuitous directions to a jobsite. I followed the instructions which led me to the last stop on the elevated train. When the door opened I looked out and there below was the deep blue Atlantic Ocean. I took the hint: they wanted me to jump in the lake. What a cruel world!

However, the time spent in New York was not lost. God knew that I needed to broaden my education before I could cope adequately with the heavy civic burdens that lay ahead. In times like those I looked to the Biblical characters for inspiration. Christ had a wilderness experience, Moses, too. David used his quiet moment of exile to write the Psalms and to prepare himself to meet the great challenges of life. As I moved from job to job, a new self-awareness was gained and I felt personal growth take place within me. My wilderness experience prepared me to perceive life-values in a real world. Soon, I started to thank God for this thing - this very good thing - that had happened to me.

Where did I go wrong? How can I profit from past mistakes? Should my personal revolution have started at the top with the Bahamas Bar Association or at the bottom with the working people? Was I equal to the task my country wanted me to undertake? These were the questions which occupied my mind as I visited the classrooms, the churches and the unions of New York.

In May, 1954 when the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court branded racial discrimination in America unconstitutional, I was there in Washington witnessing the historic event. It was like being involved in one big seminar on Black History.

When Emperor Haile Selassie visited Harlem in July, 1954 and spoke in Abyssinia Baptist Church of the rape of Ethiopia, I was there. I heard this Lion describe how Mussolini's armies in 1935 sprayed his homeland with mustard gas killing people and crops and poisoning rivers. I heard him tell how bombs dropped on innocent villages causing pregnant women to give premature birth. I heard him tell how these women picked up their newly born babies' navel strings, still uncut, and continued their flight. This little man with a heart full of emotion concluded, "God and history will remember. Never in history has prophecy been fulfilled so amply and quickly. Poland, France, England, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Rome and Germany, all who had recognized and sanctioned the rape of Ethiopia saw their own cities destroyed and tens of millions of their people killed in World War II."

When the Emperor Selassie was finished speaking there was only silence that was awe-inspiring. Then a collective "Amen" and a standing ovation.

My wife and I still talk about the last song recital of Paul Robeson given at the Galilee Baptist Church in Corona, Long Island, New York. Hundreds crowded into the little clapboard temple and thousands waited outside that Sunday afternoon in February, 1955. All wished to get a glimpse of this moody giant of a man who had become a legend in his own lifetime.

People loved Paul Robeson because he sang of them and to them with a voice unmatched for its technical mastery and natural beauty. As the hands of the clock slowly approached 4:00 p.m., starting time, the hall became strangely silent. Then we heard a whisper, "Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel?" People in the hall looked at each other. I looked at Jackie and she at me, "Didn't you say something?"

A minute later, we heard it again. This time the question was more urgent and louder, "Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel?"

Then like a rushing wind crashing against the clapboards of the little church, the deep bass baritone voice of Paul Robeson picked up the pertinent question as it came from the basement below. In a rising crescendo of passionate emotion it grew louder and louder, closer and closer until the huge frame of the artist filled the little stage. He lifted his right hand to his right ear to control the vibrations as they bounced off the beams above:

Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel
DELIVER DANIEL, DELIVER DANIEL?
DIDN'T MY LORD DELIVER D-A-N-I-E-L?
THEN WHY NOT EVERY MAN?

Paul Robeson's voice floated over the silent throng. But he was no mere singer of songs. This human organ was one big heart speaking to other hearts. He was a prophet preaching the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. In his mouth the Negro Spiritual became a testament.

To many in the well-dressed crowd who heard that song, this was simply the lyrics of one of the better known Negro spirituals. To me, however, I felt it was a command to search my own heart.

"Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel?" I asked myself.

The Bible said so, and I believed it with all my heart.

As I heard the commanding baritone addressing the souls of men, I became intimately involved in the relevance of his message to our own times in The Bahamas and most especially to my self imposed exile in New York. Why should I worry then when I have this blessed assurance?

While Paul Robeson sang, I thought of my people back home and their struggle against seemingly insurmountable odds. I recalled St. Paul's great Macedonian call and applied it to my own situation. "Go back home and help your fellow-Bahamians throw off the British colonial yoke."

The first dramatic and moving challenge was given to me when the people shouted, "We want Fawkes!" as I left the Supreme Court on February 18th, 1954.

A second reminder was the letter from L. Walton Young when he wrote, "The people of The Bahamas want you to become their leader. Do not disappoint them."

And now it was Paul Robeson who seemed to imply, “If God can deliver Daniel out of the lions’ den, then this same God can deliver Randol and his people from colonial bondage.”

In May of the same year, Jackie and I returned home with our minds completely focused on our respective goals: she to build a wholesome family life; and I to overthrow the white oligarchy and to replace it with a government in which all men and all women can participate, regardless of their race or sex.

* * *

CHAPTER VI

* THE RETURN OF THE LABOUR LEADER *

The social and economic situation in The Bahamas when I left for America in April, 1954, differed in two important respects from that to which I returned in May, 1955 - the birth of the multi-national corporation and the advent of the Progressive Liberal Party. To these two forces a third movement was soon to be added - the Bahamas Federation of Labour. For the next 12 years these three symbols of Capital, Politics and Labour dominated the Bahamian scene.

The men mostly identified with politics and the multi-national corporate society were Stafford Lofthouse Sands and Wallace Groves. The former was as much the personification of government as the latter of capital. Together they formed an almost unbeatable team.

Sands was the prototype of Mr. Goldfinger in Ian Fleming's novel, and equally as ruthless. Since 1942, he had grown physically, weighing nearly 300 pounds, and politically as the leader of Government Business in the House of Assembly and chairman of the all - powerful Tourist Board. In business transactions between Government and others, Stafford Sands often acted as legal advisor to all parties, conflict of interest laws notwithstanding. If he ignored traffic regulations, policemen conveniently looked in the opposite direction for Sands was a law unto himself. In 1955, he strutted up and down Bay Street's political arena like a mighty Goliath and challenged the children of men to disprove his invincibility.

Wallace Groves remained attached to Stafford Sands with the faithfulness of a needle to a magnet. Groves, himself a mild-looking, soft-spoken Wall Street financier with the Midas touch, was Sands' most important client.

A decade ago, Groves had operated a successful lumber mill in Pine Ridge, Grand Bahama. In 1953 he concluded an agreement with The Bahamas Government whereby his conglomerate, the Grand Bahama Port Authority purchased 50,000 acres (later expanded to 150,000 acres) of government land at \$2.80 per acre, in exchange for his promise to create a freeport in Grand Bahamas, complete with industrial and commercial enterprises. This freeport would be free of taxes except for those imposed by Groves, and neither could anyone live or work there save with his consent.

Not since 1629 when King Charles I granted the entire Bahama Islands to his Attorney General, Sir Robert Heath, had there been such a fantastic land grab. Other members of the minority Government, like the Christies and the Symonettes, used their political influence to amass considerable fortunes in real estate, but none ever equaled the Groves bonanza. The Progressive Liberal Party did not agree with this give-a-way of the people's land by the white minority Government. The P.L.P. pledged that whenever they become the government they would repudiate the Freeport contract. But, at that time, no one believed that the infant political party would ever get off the ground, much less become the government of the day.

The backgrounds of the men who led the army of beggars - the P.L.P. - provided a study in contrasts. The chairman, Henry M. Taylor was a six feet two, bulky, unkempt, ne'er-do-well, mulatto accountant. H.M., as he was affectionately called, sported a second edition of his chin, a mole on the left side of his finely chiseled face and a potbelly in a size-too-small shirt. His tight three-quarter pitch pants, held in place by an old necktie, barely covered his hips. Under these rags, however, there was a heart of gold, which drove him into helping others - anyone who had been unfairly treated in this rough and tumble world of politics.



*Stafford Sands
A Law unto himself*



*Henry Milton Taylor
"...suit of rags; a heart of gold."*

In the General Elections of 1949, while the Bay Street Boys used fleets of ships, planes and helicopters, H.M. successfully walked, cycled and donkeyed his way to a seat in the House of Assembly for the Long Island constituency.

In 1955, he was a member of parliament with a mission: to give The Bahamas its first P.L.P. government. The P.L.P.'s legal advisor was the London-trained Lynden Oscar Pindling. He was the son of a Jamaican policeman and a Bahamian woman. Where H. M. was tall and Conchy-Joe, L.O.P. was short and black as midnight. Henry was unkempt; Lynden, dapper. Taylor's manner was as rustic as the red sands of Clarence Town; Pindling's style, as urbane and well tailored as the clothes he wore. Being an only child, he was self-centered. He saw everyone and everything in terms of how he could use them to satisfy his own lust for power and wealth. On his way to the top, even as early as 1956, he rubbed out competition with style.

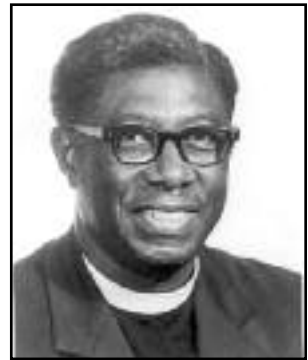
The secretary-general of the P.L.P. was light skinned Cyril St. John



Cyril Stevenson
...his pen-a sword and shield



Wallace Groves
...Wall Street financier



Rev. Edwin Taylor
...offered congratulations

Stevenson. In addition to his official duties, he edited and published the *Nassau Herald*, a weekly tabloid. Although operated on a shoestring, in the hands of Cyril, the *Herald* became a flaming sword and a shield fighting for the people's rights and protecting them against the human rights abuses of a colonialist regime. Every Saturday night, after a monumental effort, the *Herald* thundered exposés of public corruption and mal administration until Bay Street shuddered at the mere mention of its name. During the early days of this struggle for reform, Stevenson wedded the *Herald* to the cause of the masses and challenged the "divine right" of the white man to misrule over the black.

I felt I had a role to play in this unfolding drama. I wanted above all things, to change the Government and replace it with men - honourable men - who believed that "righteousness exalteth the nation." Then, and only then, justice will roll on like a mighty river and integrity flow like a never failing stream.

But what could I, a lone individual, do?

Is it really true that when a grain of sand is moved from the innumerable billions on the beach, it alters the center of gravity of the whole world?

Can one man change the destiny of the Colony? Among the Bay Street Boys, I was already marked down as public enemy number one. The small black professional class, who sought acceptance by the elitist society, thought it impolitic to be seen in my company. Truth to tell, the only people really happy about my return from exile were the working classes in the ghettos of Mason's Addition and Grant's Town, the longshoremen, the vendors on Prince George Dock and the street sweepers and garbage collectors. As I moved among them I prayed, "Lord open mine eyes that I may see the opportunities Thou hast in store for me."

While returning to my home that evening by way of Lewis Street, my eyes fell on the Wayside Pulpit (bulletin board) of the African Orthodox Church. It read, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

This message seemed bent on reassuring me that I had the power within me to succeed; that the Christ within me was greater than all the evil forces outside. I reflected on the advice my mother gave me as she taught me to read, "Ran," she said, "if you have the faith, God has the ability."

Two weeks later I opened an employment agency, the first of its kind, on the corners of Bay Street and Elizabeth Avenue. To this office came workers of all categories seeking jobs. I organized them into craft unions and successfully negotiated on their behalf decent wage scales and good working conditions.

This new phenomenon on the economic scene drew Bay Street's wrath. They fired union members and frustrated almost every attempt at collective bargaining. But the more they tried to suppress the movement, the stronger we became, until all the little craft unions merged for greater solidarity into one big industrial organization, THE BAHAMAS FEDERATION OF LABOUR.

"Now," we reasoned, "we will match size for size. A small problem will be met by a small branch union. But in the case of a big industrial dispute with a multi-national corporation, the full weight of the B. F. of L. with all its affiliates and branches, would be summoned into action."

"We're building a grand new nation," sang the delegates to the founding congress of the B. F. of L., held in the Lydia Club Hall on East Street, the heart of the black belt. Our immediate aim was "more bread" but our long-range

goals included the enactment of a Fair Labour Code; the establishment of an Industrial Conciliation Board; the right of all persons to join unions of their choice; a social security system; on the job training and apprenticeship schemes; association of The Bahamas with the University of the West Indies and a Court of Appeal.

Under the Presidency of Bill Mallory, a stone mason, Brother Cecil Bain, a painter, as secretary, and Morgan Brice, a carpenter, as treasurer, the B. F. of L. fought against wage slavery and economic injustice. We went on strike for higher wages for garbage collectors and won. A picket line around Fort Montague Beach Hotel resulted in shorter hours for construction workers and time and one half for overtime. On the waterfront, our United Brotherhood of Longshoremen won recognition and signed their first collective bargaining agreement with the steamship agents. This agreement guaranteed protective gear for the nostrils of cement workers, insurance protection against injury or death during the course of their employment and time and one half payment for all work performed in excess of eight hours in any one work day. We called this milestone the Workers' Bill of Rights.

For the rest of 1955, we used all the weaponry of unions for the benefit of our members. In spite of the fierce opposition from Bay Street, we never lost a strike. The victories earned for the B. F. of L. a special place in the hearts of the workers. With enthusiasm of true believers we sang as we picketed:

*We meet today in freedom's cause, and raise our voices high;
We'll join our hands in union strong, to battle and to die.*

CHORUS

*Hold the fort for we are coming, union men be strong!
Side by side we'll battle onward, victory will come.
See our numbers still increasing, hear the bugle blow;
By our union we shall triumph, over every foe.*

Notable as these gains were, it was obvious to me, as organizer, that unions needed a democratic climate if they were to grow to full strength. In the Bahamian context, hotel and agricultural workers, the largest segment of employees, were prevented by statute from joining unions. Government opposed the principle of workers' representation on public boards and committees and flouted the concept of equal pay for work of equal value. Therefore when Cyril Stevenson, the Secretary General of the P. L.P., invited

me to join the party and contest a seat for the Southern District of New Providence, I knew that he was reading my mind. "Randol," he inquired, "you know what the International Labour Organization declared at its last Convention in Geneva, Switzerland?"

"No, you tell me."

Opening the I. L.O.'s news bulletin, Stevenson read, "We declare that freedom of expression and of association are essential to sustained progress and that the fundamental objective of all national efforts should be based on the principle that all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity of economic security and equal opportunity."

"Ah Cyril," I said, "the I. L. O. has pinpointed so well the three major obstacles to our progressive movement: race, creed and sex. Before we can liberate our people," I continued, "these barriers must be torn down."

"True Randol," Cyril replied, "but whatever you or I can do alone, we can do better together. Now will you join our party?"

Before I could answer affirmatively, William W Cartwright, the treasurer of the P. L. P. walked up. After determining the trend of our conversation, he blurted out, "Man, everyone knows that Bahamian women cannot vote. If that isn't discrimination based on sex then I'd like to know what is. During the 1949 General Elections," Cartwright continued, "I was a candidate for the Bight, Cat Island, a totally Negroid constituency which has consistently returned to the House of Assembly the white man, Mr. H. G. Christie. On the last night of my campaign I took Dr. C. R. Walker along to help me convince the patriarch, Sammie Swain, that he should vote for his own people, at least, once in his lifetime.

"Dr. Walker was at his absolute best on this occasion. He brought to my cause his arsenal of reasoned logic until it seemed as if Brother Swain was almost persuaded. I felt that at least, in this case, the British brainwashing process was a failure. Seeking to wind up a successful day I inquired, 'Now Brother Swain are you going to vote for me tomorrow morning?'

"'Well Mr. Cartwright,' Swain replied, 'I like all two-a-yinna, so dis is what I decide to do.' After a long pause Swain triumphantly blurted out, 'I ga vote for Mr. Christie (the white man) and pray for you Mr. Cartwright.'"

The task, which the P.L.P. and the B. F. of L. had set for themselves, was onerous and particularly urgent in view of the certainty of the General Elections by the middle of June, 1956. It seemed that the progressive movement had a date with destiny as we started to amalgamate, educate and to agitate among the poor for a world in which no one would want for food, shelter or clothing and all would be protected against the ravages of sickness and old age. To me, the B. F. of L., the big industrial union, seemed to hold the solution to all the world's problems. Surely, this is what Tennyson envisioned in his "Federation of the World - The Parliament of Man."

Some of my friends took to the sidelines and watched in openmouthed amazement as I advocated from the platforms of the Southern Recreation Grounds and Windsor Park for a complete change in the status quo. "Colonialism," I preached, "is a sickness in our society. It robs the government and the governed of their human dignity. The only therapy capable of creating the conditions for a new social order is a new representative House of Assembly."

"Speak on, li'l Moses," some shouted.

"Tell it like it is," cried others.



Two Voices in the Wilderness: Milo Butler cheers the authors as he makes his point (1956).

With that encouragement I continued, “Yesterday, after I had won an extra shilling per hour for the longshoremen, Stafford Sands inquired, ‘Mr. Fawkes, do you intend to destroy this economy?’

“My answer to that question was, ‘Yes, Mr. Sands.’”

There was a restrained silence from the audience. Then I continued. “My brothers and sisters, I intend to destroy this barefooted economy and put some shoes on it! I intend to destroy the empty dinner table and put some food on it! I intend to destroy the empty pocket book and put some money in it! I intend to wipe the furrowed brows of the old and weary, place smiles on their faces and songs of praise in their hearts!” There was a crescendo of feeling as I repeated the rhythm of short sentences until the vibrations of the crowd exploded into a thunderous applause. It was as if in the darkness of night, the poor and oppressed had touched my outstretched hand and having established contact, God was helping me to lift them to that higher standard of dignity and self-respect that follows a full day’s work for a decent day’s pay.

The next day, I joined the P.L.P. and was nominated along with brother Lynden O. Pindling to contest the two seats in the House of Assembly for the Southern District. Thereafter, Cyril wrote the political columns for the *Herald* and I did a page each week on the bread and butter issues. Together, with Pindling’s masterful oratory, we began to teach the masses their proper roles in democratic institutions based on: one man one vote.

Our campaign got off to a good start. My first article in the *Herald* - “WANTED : MEN” bore all the touchstones of good writing - a universal theme, individual creativity and a powerful suggestion.

Addressing all The Bahama Islands it began:

“LISTEN ABACO, ANDROS AND ACKLINS!

“LISTEN CAT ISLAND AND CROOKED ISLAND!

“Our greatest need today is MEN; no, not prima donnas, but real men. Stout-hearted men who know what is right and are willing to stand up for it; who know what is wrong and are willing to fight against it.

“LISTEN ELEUTHERA AND EXUMA!

“LISTEN GRAND BAHAMA AND BIMINI!

“Search among yourselves and find men to represent you. Sons of the soil

you must have before your burdens can be lifted and your labours rewarded. You need them; your children need them; The Bahamas needs them.

“LISTEN HARBOUR ISLAND AND INAGUA!

“LISTEN LONG ISLAND, SAN SALVADOR AND RUM CAY!

“Leadership is needed today to strengthen what is right in your town and to stamp out what is wrong.

“Too long you have carried the torch for false prophets and wolves in sheep’s clothing. Talk over the idea with compatriots in your land and the results will surprise you.

“Deep down in the heart of every man there is a binding sympathy which needs only contact with another to produce some tangible results. Delay no longer. Start today to look for a leader and you will find him.

“Listen Mr. Out Islander, there are roads to be repaired, pathways that are deep in mud rendering them almost impassable and garbage heaps that are close to the spring well where the dung oozes into it. The walls of the school are black from neglect and dirt and filth covers the rotten floors.

“This is where the leaders of tomorrow are trained. This is where infants spend large parts of their days sprawled out on the floor with bits of bread in their hands. These may be your children.

“Pray, tell me Mr. Out Islander: Suppose your son has suddenly taken ill. Is there a doctor nearby?

“Suppose your wife needed a serious operation. Could you obtain a bed in the island hospital? Don’t answer that question; after all, this is only 1955. I do not mean to offend, but pray, tell me: Is a sincere effort being made by your representative to improve the health situation in your community? Is adequate provision made for the poor children, the aged and the crippled?

“The Bay Street Boys will call me bad names for asking these questions. They will say that I am an agitator. But all I want to know is whether after two hundred years of representation, there is in place a system of local government? Are you a part of the decision-making process?

“LISTEN MR. AND MRS. BAHAMAS!

“Are your schools spacious, properly equipped and in good condition? Are

your teachers qualified and well paid?

“Please tell me, do your representatives take steps to have families decently housed? Is there continuous planning for the improvement of residential areas, parks and roads? Are good jobs available? Do labour, industry, agriculture and government work together to ensure the sound economic growth of your community? Are dangerous tensions kept at a minimum by the avoidance of discrimination and injustices?

“You will say that I am wasting your time; but Mr. and Mrs. Bahamas, these questions are standards by which the work of any representative can be measured. Honestly answer them and you will know whom not to re-elect. Avoid the answers to these questions and you will sell yourself and your children further into slavery.

“LISTEN MR. AND MRS. BAHAMAS, how come the Bahamian project workers on the United States farms pay two and one half percent income tax when the rich banks, insurance companies and other multi-national investors are required to pay not one cent income tax? Pray tell me.

“It has been said that money is like blood; the more it circulates, the more healthy the community becomes. But the Bahamian public’s money is like ice, and by the time it has passed through so many hands on the way to the worker, it is all melted.

“That is why I say Mr. and Mrs. Bahamas, we need men who are closer to the people - men who are willing to step out in the vanguard and speak out, and when necessary, to talk back. We need strong men, and women too who will see in every obstacle an opportunity, in every difficulty a challenge, and in every block a stepping stone.

“We need men who dare to shout, ‘No!’ to the dictator’s demand for his vote. Tell him that you don’t want his five pounds or sack of flour. Tell him that you are fed up with the lecherous activities of the corrupt syndicate.

“If you accept the five pounds or sack of flour in exchange for your vote, soon the trumpet will blow and you will shout, ‘Which way is the promised land?’

“And the mocking voice of tyranny will reply, ‘You’ve had it brother. You’ve had it.’ Then you will realize the extent of your folly.

“But the expression of this clarion call for men needs the mind of the poet Holland who wrote:

*God, give us men! A time like this demands,
Strong hearts, true faith and ready hands;
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honour - men who will not lie!
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And damn his treacherous flattery without winking!
Tall men, sun crowned men, who live above the fog
In public duty and in private thinking."*

By February 17, 1956 - the expiring date of my farcical suspension from the Bahamas Bar - I was in the midst of an excitingly new career. Nevertheless, on that morning I marched up to Government House accompanied by a few of my longshoremen and demanded from His Excellency, The Governor, Lord Ranfurly, my Notary Public License. This was delivered to me that same afternoon, and my right to practise law was conceded with even less formality. Government obviously did not wish to clash with me, for the whole Suspension Case was an embarrassment to them. Further, as L. Walton Young had predicted, I had since become with God's help, "a much bigger man."

I was fortunate in renting from Dentist Hugh Johnson a one-story stone building on East Street complete with a huge basement. Therefore my law office on the main floor was only the respectable facade of the B. F. of L.'s underground kingdom. From that basement issued thousands of mimeographed leaflets on every conceivable topic, but none was more earthshaking than our Manifesto declaring Friday, June 1, 1956 as Labour Day.

The entire executive body of the B. F. of L. planned a mammoth parade to exhibit the strength and esprit-de-corps of the labour movement. At four o'clock on Labour Day, we would invite no less a person than His Excellency, The Governor - The Earl of Ranfurly himself, to address our workers' rally at the Southern Recreation Grounds.

When we later informed K. M. Walmsley, the Colonial Secretary of our plans, his heart literally jumped to his mouth, "Whoever heard of The Queen's Representative addressing a mass of sweaty rags and bones?"

"But Mr. Walmsley," I replied "there are some fine people in those unions. In time of war they are the first to take up arms in defense of their country. 'Greater love hath no man than he who lays down his life for his

friend.”

“I don’t care for your brand of oratory, Mr. Fawkes,” Mr. Walmsley interjected. “I have never heard of it before. It’s..... it’s in poor taste.”

“Well then, Mr. Walmsley,” I said matter-of-factly, “tell the Governor that if he refuses to speak to us on the Southern Recreation Grounds on Labour Day, we shall come to Government House to speak to him - 20,000 strong.”

The next day we received a letter from the Colonial Secretary informing us that His Excellency would be pleased to attend the workers’ rally and deliver an address.

With the Governor securely locked into the Labour Day programme, we sought to commemorate that historic occasion on June 1, 1942, when the workers of “Burma Road” united for a moment to dramatize their struggle for greater economic justice on the jobsite. For four months prior to the “big day,” we circulated literature billing it as “The Day of Freedom.”

All unions - the construction and general workers, the hotel and domestic employees, the longshoremen, street sweepers and garbage collectors and the staffs of airline and commercial companies were linked in a drive for an eight hour day and a forty-four hour week. Each member had an air of confidence, the awareness that is so often the nature of a visionary as he prepares to make his first cry, “I am,” to the world. The B. F. of L. was ready and determined to end the scourge of pitifully low wages and long hours, court-victimization, child labour on the lumber camps and massive inequality and discrimination everywhere.

Of all the out-door events, the Labour Day parade was the most complicated, the most time-consuming, the most back-breaking, frustrating and the most rewarding. As our Labour Day dawned, we learned that we were still at the mercy of an unpredictable factor. The weather threatened to drown out all our weeks and months of preparation.

At 12 o’clock noon on Friday, June 1, 1956 it started to rain. The down-pour continued to 12:30 p.m. as thousands of men, women and children dressed in their Sunday best assembled at Windsor Park and took their positions for the grand parade. Suddenly at 1:30 p.m. with no sign of a silver lining behind any of the dark clouds, a thunderous clapping and clamour went up from the massive crowd, “We want to march and we shall march.” And march we did to the music of three brass bands and the sound of the pita-pata

of raindrops on the pavements.

On reaching the top of East Street Hill, Stanley Toogood, our official photographer, remarked, "Randol, I think we have at least 20,000."

I turned around, and on observing the endless columns of humanity holding aloft the names of their various unions and the slogans of the Colony's developing labour movement, I replied, "It's beautiful Stanley; simply beautiful."

After the procession had gone a quarter of its designated route the clouds cleared, the rain halted and God's good sun smiled and gave us a warm embrace. As we walked the proud mile along Bay Street, the cheering throngs on the sidewalks and the new converts jumped in line and sang with us:

*On the first day of June we stood up against the foe,
And demanded FREEDOM NOW and that tyranny must go,
For we have seen the glory that's beyond the status quo,
For we won't be slaves anymore
SOLIDARITY FOREVER
SOLIDARITY FOREVER,
SOLIDARITY FOREVER,*



Our sisters march - Above, Idell Moss holds her placard high as she leads the women marching for "Bread, Peace and Freedom" on Labour Day.

FOR THE UNION MAKES US STRONG

It took the military genius of Austin Morris, the organizational ability of a carpenter - Arthur Leon Roach; the stick-to-it-ness of a Daniel Gibson and the

hotel workers president, Bartholomew Bastian and his devoted secretary Dudley Marshall plus the absolute loyalty of Ernest Williams, Richard Cooper, and Charles Linwood Austin - all dedicated men with rare abilities to lead and direct, to command and organize the separate parts into a composite whole - all marching out of the dark yesterdays into brighter tomorrows. The big parade became a symphony of motion.

As each contingent arrived on the Southern Recreation Grounds, the termination point of our parade, the crowds who were waiting for us, burst into spontaneous cheering. They greeted us with hugs and kisses, shaking hands, African style, until our arms grew weary.

After the music had faded into the background, I ascended the platform. Looking out at the colourful flags identifying each island from which the workers had come, I proceeded to recite Hovey's deathless poem:

*Not against war,
But against wrong,
League we in mighty bond from sea to sea,
Peace, when the world is free!
Peace when there is no thorn, fetter or bar!
No scourges for men's backs
No thumbscrews and no racks for body or soul,
No unjust Law,
No tyrannous control of brawn or maw
But, though that day be far,
Till then — WAR!*

As Labour's chief trouble shooter, I developed the theme:

“WAR against poverty and squalor!”

The crowd responded, “YES!”

“WAR against bigotry and injustice!”

“YES!”

“WAR against long hours and small pay!”

“YES!”

Then, almost as suddenly as it began, it stopped. An awesome quiet hov-

ered over the gathering as the bands played the British National Anthem - our National Anthem - *God save The Queen*. Men uncovered their heads while others stood erectly. After a few words of introduction by the President of the B. F. of L., Bill Mallory, His Excellency, The Governor spoke:

“I am grateful to your President, Mr. Mallory, for his opening remarks, and I would like to tell the officers and members of the Bahamas Federation of Labour that the invitation to come and address you here this afternoon was a welcomed one, not only for the fact that it was the first invitation that you had extended to me, but also because it is the earnest desire of my administration to maintain close touch with the growth of trade unions in this Colony and to advise them in whatever manner it is possible to do so. You have given me this first opportunity of expressing some views on trade unions to your youthful Federation and I am most grateful to you.

“Let me first touch upon what I believe to be the accepted objects of all Trade Unions. First, I would put the fact that a union enables working men to meet employers and bargain with them on equal terms. The second, to secure conditions of service which are consistent with the needs of each particular trade. Thirdly, to raise the standard of living. Fourthly, to work for proper arrangement for the health and safety of those employed. And finally, to provide for the welfare of fellow members who, through some cause, are deprived of means of livelihood.

“These are all the most worthy and admirable objects and it is an accepted fact throughout the world that Labour Unions are an essential part of the social machinery, creating as they do, points of close contact between employers and the employed, and making a truly significant contribution to the regulation of conditions of work and wages in particular and to the improvement of industrial relations in general.

“ The Colony is on the threshold of great economic expansion not only in Grand Bahama, Freeport area, but also in New Providence and some of the neighbouring islands. For the first time, one can see the probability of an economy based upon the twin pillars of tourism and industry - a balanced economy upon which a far greater reliance can be placed than what has been experienced up to the present time.

“For my part, I am convinced that it will bring with it in the end, the certainty of employment for every man in the Colony who is able and willing to accept employment on reasonable conditions. And when I say reasonable con-

ditions, I don't mean only the conditions of work within the industries or trades, whatever they may be, but also the proper modern conditions for the operation of trade unions and for the settlement of trade disputes.

“More than anything, one can assist the economic expansion, and encourage those who are willing to invest in the future of the Colony and provide employment for its people, and that is the attitude of the working people of the Colony, as may be shown, for instance, through the actions of the elected leaders of the Federation. If these actions are responsible, reasonable and constructive, and if the virtues that I have mentioned are borne in mind, then I have no doubt that a greater prosperity than these islands have ever known lies just around the corner. I leave this thought with you, and once again would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to address you here this evening.”

Although His Excellency, Lord Ranfurly, was soon to return to London, his Labour Day message would remain with us for a long time as it gave the entire movement a fresh impetus.

Next, Ken Sterling brought fraternal greetings to us from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, an organization representing more than



The author looks on as Mr. Ken Sterling is introduced to His Excellency, Lord Ranfurly on Labour Day, 1956.

seventy-five million workers. Sterling, being a Jamaican trade union leader, also represented the interest of the Caribbean region in what was taking place in The Bahamas. Also on the programme were brothers Sam Stubbs, Errol Jackson and Alexander Grant, a gospel trio, who assured us that we “were on our way up to Canaan Land.” But whether speech or song, they all gave eloquent testimony of the B. F. of L.’s total commitment to BREAD, PEACE and FREEDOM.

Labour Day, therefore, burst on the Bahamian scene amidst applause that sounded like a clatter of thunder. A loaf of bread was happily symbolic of our economic goals. Peace based on social justice was essential if every man and woman were to become all that he or she was capable of being, and freedom meant more than the right to express oneself and join unions; it included the right of the labouring masses to participate fully in the social, cultural and political life of the country. We sang a new song:

*In our hands is placed a power greater than their boarded gold,
Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand fold,
We shall bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old,
For the Union makes us strong.*

CHORUS

SOLIDARITY FOREVER



Hotel workers on the march for more jobs.

THESE GOALS FIT THE PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL
PROGRAM



A NATIONAL BANK

A BUREAU DEAL FOR THE MASSES

ANTI-CORRUPTION LAW

A COURT OF APPEAL FOR THE COAST

TOUR PLANNING: DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTHERN CURRENCY

FARMER DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY'S WASTE

DEMOCRACY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WEST INDIES
FREE TRADE AND WIDE EXPORTS

STABILIZATION OF OUR ISLAND STRUCTURE

BETTER REPRESENTATION OF THE MASSES IN PUBLIC OFFICES OF THE ISLAND

NEW LABOR LAWS: OLD AGE PENSIONS AND HEALTH INSURANCE; WORKMAN'S COMPENSATION

WRITERS CONSTITUTION BASED ON UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE AND PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION



BRUNSON, H. P.,
1200000,
2424 FORTWORTH, 1956.

DEAR FRIEND,

The time is ripe and loud when you shall have to choose whether you want progress or whether you want stagnation!

As candidates of The Progressive Liberal Party we stand four square behind the dreams, hopes and aspirations of our people; for we realize that only by working together as a team can we overcome the numerous obstacles that have in the past bound us hand and foot, **WE ARE DETERMINED TO BREAK THESE CHAINS!**

The crime for which we expire is the -state of Righteousness. This -crime is too big for anyone of us to win alone. We are therefore asking you to join hands with us in order that together we, as a people, may take our rightful place in our native land.

IT IS TIME FOR A CHANGE!

Yours very sincerely,

THE CANDIDATES FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT.

STONEY-ON-LAW
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW
YOU SHOULD KNOW YOUR
GOVERNMENT. ONE OF THE FOUNDERS
OF THE PEOPLE'S FIRST SAVINGS
BANK, LTD., ONE OF THE FOUNDERS
OF THE NATIONAL PRODUCTION OF
LAWNS, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE
VICTORIA SPORTING CLUB AND ONE
OF THE FIRST TO BRING OLD SCOTLAND
ASSOCIATION.

A leaflet distributed during the election campaign of 1956.

This was the way we felt at the time and, truth to tell; we have never, ever felt otherwise.

In the meantime, the Progressive Liberal Party was making itself felt. A CHALLENGE TO BE MET, the first political platform ever in the Colony, was printed and widely distributed before the election and successfully launched the P.L.P. in the political arena. This programme of principles and policies gave definiteness and point to the vague ideas floating around. It demanded among other things, universal suffrage, a balanced budget and a more efficient civil service. We wanted better educational and medical facilities for all people, improvement of roads and mail services, the promised incorporation of the City of Nassau as a prerequisite for local government and the removal of the burden of administration from the shoulders of the poor and the placing of it on the shoulders of those who received the greatest benefit from the revenues of the Colony and consequently were better able to bear it.

The party's national song was written by two Roman Catholic brothers, Joseph McBain Johnson and Bosfield Johnson. As Woodie Woodside sang the words, he sent them into every campaign meeting to stir the hearts of men and women:

*From Andros to Exuma across the deep blue sea,
From Bimini to Mayaguana we're good men true
And we're joining hands, we're marching for what is good and true,
Beneath our flag that stands for right the white and royal blue*

CHORUS

*We're marching, marching, marching for justice and right,
We're marching, marching P.L.P.'s shining bright,-
From North to South from East to West our Party's flag is flying best,
We're marching together, these Islands shall be free;
We're marching forward, marching, marching in the P.L.P.*

Our hearts burst with pride as we sang. But Election 1956 was something more than a song; something more than a flag. It was a spirit of former slaves yearning to be free. In those days, election bribery was a way of life. The monster was bigger than the red flag of the B.F. of L. or the blue and white flag of the P.L.P.

“You visit the homes the night before election. Money, sacks of flour, bottles of rum, peas and corn are given to the people and they vote the way you want,” said an election official in Fresh Creek, Andros. “I see nothing wrong with the system. It has always been that way. The voter,” he continued, “has always been for sale to the highest bidder.”

But Andros Island was preparing a surprise for the Bay Street merchants. Androsians were the first to take an independent stand against election bribery and corruption. On election eve, a group of voters swam out to the white candidates’ yachts and threw overboard a full cargo of rum, peas, rice, lard, flour— election lucre. The sleeping giant, the largest in The Bahamas chain, was about to stir.

In the Eastern District of New Providence, where our own Samuel Isaacs was running, the old guard sent out a cry in desperation: “Send me two hundred sandwiches (two hundred pounds) the price for two hundred votes.”

Some bosses tore the pound notes in half and gave one half to the voter before election date; the voter then agreed to kick the secret ballot and vote openly. After the election, the voter would claim the entire note by matching his half with the half retained by the political boss.

In West End, Grand Bahama, two persons were to be nominated to contest the parliamentary election: one white; the other, black. On the eve of nomination day, the white man paid the black man one thousand pounds plus a return ticket for Miami, Florida U.S A. The following day, the white candidate was acclaimed the winner unopposed.

Exactly one week after the Labour Day parade - Friday, June 8, 1956 - Lynden O. Pindling and I were swept into Parliament on the crest of the wave of popular vote. When all the dust had settled the P.L.P. polled one third of the total votes cast, yet in the House of Assembly, we won only six of the twenty-nine parliamentary seats. This was disproportional representation on a grand scale. For the next five years, the P.L.P. and the B.F. of L. were to be the eyes, the ears and the voices of the poor and dispossessed.

For me, it was a magnificent journey. I was grateful for all the detours along the way. They gave me time to prepare myself for the heavy tasks that lay ahead.

On June 9, 1956, I received a letter from Rev. Edwin L. Taylor. He himself, a victim of discrimination by the Spanish Wells Methodist Church, described

with what emotions he viewed the recent events:



The Magnificent Six - The first six members of the P.L.P. to be elected to Parliament. Seated from left: Randol Fawkes (the author), Cyril Stevenson and Clarence A. Bain, Standing, from left are: Lynden O. Pindling, Milo B. Butler and Samuel Isaacs.

My Dear Randol,

In offering our sincerest congratulations to you on being elected by the people of the Southern District of New Providence we should like to include Jacqueline in this word of high esteem to you. Truly, it may be said in your case: "Cherchez la femme."

I called at your office on Tuesday on the eve of my return to Cat Is., but saw Jackie and your father and was able to offer them my congratulations on your obvious preferment to the senior membership in the House for the Southern District even before the elections were held.

Two years could have been a long time of worry; instead, they were two years of needed preparation, and you have had the insight and the foresight, as you told me in the beginning, to make the best of them. You are to be congratulated on a moral triumph as well as a political victory.

As you know, Bay Street is afraid of the power which you can now have as head of a powerful labour union and a member of the House. I fail to see why they are afraid. But let me say this: when Churchill sent General Templer to Malaya he said to him, "I give you full power, but power is heavy stuff." Templer did a brilliant job. You will, of course, remember that while you will always have the love and respect of the workers, you may have rivalry from the officers; that may be inevitable.

The former Senior Representative of this Island, in conversation with me here a few days ago, told me how Bay Street was afraid of the power that could be yours. I reassured him that you would be the senior member and that nothing could stop that. He says that they are now making deals to bring capital to the islands and your labour unions would cause them to withdraw before they left the U.S. and other places in order to avoid income tax and to come to a place where there were no labour unions. I replied by telling him that you had common sense and discretion. I also had to remind him of



32-40-101 St
St Albans 69
July 18/56

My Dear Ran

I received your very nice letter. It always makes me very happy to hear from you. The day I got your letter, I received one from Bill at the same time. I notice by both of your letters that both of you still remember the days and nights when we used to have our family prayers together. I am happy to know that

you are relying on the
Master for faith and
guidance. Our faith ~~has~~^{has}
been severely tried. But
he is the same. God mother
always put her trust
in. Those who will conquer
first must be overcome.
I am thanking him for
his kindness to us. We
are all well over here.
Your Dad is here with
us. He is still ^{telling} me or us
about you and the election.
The P & P on the whole.
He is very happy over your
come-back. So Ran never
look behind continue to
go forward. Mother is
always behind you with
her prayers. Please give
my very best regards
and congratulations to
Jackie. Kiss the children
write again soon.

Love mother

Letter from Mother

the Bethel case, your two year suspension and the refusal of the Governor to see anyone but Cambridge in a petition that you made. This, he had all forgotten. However, you must make the labour unions succeed and do all in your power to temper your success to win the goodwill of both the unions and the ordinary man in the street who is now looking to you for a lead. You have a grand opportunity, and as I said to you two years

CHAPTER VII

* A MIGHTY MEEKNESS *

Guess who was glad to see me a member of Parliament? Guess who gave me two sons, Francis and Douglas, and one daughter, Rosalie? Guess who inspired the starry-eyed dreamer to recite love sonnets all day long?

I love you not only for what you are,
But for what I am when I'm with you;
I love you not only for what you are making of yourself,
But for what you are making of me.

Guessing time is finished.

“Jackie?”

“Who else?”

On each of our anniversaries I drew a heart on a sheet of paper. With a lighted candle I singed its edges. Under the heart I scribbled, of course with apologies to John Donne: “Ask me not for whom my heart burns, for it burns for thee.”

She called me, “The Poet.”

I called her, “The Poem.”

From that first brief rhapsody in April, 1948, I felt that our lives were meant to complement each other. Where I was anxious and impulsive, she was patient and contemplative. I needed a mooring for my restless spirit, an anchor for my wandering soul. I found both in Jackie.

One bright sunny noonday in July 1956, the sleek black Cadillac of the Taxi-Cab Union glided down Bay Street and parked opposite the House of Assembly where thousands awaited the opening of Parliament. Mrs. Jacqueline Fawkes, appropriately attired for the occasion, alighted from the automobile and stepped briskly across the street. Escorting her was a character right out of 18th century England. In spite of the 90-degree temperature, he wore heavy, suede shoes, woolen, black, pencil-striped trousers, and waistcoat, tailcoat, top hat (derby) and cane!



The author and his wife at the opening of parliament, 1956

“Who?”

Modesty prevents me from mentioning his name. But the crowds could not keep a secret, not even for a minute. They detected all the mannerisms of their Labour Leader and applauded vociferously.

When we were children, to dress in the clothes and hats of our parents was a standard joke. Our elders laughed when we mimicked them. But on July 7th, 1956, as we - six M.P's - paraded in the traditional garb of our colonial masters, we were dead serious. Protocol demanded top hat and tails for the morning meetings of Parliament and tuxedos or shell coats for the evenings. This was a part of the elitist psychology of putting some distance between lords of the land and the commoners. After over two hundred years of Colonialism, we had adopted the British language, dress and customs as our own. At times we out-British the British.

When the crowds saw L. O. Pindling and me together with our four colleagues - Milo B. Butler, the salesman and firebrand; Clarence A. Bain, the Bible-quoting orator, sponger and salesman; Cyril S. Stevenson, the fearless editor of the *Herald*; and Samuel Isaacs, the plumber and soldier of fortune, they could not contain their pride. They shouted in staccato fashion “P.L.P.!”

The heavens reverberated with the people's response, “ALL-THE-WAY!”

The opening of Parliament was always a colorful ceremony. It was at this time that His Excellency, The Governor took the royal salute and inspected the uniformed Guard of Honor. Members of the Governor's Executive Council and others members of the House of Assembly marched to the Legislative Council Chambers for the speech from the Throne which would present the Government's programme for the current session.

But the 1956 Parliamentary session was of special significance to the Bahamian masses. It was the first time in all our long history that the Negro opposition to white minority rule was ever united under one political banner - the Progressive Liberal Party and liberally supported by one crusading and singing Labour Movement - the Bahamas Federation of Labour.

“The Magnificent Six,” as we were called, were a unique institution in Bahamian politics. The people looked to us for an alternative policy even before we were elected. Now as Her Majesty's loyal opposition, we became the keepers of the Colony's conscience. What a challenge to our sense of accountability!

After the formal opening of Parliament by His Excellency, The Governor, the Leader of the white minority, without benefit of a political party and without prior notice to the Leader of the Opposition, seized every Select Committee on every conceivable subject matter. Of course, this was done in an effort to steal the Opposition's thunder. Hitherto, the House had functioned like an ivy-league club where each member usually became the chairman of the Select Committee he proposed. But now, with all the chairmanships locked in one fist, the six opposition members were prevented from helping their constituencies or anybody else; at least, so they thought.

The morning's business completed, the House adjourned to its customary Monday meeting at 8 o' clock hoping that by then the people's love for the P. L. P. and Labour would have died down. But on Monday night, July 16, and on every subsequent adjournment, large crowds could be seen chasing Stafford Lofthouse Sands and other white minority members until policemen were compelled to escort government leaders to and from the House of Assembly. As tensions continued to rise, the distraught Government decided early in August, 1956 to close Parliament for the balance of the year.

By the long adjournment, Government had hoped to frustrate all attempts at political, economic and social reform, but they did not reckon with the resourcefulness of the massive poor. On the same night of the adjournment, Milo Boughton Butler and I launched the Crusade for Freedom Fund on the Southern Recreation Grounds. The P.L.P.'s Women's Auxiliary presented their Chairman, H. M. Taylor with a brand new pair of shoes and a new suit. Together we dispatched him and L. O. Pindling and Milo Butler to London to put the people's case for reforms before the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

We knew that we could count on the British Labour Party and Fenner Brockway's Movement for Colonial Freedom for support, but unfortunately, it was the Conservative Party, which was then in power. The Bay Street Boys would not be outdone. They sent a delegation to Westminster, London to seek ways and means to "keep the Negroes in their place." Upon their return to The Bahamas, they formed the conservative counterpart to the P.L.P. and called it: The United Bahamian Party. This new entity on the Bahamian horizon had neither constitution nor platform but its principles and policies were summed up by the Honorable C. W. F. Bethell, the Colony's biggest rum merchant: "We mean to pass down this Colony to our white children in a stronger position than when we inherited it from our forefathers."

In the meantime, I drafted bills for the 1957 session of the House and inten-

sified the B. F. of L.'s membership drive. The Labour Movement was something more than a mere trade union. It embraced not only the industrial objectives of the working class but also many of its educational, socio-economic and political ideals, all of which were anti colonialist in nature. The B. F. of L. and the P. L. P. often shared a common membership and a common goal and each stood to benefit from the cross-pollination of the other.

On February 4th, 1957, I introduced in the House of Assembly a Bill to amend the law with respect to disqualifications on account of sex. The object of the proposal was to remove sex as a barrier to women serving on juries and their occupying certain public offices. Godfrey Kelly, a member of the old guard, countered by having the bill sent to a Select Committee where it died an unnatural death.

On April 8th, 1957, I moved the second reading of the modern Representation of the People Bill. The measure took cognizance of the recent birth of party government and sought to establish, among other things, universal adult suffrage. As a counter-attack, the United Bahamian Party's minion, Stafford Lofthouse Sands, moved an amendment; this time that the bill "be read this day six months." His motion was carried 23 to 6, the exact division between the parties.

A similar fate was accorded each piece of Labour legislation. The Magnificent Six could outdistance the United Bahamian Party in every way. Sometimes the Opposition was allowed to talk six or seven hours on end without Government saying one word. When the speechmaking was finished we



First Delegation - Cyril Stevenson, at left, bids goodbye to H.M. Taylor, L.O. Pindling and Milo B. Butler, who constituted the first P.L.P. delegation to London.

learned, the hard way, that the best repartee is a big majority.

Early in July 1957, I led a strike for more wages among Government's street sweepers, garbage collectors and truck drivers. After a few days, Bay Street started to smell; what was more, every night our members dumped just a little bit more trash on the main thoroughfare for effect. Government threatened to dismiss all those on strike unless they returned to work immediately. So effective was the solidarity of the members that no one in the whole community attempted to work in their places.

Seeing this, Government then referred the wage dispute to a Labour Board consisting of Leonard J. Knowles, a lawyer, and four other employers, but we refused to state our case to a panel on which the workers had no representative. This panel was immediately abandoned and replaced by a tripartite Labour Board with an impartial chairman. This done, our brothers returned to work upon the written assurance that they would receive their requested increases. At our next convention, I was elected President of the industrial union.

The B. F. of L. had outgrown my law office basement on East Street North. We now occupied the whole of the second floor of Bodie's Building on Wulff Road, the Harlem of The Bahamas. Our foreign contacts included affiliation with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the Inter-American Organization of Workers and its Caribbean affiliate whose headquarters was situated in Trinidad.

But despite the undoubted progress of the B. F. of L., Bahamian Labour laws still remained in brutal conflict with the fundamental concept of the International Labour Organization that all people should be free to join unions of their choice. The fact that Bahamian hotel, agricultural and domestic workers could not engage in collective bargaining, made them an easy prey for unscrupulous employers. All efforts of the Magnificent Six to persuade the House to remove this anomaly from the statute books had thus far ended in failure.

"Mr. Speaker," I inquired, "are hotel and agricultural workers different from other human beings in that they should be singled out for denial of freedom of association?"

Holding aloft a contract drafted in the offices of Messrs Peter Graham & Company, attorneys for the British Colonial Hotel, I continued, "Mr. Speaker, this is what each Bahamian must sign before he is given a job in that hotel. It

reads: 'I HEREBY AGREE AS A CONDITION OF MY EMPLOYMENT AT THE BRITISH COLONIAL HOTEL:

- (I) To notify Management if I see, have cause to know or believe that any employee is removing from the premises any property belonging to the hotel;
- (ii) To work by the hour, day, week or month at any wage fixed by the hotel;
- (iii) That this contract may be terminated at the will of the employer without notice;
- (iv) If, at any time, during my employment, the Management desires to search my person, locker, residence, clothing and effects, I will submit to such examination without objection and I hereby waive all claims for damages in case of loss or injury caused during such examination.

Signature of Employee.....

Signature of Dept. Head.....

Signature of Manager.....

Date19.....'

“Mr. Speaker, if slavery is the ownership of one person by another, then this is slavery indeed.

“The agricultural workers, who have been toiling on the American farms since the outbreak of the Second World War, fare no better. They are the only people in the whole Colony, Mr. Speaker, who will pay two and one half per cent income tax. Furthermore, it is impossible for these workers to get, upon their return to The Bahamas, a true accounting of their monies which were deducted from their wages by Government under its compulsory savings plan.

“Although, Mr. Speaker, farm laborers pay income tax, the rich pay none. The wealthy pay no corporation tax, no withholding tax, no capital gains tax, no estate tax, no death or succession duties. In no place in the world, Mr. Speaker, are the rich pampered so lavishly at the expense of the poor.”

Then, in the tradition of Cicero, I asked three rhetorical questions:

“When, Mr. Speaker, will the western side of this House of Assembly cease to try our patience?”

“How long, Mr. Speaker is this madness of theirs to mock our efforts to restore dignity and self respect to Labour?”

“Do they not see, Mr. Speaker, that the laboring masses are mobilizing to demand their rights as first class citizens?”

“Mr. Speaker, I still believe, even at this late hour, that there can be peace among the races but that peace must be based on social justice.

“Mr. Speaker, time is fast running out. The lamp of liberty burns low.

“Mr. Speaker, if an end is not put to these massive injustices, there will be trouble in this land!”

Before I could sit, Stafford Lofthouse Sands, was on his feet. “Mr. Speaker,” he harangued, “if there is going to be trouble, I say, let it come, Mr. Speaker, let it come. We are ready. We can handle it.

“Mr. Speaker,” Mr. Sands continued, “if an investigation were made into the conditions of hotel workers, it would be discovered that they are not laboring in chains as the Labour member would have you believe.

“Mr. Speaker, Bahamian hotel and agricultural workers are the highest paid in the British Caribbean,” Mr. Sands emphasized, “if they were given the right to organize, the Colony would lose its tourist business. The tourists come to our shores to see the sights, to see the diving boys and to bask in the Old World charm. They don’t want to be embroiled in Labour disputes.”

The next Speaker was Milo Boughton Butler, the John Brown of the Bahamas. As God’s angry man, he had placed his gigantic physique and thunderous voice at the service of the poor and downtrodden. T.N.T. was his vocal trademark and he used it often. In the 1935 General Elections, Milo, at the head of a sweaty mass of rabble-rousers, unceremoniously stormed the gates of Her Majesty’s Prison and demanded and won the immediate release of Joe E. Brown and Ernest Clarke, two natives who had been unjustly detained. In 1956, in keeping with our election promises, Milo and I marched into the Royal Bank of Canada, the Bank of Nova Scotia and Barclays Bank (D.C.O.) and demanded and won employment for Bahamians for positions other than janitors and charwomen. So great was Milo’s faith in God and courage that when I was with him, I felt that I had an army at my side.

As Milo rose to speak, the Bay Street clique stood and started to make their exit to the Smokers' Room as Stafford Lotfhouse Sands, their leader, turned and shouted, "Mr. Speaker, we don't want to hear anything from the quarter."

"But when we take over government, Mr. Speaker, they will have to hear us," Milo quickly responded.

"When he takes over government, Mr. Speaker," Sands said contemptuously, "I will leave the Colony."

"Mr. Speaker," Milo roared, "if they don't listen to the cries of the poor for relief, the day will come when Bay Street will walk knee-deep in blood."

In spite of Milo's pugnacity and the cool logic of Brother L. O. Pindling, the United Bahamian Party returned to the Debating Chamber of the House long enough to vote down any hope we might have entertained for Labour reform.

Feeling secure that the P. L. P. and the B. F. of L. would be only another seven-day wonder, big corporations like the Grand Bahama Port Authority and the Royal Bank of Canada continued their hiring of foreigners in preference to Bahamians. Mr. Tuck, the General Superintendent of construction in Freeport was speaking on behalf of all employers when he told Cecil Hepburn, the President of the Grand Bahama Union, "Go into the village. Destroy your union and when you are finished, return to me and swear allegiance to Freeport and Freeport alone. Then, perhaps, you may find a job."

Our next thrust was to indict the United Kingdom, the metropolitan government responsible for the Colony of the Bahamas before the United Nations, on a charge of rank violation of trade union freedoms. When even this failed to produce results, Shervin Bain and I pressed thousands of hotel and agricultural workers into the B. F. of L. and prepared them for the confrontation that was sure to come.

It came on Sunday, January 12, 1958, when the false social and economic facade of The Bahamas was shaken to its foundations. On that day colonial arrogance and the free trade union solidarity locked horns in what was surely the most dramatic and most successful general strike in Caribbean history.

The original dispute surfaced on November 1, 1957, as a result of Government's granting to the white tour companies the exclusive franchise to operate transportation services between the new Nassau International Airport and the City. To cope with this lion's share of the business, the tour companies purchased a fleet of cars and buses and informed members of the Bahamas

Taxi-Cab Union, their former employees, that their services were no longer required. The officers of the union wandered, in vain, from “pillar to post” in search of a government department who would listen to their grievances.

So in desperation on Saturday November 1, 1957 the Taxi-Cab Union under the leadership of Clifford Darling, Nick Musgrove, Lochinvar Lockhart, Jimmy Shepherd, Cyril Ferguson and Wilbert Moss blocked all traffic to and from Nassau International Airport for hours while the Commissioner and his policemen looked on helplessly.

On Sunday afternoon November 2nd, the Bahamas Taxi-Cab Union called on the Bahamas Federation of Labour for assistance. The B. F. of L.'s Airport, Airline and Allied Workers acting under the instructions of Brothers Cadwell Armbrister, Clement Pinder and Anthony Roberts, responded with a sympa-



Opening Sessions - Members of the House of Assembly proceed to the Legislative Council Chamber to hear His Excellency, The Governor's speech, opening a new session of the Legislature. Above, from left are: Eugene A.P. Dupuch, R.T. Symonette, Gerald C. Cash, Dr. Raymond Sawyer, Joseph Albury, John Bethell, Peter Bethell, Leonard Thompson, Foster Clarke, Clarence A. Bain, Lynden O. Pindling, Samuel Isaacs, Donald d'Albenas, Milo Butler and Randol Fawkes (author).

thetic two-hour strike. This action achieved an eight-week truce during which the Taxi Union and tour companies were to negotiate a peaceful settlement of their grievances.

Negotiations had hardly begun when over thirty taxi drivers were hauled into court, charged and, in some cases, convicted of assault against police officers and breaches of traffic regulations during the November 1st demonstration. This did not have the intended effect. It served only to embolden the resolve of the union to fight this issue to the end.

During the following eight weeks, an improvised transportation committee under the chairmanship of the Attorney General L. A. W. Orr, convened conferences between representatives of both parties. Out of the twenty-point memorandum produced by the committee, nineteen were agreed. Point 20, the exclusive right of the tour companies to transport passengers from the City to airport in unlicensed cars of their own choice still evaded resolution. Point 20 sounded the death-knell to the taxi cab drivers' livelihood particularly in cases where the drivers had mortgaged their homes to purchase automobiles.

At the end of the eight weeks truce, Government, with its peculiar bias, issued a statement supporting the white tour companies and warned all and sundry that in the event of any interference it would enforce law and order to the fullest extent. The Taxi-Cab Union appealed to the B. F. of L. for help. Again, the Federation advised that point 20 should be submitted to a tripartite Arbitration Tribunal consisting of:

- One person appointed by the Taxi-Cab Union;
- One person appointed by the tour companies; and
- One independent person agreed upon by the parties.



Clifford Darling
Taxi Cab Union leader



Saul Campbell
Shop Steward of Hotel Union



Anthony Roberts
Leader B.F. of L.'s Airline
Workers' Union

The union appointed me as their representative on the Tribunal. Government and the tour companies objected vehemently. They also took the opportunity to widen the terms of reference to include not only point 20 but also points 13 and 14 on which agreement had already been reached. This new stance of the tour companies literally nullified the whole eight weeks of negotiations.

Therefore at 9:30 p.m. Brother Pindling and I called at Government House. We urged His Excellency, The Governor, Sir Oswald Raynor Arthur, to appoint A Royal Commission Inquiry to study the facts of the dispute and to make recommendations, but Government turned a deaf ear to our pleas.

With no hope of settlement in sight, Clifford Darling, the President of the Taxi-Cab Union, dispatched the following letter to the B. F. of L.

January 10th 1958

*The Bahamas Federation of Labour,
P. O. Box 461,
Nassau.*

Gentlemen,

I have been directed by the Executive Board of the Bahamas Taxi-Cab Union to officially request the active assistance and support of the Bahamas Federation of Labour in the current dispute between our union and the tour company operators.

The assistance of the Federation is urgently needed. The situation is very grave indeed, as negotiations have completely broken down. The Bahamas Taxi-Cab Union has no other recourse but to appeal to you.

The Union will be expecting a reply with the speed commensurate to the urgency of the situation.

Yours faithfully,

CLIFFORD DARLING.

The B. F. of L.'s response to Brother Darling's call for help was swift. Our National Executive Board would seek the approval of all our branches and affiliate unions for a resolution to launch a General Strike to protest the denial of freedom of association to hotel and agricultural workers and to provide support for the cause of the Bahamas Taxi-Cab Union, and for Labor's struggle

generally for greater dignity and self-respect on the jobsite.

At 11:00 p.m. on January 12, 1958, I observed candles and lampshades being lighted in the houses in the deep South as young men and women in their late teens and early 20's joined common cause with old men and old women as they moved in the darkness towards the Federation Hall.

By 11:30 p.m. all the benches and aisles and spaces in between were filled until the hall could hold not even one more person. The overflow was therefore directed to the Taxi Union Building situated 100 yards away on the northern side of Wulff Road where another meeting was being held simultaneously.

Promptly at one minute after midnight, our special meeting was opened with a prayer by Rev. Henry Wright.

I took as my theme "Once in the Life of Every Man and Nation Comes the Moment to Decide."

I hid nothing from my brothers and sisters. They knew the purpose of the meeting. They realized that failure in what we were about to do could mean certain jail sentences for some; and for the ringleaders, even worse.

I recalled the experiences of the children of Israel and how, despite the stubbornness of Pharaoh, they struck out for freedom. I made reference to the recent bus strike in Montgomery, Alabama, of Martin Luther King Jr. and others, and told them that if they listened carefully they could still hear the marching feet of their brothers and sisters in Africa as they declared the independence of Ghana.

"And now," I continued, "it is time to separate the men from the boys and the women from the girls. It is time that the world should know whether the Bahamians have backbones or just a piece of gristle.

"If there is anyone who has no stomach for the battle, we invite him or her to do the noble thing and leave now; and nothing will be said. But for those who remain with us and pray with us and think with us and fight with us, I assure you that in the future when your children kneel to say their prayers, they will thank their God for what their fathers and their mothers have done this night to secure their freedom."

Not one brother or sister moved. The motion was therefore put, seconded and unanimously carried that the B. F. of L. "should call a General Strike to

aid the Taxi Union and to dramatize the fight of all Bahamians for greater dignity and self-respect on the jobsite through decent wages and better working conditions.”

After the vote, the whole of the Federation Hall repeated, individually and collectively, the following pledge:

“I hereby pledge that I will not divulge any of the decisions or business of the B. F. of L. to any person who is not a member. I will work for and support the free trade union movement so that my brothers and sisters may win for themselves a decent wage scale and better working conditions. I will not hurt or injure my brother or sister or see him or her hurt or injured if it is in my power to prevent it. To all this I pledge my most sacred honor.”

After the decision Sam Stubbs, our music director, led this spirit-filled congregation in singing:

*In our hands is placed a power greater than their boarded gold,
Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand-fold;
We can bring to birth a New World from the ashes of the old,
For the UNION makes us strong.*

CHORUS

SOLIDARITY FOREVER etc.

I retired at about 3 a.m. after that call for help and the taking of the vote. At 5:01 a.m. there was a rap on the door. It was Cecil Thompson alias Copperhead. He informed me, “The workers have reported for picket duty. They are at Federation and Taxi-Union Halls awaiting your instructions.”

At about 7a.m. January 12, 1958, Brother Pindling and I entered Emerald Beach Hotel; rested our hands on the right shoulder of Saul Campbell, Chief Shop Steward of the Hotel Workers’ Union and whispered, “NOW!” This password re-echoed throughout the length and breadth of New Providence as our comrades performed similar ceremonies in other hotels.

The strike could not have been better timed. It was the height of the season. All pots and pans, some cleaned, some dirty, remained where they were. Beds, only half-spread, were abandoned, breakfast which had been prepared was never served, for all waiters, cooks, bellboys, maids and chefs had decided to strike and to seek answers to their outstanding demands for higher wages and better working conditions. But the irony of this hotel walk-out was that

in spite of the statutory restriction on the unionization of hotel and domestic workers, the Bahamas Federation of Labour had not only organized our brothers and sisters, but had now called on them to “strike” for the “right to strike.”

By Monday January 13th, 1958, every major hotel in this tourist-oriented city was closed down tightly and both owners and workers prepared themselves for a long siege.

Our man at Fort Montague Beach Hotel was Lionel Brown. At Royal Victoria Hotel it was Cleveland Rodgers alias “Boozie”; at British Colonial Hotel, Berkley Ferguson, and at the Dolphin Hotel Captain Eddie Stubbs. And there were many other common people who displayed uncommon courage in challenging the immoral foundation on which British Colonialism was built.

On our way from the hotels, Brother Pindling and I decided that the students at the Government High School should be apprised of the situation. Perhaps, they would want to demonstrate in sympathy with the workers’ cause; at least, this is what we hoped.

We were in luck. In the southeastern corner of the campus, the top class was studying literature without a teacher. Among the thirty students were Perry Christie, B. Nottage and Dwight Glover. We seized the opportunity and explained the issues to them. Next, I led the students in the singing of the second stanza of my own composition

BAHAMAS - GLORIOUS HOMELAND,

*Full well we love our islands and sea of sapphire blue,
Our homes and schools and churches, our unions good and true;
With these let no man trespass or rest the tyrant’s hand,
Lest we shall fight forever, ’till freedom fills the land.*

We had scarcely finished singing when we observed our old Headmaster himself, Dr. A. Deans Peggs, lumbering toward us. Panting and out of breath he said, “I can hardly believe my eyes and ears that you two, former students of this school will disrupt my classes.”

“The students are enjoying themselves,” I responded.

“We were merely acquainting them with the social and economic realities of the day,” Pindling added.

Dr. Peggs invited us into the school building. On attaining the security of his office he asserted, “Both of you should know that I shall not allow the singing of political songs in this school.”

“But, Dr. Peggs,” rebutted Brother Pindling, “GOD SAVE THE QUEEN is a political song if ever we have heard one.”

The heart of Dr. Peggs rushed to his mouth. He was visibly upset by Pindling’s repartee. On regaining his composure, Dr. Peggs invited us to leave.

“We will go. But soon we shall sing our own National Anthem written by our own Bahamian in this Government High School,” I said as we went out of the door.

On January 14, 1958, I received the following telegram from Sir Vincent Tewson, the General Secretary of the powerful British Trades Union Congress: “DON’T CALL GENERAL STRIKE. STOP IT WILL RUIN ALL THAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO IN LONDON TO HELP THE BAHAMIAN WORKERS.”

But the power of the free trade union movement had already been unleashed; the die had been cast and the destiny determined. We could not turn back.

On Tuesday, January 14th, 1958, the strike had spread. Employees of the Bahamas Electricity Corporation, street sweepers, garbage collectors, clerks, messengers, construction workers - all had joined the Bahamas Federation of Labour in the struggle for a squarer deal for the working man through union recognition and collective bargaining.

At 10:05 on January 14th, renewed tension accompanied the opening of Parliament after the long adjournment. At any other time His Excellency, The Governor, would have been greeted with cheers and flag waving. But times had since changed. The returning farm workers from America brought back with them ideas and experiences of race consciousness and labour unionism, of democracy and the right to vote and of governments toppled and changed overnight. To the new Bahamian, the British monarchy and the white colonial administration were no longer sacred cows. It was now time for the black man’s voice to be heard in all the halls of justice and in Parliament.

So as the Governor alighted from his limousine in all his feathers and trappings, boos and catcalls greeted him on every side as the Police Band played “OH! THE MONKEY WRAPPED HIS TAIL AROUND THE FLAG POLE.” This was the first time within living memory that a Royal Governor had been so treated. Ken Sterling, a Caribbean trade unionist, later remarked that the Bahamian people were making a “boo boo” out of British Colonialism.

His Excellency proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber and there he addressed the Colony’s legislators on the Government’s programme for the ses-

sion. As usual, the crowd was expectant. The people waited patiently for a hint on constitutional change to fall from the lips of the Chief Executive, but none was forthcoming.

Later the same day, Tuesday, January 14, 1958, the Airline Workers Union went on strike because management had refused to consider a draft Collective Bargaining Agreement submitted by the union five months ago. At the same time, the B. F. of L. and P. L. P. launched an all-out boycott of Bay Street shops. Both of these efforts were successful and within a few short hours, the New Providence Airport resembled a graveyard and Bay Street, a ghost town. According to the Honorable Asa H. Pritchard, Speaker of the House of Assembly and one of the representative merchants on Bay Street, they were losing at least eighty-five percent of their business each day because of the boycott and strike.

In the history of Labour Unionism, there is no record of a general strike without casualties. The story of the workers movement is written in blood, broken skulls and spines. In this strike, however, the philosophy of a Mighty Meekness brought a new sense of dignity and self-respect to the Bahamian.

Every night at Windsor Park, thousands participated in prayer meetings. At the end of the prayers, Brother Joseph Zonicle, the Assistant General Secretary of the B. F. of L. would read a Psalm; then Sam Stubbs sang, BAHAMAS — GLORIOUS HOMELAND. The tune—*The Church's One Foundation*—and the lyrics particularly of the third stanza, struck a sympathetic chord in the hearts of the various generations of workers and gave them all a lift:

*One day when we are older and to our sons unfold
The burden on broad shoulders of common men and bold;
With one heart they shall honor, with one voice proclaim thee:
"Bahamas, Glorious Homeland — sweet land of liberty."*

A mighty throng of over twelve thousand shared in this hymn of freedom and we then knew that we were witnessing the birth of a new Bahamian working together with other Bahamians for a new Bahamas. Songs such as this swept through the Bahama Islands and did more for the people's struggle for freedom than all the speeches and newspapers combined.

At Tuesday night's mass meeting, we adopted a course of non-violence. It was always our conviction that a bloody revolution would defeat our purpose; besides, it would be exactly the pretext Government wanted to spray down innocent men, women and children and to blame the whole massacre on irre-

sponsible trade union leadership.

Our advice was contained in ten thousand handbills: "STAY CALM. BE CALM. LET US WIN THIS BATTLE WITH A MIGHTY MEEKNESS." In fact, the people behaved so well that the Law Courts were forced to close their doors because of a lack of business.

In the meantime, the Bahamas Hotel Employers' Association and the Building Contractors tried every trick in the book to break the strike. They labeled union leaders as agitators. They threatened to close all hotels by Wednesday morning unless the workers returned. They raised the banner of Law and Order to provide the Governor with a pretext to amass legal and police weapons against a wholly imagined violence. They intercepted our telegrams and letters to our local branches on the Out Islands and to our international affiliates.

Lastly, they tried to organise a "Back-to-Work Movement."

To cope with this new development, the B. F. of L. sent Coreene Fountain (code-named *Gertrude*) to New York to acquaint the free trade unions there of our plight. Sister Fountain, tenacious of her Garcia message, with faithfulness, resourcefulness and initiative so stirred the conscience of the American Labour leaders that they bombarded Number 10 Downing Street, London with telegrams praying for the introduction of democracy in the Bahamas.

Back in Nassau, a few minutes before midnight, on January 14th, 1958, we received a message that one hundred and fifty armed soldiers had landed at our Airport from Kingston, Jamaica, and that others were expected from London during the early morning. Our informant told us that the troops were members of the Royal Worcestershire Regiment. Some carried 3-mm rifles with fixed bayonets, others had automatic weapons. They wore battle dress and steel helmets.

Of course, all of this was part and parcel of Britain's gunboat diplomacy. But we had our guns too and were not afraid to use them. We had three small cannons at Fort Charlotte, four guns at Fort Fincastle and five big cannons at Fort Montague - all about three hundred years old and just a little rusty from the elements.

Humor aside, we immediately summoned our crisis cabinet to a meeting at 3:00 a.m. At our general meeting held at the Federation and Taxi-Union Hall at 5:01 the next morning, we informed the rank and file of our members what

had transpired a few hours before. We told them that the Government intended to provoke us, the officers, and them to violence in order that armed force could justifiably be used against all of us.

The members held their breaths as Radio Station Z.N.S. later confirmed what we had already told them. If one strand of hair was singed, more so, if one life was lost in this struggle, his or her blood would be on the hands of all of us.

Personally, I did not mind suffering for the cause. When one challenges constituted authority as I had done, one must be prepared to suffer the consequences. If I shall succeed without sacrificing, it is because some of our former Bahamian heroes have sacrificed before my time; but if I suffer without succeeding, then it is in order that those who come after me may succeed. Furthermore, it seemed like good mathematics to me if one – that I - should die so that one hundred and fifty thousand could live in freedom.

The above were my thoughts as I re-joined in the singing of my mother's favorite hymn:

*Fight the good fight with all thy might,
Christ is thy strength and Christ thy might,-
Lay hold on life and it shall be,
Thy joy and crown eternally.*

At about 6:30 a.m. on Wednesday, January 15th, we started to picket the Electricity Power Station and other jobsites. Wherever we put our pickets, Government stationed its armed troops.

They tried to provoke us into a physical confrontation but it did not work. We felt goose-pimples all over us when we saw the firm picket lines of our brothers and sisters all carrying the slogan from a speech the night before: "NOT A SWEAT."

Soon the Government faced a real problem. The members of the Water Department felt that they too had a role to play in this drama. Nearly the whole Civil Service had attended our nightly mass meetings at Windsor Park where they breathed in the air of freedom. Despite the statutory restriction prohibiting Civil Servants from joining non-governmental Labour unions, many of them became members of the B. F. of L.

Later that afternoon over three hundred workers from the Public Board of



Women picket on Bay Street for the first time in history.

Works walked off their jobs and reported to the Federation Hall for picket duty. After this, whenever the officers of the B. F. of L. were seen talking to civil servants Government was quick to brand it “intimidation.”

K. N. Walmsley, the Colonial Secretary, whose reactionary attitude had done so much to create the crisis, was visibly shaken. The next day an official release read:

Fully armed troops have been stationed at strategic points, guarding public utilities and several government offices.

Any person against whom a case of intimidation can be established may expect to be treated with every severity legally possible. A special mobile squad has been arranged to deal with reported cases of intimidation. Any person experiencing, witnessing or having information on cases of intimidation may reach the squad by telephone 4774.

Our informers also warned that special tear gas squads had been called in to deal with the strikers. Our non-violent tactics, however, confounded the authorities. My challenge to fight the armed forces in a football match at



Gun-Boat Diplomacy - Hundreds of fully-armed British troops were brought into The Bahamas to quell any intimidation by striking workers. However, the workers refused to be provoked into any physical confrontation.

Clifford Park horrified them. They saw nothing comical about it. In a reign of tyranny, humor was usually the first casualty.

It was not long after the release of the Intimidation Notice that Brother Edwin Stubbs, a short, robust worker at Dolphin Hotel, dialed: 4774.

“I have,” he said, “an intimidation case to report.”

“Yes, yes, speak up, old boy,” answered the British accented voice on the other end.

“Where? Come on! Where?”

The stuttering voice of Brother Stubbs responded: “At—at—at the Dolphin



A young man working the picket line.

Hotel on the Corner - Corner of Bay an' and - Nassau Street. Dere is two - mans down - down here intimidat- ing me, Sir."

Thinking that the two men were L. O. Pindling and I, about ten minutes later a truckload of Royal Worcestershire soldiers heavily armed and with spitfire in their eyes arrived at the trouble spot. To their consternation, they found Stubbs pointing the accusing finger at the two-armed British guards who had been placed at this spot. The whole regiment became exasperated as these alarms multiplied one hundred times here and there and every- where. The phoning procedure was gloriously comical. It was

a "Keystone Cops" performance which Hollywood would have accepted without any alteration in script.

On January 17th, the Taxi Union requested His Excellency to appoint a new panel to negotiate a settlement under the chairmanship of an independent person. Bay Street Boys displayed their immediate hostility to the idea and this meant certain rejection by the Governor. The B. F. of L. therefore submitted to hotel managers and building contractors draft collective bargaining agreements for union recognition and the establishment of the machinery for "swift



In the face of British Colonialism, Bahamian youths displayed uncommon courage and intelligence. "Not a sweat."

settlement of disputes which may arise between the parties."

The employers rebuffed all the above proposals; their cold calculation being the B. F. of L. could not have built up much of a strike fund in only two years. They therefore decided to starve the workers into submission. That night at Windsor Park, my reply was applauded: "We've come too far to turn back," I said. "We know the enemy and we will fight them until there is nothing left in us to fight. Unless we get our rights, we'll strike 'til kingdom come!"

Two days later, the Government and Bay Street welcomed more military men. They came this time off Her Majesty's Ship ULSTER. Their technicians were to man the electrical power station which was working only in fits and spurts.

On Wednesday, January 22nd, Wesley Wainwright, Chief Negotiator of the National Workers' Union of Kingston, Jamaica succeeded at last in bringing

tour company operators and the taxi-men around the conference table, but by Friday, January 24th, all hopes of a solution were dashed to the ground and Wainwright returned to Kingston, a saddened man.

Next Martin Pounder of London's Trade Union Congress and N. W. U.'s president, Thosy Kelly arrived to help the local leaders find a solution. At last the free world started to take notice of Government's antediluvian attitude to freedom of association for the laboring masses. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions cabled two thousand dollars to the Federation and a deluge of telegrams and smaller donations were received from



*A Time Had Come. Britain sent more soldiers to fight an idea whose time had come.
The result was inevitable.*

unions in the United States of America and Jamaica. All these messages of love and solidarity were read at our mass meetings. Workers became ecstatic. They cheered, some danced and others wept with joy.

It was around this time that the Executive Council of the powerful American Federation of Labour Congress of Industrial Organizations was in session in Miami Beach, Florida. Upon learning of the struggle of the Bahamian workers, President George Meany, breaking through Government's censorship reg-

ulations, dispatched the following telegram to us:

THE AFL-CIO Executive Council has followed with deepest sympathy the valiant struggle of the workers of Nassau, Bahamas to raise their pitifully low living standards. For three weeks, under the leadership of the Bahamas Federation of Labour, our fellow ICFTU affiliate, taxi drivers, hotel, restaurant and other workers, struck against their anti-union employers. We honor these brave workers who, although denied the right to join unions of their own choosing, suffered desperately against overwhelming odds. Under the oppressive Labour legislation in the Bahamas, there exists for most workers neither free collective bargaining nor procedures for settling grievances. The present unrest in The Bahamas is the direct outcome of the fact that political power is undemocratically vested in a small, privileged clique. We are sure that the British TUC, in accordance with their traditions, will use their good offices in London to support efforts to remedy these conditions as speedily as possible.

Further, the so-called Constitution, consisting mainly of Royal letters from the Colonial Office in London, remained substantially the same as those of the thirteen American Colonies before the Revolution. Under it, ownership or rental of property were decisive factors in an extremely limited male franchise which excluded women entirely. The British occupied top executive and administrative posts - the whole legislative system could be dissolved or sus-

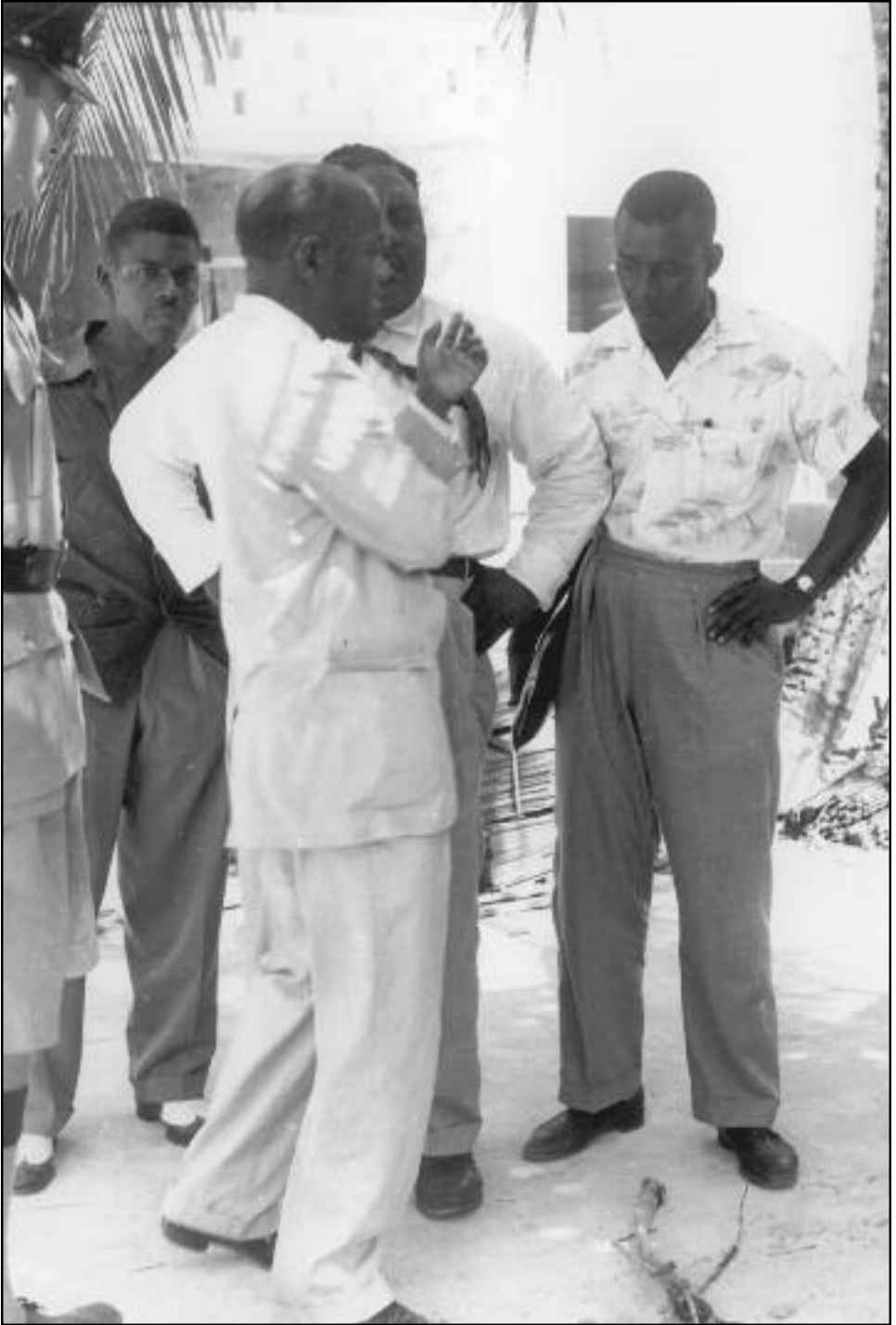
pending anytime at the whim of the Queen's representative, His Excellency, The Governor.



*Norman W. Manley, Q.C.
...Premier of Jamaica, B.W.I.*

In such a social climate, the free trade union movement could not thrive. It was for this reason that the Bahamas Federation of Labour shortly after the General Strike began, called on the Colonial Office to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the social, economic and political conditions in the Bahamas.

On Monday, January 28th, the House of Assembly convened at 8:15 p.m. for the second time since the strike began. The people everywhere remembered. Thousands lined the northern pavement of Bay Street



Impasse 1959. Maurice Mallory, plumber (second from left), the President of the B.F. of L. (author), Milo B. Butler, and L. Garth Wright discuss strategy during the work stoppage at the Nassau Beach Lodge.

behind the police cordon to await the answer to the P. L. P. and the B. F. of L.'s request for the appointment of a Royal Commission. Cyril S. Stevenson, Senior Representative for the outlying district of Andros, made the application. The debate lasted until 3:15 the following morning when the motion was lost by a vote of 16 to 6.

But history was being written in the House of Representatives, Kingston, Jamaica where a similar debate was in progress. There, both parties - the Peoples' National Party and the Jamaica Labour Party - Government and Opposition - joined forces on this rare occasion. The Speaker called for a standing vote. It was unanimous! Consequently, the Honorable Norman W. Manley Q.C., Chief Minister of Jamaica, dispatched the following cable to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London, England: "THE BAHAMAS STRIKERS HAVE THE SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT OF ALL PROGRESSIVE FORCES IN THE WEST INDIES WHICH WELL UNDERSTAND THIS STRUGGLE AGAINST A DISGRACEFUL AND OUT-MODED SYSTEM AND ATTITUDE. I STRONGLY SUPPORT PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF ROYAL COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY. THERE IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY NOW TO GET REFORMS LONG OVERDUE AND STABILITY WILL NOT OTHERWISE BE FULLY RESTORED."

When there was a social upheaval in the West Indies in the late 1930's and 1940's, the British Government was quick to appoint a Royal Commission of Enquiry to investigate its causes. Out of that Commission's report grew universal suffrage and many basic reforms that now underpin West Indian society. It would be a sad commentary indeed, if one were put in place only after bloodshed.

The conscience of America was stirred by the display of "unbritish" justice in this British Colony. Many American citizens went to great lengths to raise their voices against the apathetic attitude with which the British Governor treated the just demands of the Bahamian people. In this respect, the letter of Mr. Theodore Silbert of Standard Finance Corporation on Fifth Avenue in New York was a serious indictment of our system. It read:

Your Excellency,

As one who has enjoyed the hospitality of your island for several years, I humbly take the liberty of writing to you and urging a course of action with respect to the present General Strike in Nassau. In the liberal tradition of Great Britain with

regard to its Colonies during the last decade, I am sure, you would be interested in the attitudes of many Americans on the unfortunate predicament which faces your community. There are two that are prevalent. One is that the Trade Unions Act of 1942 forbidding improved Labour conditions is something that is shocking to the great democratic traditions of your country and ours. Two is that the use of hunger and the "lockout" as weapons to starve workers into submission is offensive to the vast majority of our people.

Most of us know that the real culprit is inflation, which strikes us all alike regardless of race or color. May I suggest that you consider the advisability of making available food to needy, unemployed workers during the duration of the strike. If you were unable to raise the necessary funds, it would not be difficult to form a committee of prominent citizens of the United States to obtain contributions for the above purpose, if you approve of this approach.

THEODORE H. SILBERT

President.

The World Council of Churches with offices in New York City made a similar offer of food for distribution among the poor people in Nassau, but their local affiliates, fearful of the wrath of the Bay Street merchants, rejected the offer.

So, sisters Mildred Moxey, Hilda Ferguson and Jennie Jones organized their own soup kitchen and fed thousands. As we swallowed, we sang to the tune of MY BONNIE LIES OVER THE OCEAN:

*Remember the days of the strike,
We didn't have bread to eat;
But that didn't bother us, brother,
We were fed from our heads to our feet*

CHORUS

*With what, Brother? With what?
They gave us a bowl of soup.
They gave us a bowl of soup.*

On January 29, 1958, His Excellency at last brought representatives of the tour companies and the Taxi-Union together at a top-level conference. At the end of the talks, the officers of each organization signed a detailed agreement providing for the more equitable division of transportation of passengers to

and from the Airport. His Excellency also gave the following assurances:

1. That within a very short time the legislature would remove the statutory restriction that hampers hotel and agricultural workers.
2. That a Labour Department would be established;
3. That a Bahamian Transport Authority would be set up.

The B. F. of L. therefore called an end to the General Strike and the workers were ordered to return to their jobs. There was a great camp meeting at the University of Windsor Park that night when the announcement was made. The Goombay festival mood was captured in a strike melodrama written by George Moxey, a member of the Bahamas Musicians' Union:

*January twelfth was the fateful day,
Labour took it "All the Way!"
They claimed they had a lawful right,
To see things in a different light;
That strike was an awful thing,
It almost knocked me off my wing;
My girl friend almost went astray,
'Cause I didn't get my usual pay.*



*Mother Mildred Moxey
...Queen of the Soupline.*



George Moxey, President Musicians' Union

REFRAIN

*Strike! Strike!! Strike!!!
That's all they talk about
Strike! Strike !! Strike !!!
Some talk, some sing, some shout;
Strike! Strike!! Strike !!!
The end, it came too soon;
In this our fair Isle of June.
Bay Street looked like graveyard,
Some shops had closed their doors;
Don't believe it? Don't you see,
Dollar bill - a novelty;*

*Worcestershire's, they come in force,
I much prefer their kind of sauce;
They didn't have to do a thing,
But stand at ease and dance and sing.
Sterling, he made several trips,
Kelly and Pounder worked like bricks;
When Fawkes and Pindling's brows got wet,
Cliff Darling told them, "Not a Sweat."*

*The judge placed a liquor ban,
No Scotch, no beer from bottle or can;
But drug stores sold out all their stocks,
Strike cocktail, Sir? Bay Rum on the rocks!
A local boy with humorous wit,
Phones the police with words like this:
"This man with gun intimidating me,
Please hurry up and you will see."
They wanted justice on the spot;
Big surprise, guess what they saw?
A "Tommy" near a city door.*

If men would learn to give and take.

*Nothing would have to strike or break;
Good will and health, blue skies galore!
What living man can ask for more?
Welcome the tourists back to town,
Can't let our reputation down;
For romance, bathing, drinks and fun,
Please hurry back to Nassau's sun.*

The following night His Excellency, The Governor, made, what I would wager to be, one of the best speeches of his entire career:

“We are all dependent on each other - and must work together to get our Colony going again. Last night about half past nine, Mr. Shepherd, of the Bahamas Taxi-Cab Union, Mr. Pounder and Mr. Kelly called on me and told me that they were going immediately to a meeting at which it would be announced that the General Strike was called off. I should have wished to speak to you over the air as soon as possible, but there was still a difference between the tour companies and the Taxi Union to be settled, and I thought it better to wait until all differences were over before addressing you. I am glad to say that, as a result of meetings which took place today, agreement has been reached between the tour companies and the Taxi-Cab Union, so that too, is now over.

“What we've got to do now is look to the future. The strike has for the time brought to an end the source from which we all drew our living. We must, all of us, as quickly as we can, get to work to set that source flowing again. This is not a thing which we can do if we are at odds with each other. I earnestly call upon every one of all sectors of the community to forget the past and get down to restoring the future. Make no mistake about it; we are all dependent on each other, whether we like it or whether we don't. We are all bound to live together and work together; let us do it with good will on every side.

“If you are an employer and think your man has let you down, forget it and set to work with him to restore your business. If you are employed and think your employer has been harsh with you, forget it and take your coat off and get down to work again. If you have had differences with others, remember that your interests and theirs are so tied up with each other that you must work together to get our Colony going again.

“None of us, no part of the community can get on without the rest. Let us

now forget the past and go to work together to ensure the future, and may God help us in the work.”

The Governor’s speech did clear the air, but not for long. Like a thunderbolt out of the blue, the next week His Excellency asked the Legislature for certain dictatorial powers which, if granted, would have given him absolute power over the lives and destinies of us British subjects including the power to arrest whomsoever he pleased without warrant and to detain him or her indefinitely without bail or due process.

The bill read as follows:

SESSION 1958

Bill No. 9

Government

Mr. R. T. Symonette,

27th January, 1958

A BILL FOR AN ACT

to confer on the Governor certain powers for securing the public safety and defense of the Colony.

May it etc.

1. This Act may be cited as the Emergency Powers Act 1958.

INTERPRETATION

2. In this Act, “Law” includes any Order of Her Majesty in Council and any Act, Order, Rule, Regulation, By-Law or other law for the time being in force in the Colony.

POWER TO MAKE REGULATIONS

3. (1) The Governor may make such Regulations as appear to him to be necessary or expedient for securing the public safety, the defense of the territory, the maintenance of public order and the suppression of mutiny, rebellion, and for maintaining supplies and services essential to the life of the community.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of the powers conferred by the preceding sub-section, the Regulations may, so far as appear to the Governor to be necessary or expedient for any of the purposes mentioned in that sub-section: -

- (a) Make provision for the detention of persons and the deportation and exclusion of persons from the territory;
- (b) Authorize:
 - (i) The taking of possession or control, on behalf of Her Majesty, of any property or undertaking;
 - (ii) The acquisition on behalf of Her Majesty of any property other than land; and the payment of compensation thereof;
- (c) Authorize the entering and search of any premises;
- (d) Provide for amending any law, for suspending the operation of law and for applying any law with or without modification;
- (e) Provide for the apprehension, trial and punishment of persons offending against the Regulations; providing that nothing in this section shall authorize the making of provision for the trial of persons by Military Courts.

POWER TO MAKE RULES AND ORDERS UNDER
REGULATIONS

- 4. The Regulations may provide for empowering such authorities or persons as may be specified in the Regulations to make orders and rules for any of the purposes for which such Regulations are authorized by this Act to be made and may contain such incidental and supplementary provisions as appear to the Governor to be necessary or expedient for the purposes of the Regulations.

REGULATIONS, RULES AND ORDERS TO HAVE EFFECT
NOTWITHSTANDING ANY LAW

- 5. A Regulation or any order or rule made in pursuance of such a Regulation shall have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in any law, and any provision of a law which may be inconsistent with any Regulation or any such order or rule shall, whether that provision shall or shall not have been amended, modified or suspended in its operation under section 3 of this Act, to the extent of such inconsistency have no effect so long as such Regulation, order or rule shall remain in force.

INSTRUMENTS RECEIVABLE IN EVIDENCE

6. Every document purporting to be an instrument made or issued by the Governor or other authority or person in pursuance of this Act, or any Regulation, and to be signed by or on behalf of the Governor or such other authority or person, shall be received in evidence, and shall, until the contrary is proved, be deemed to be an instrument made or issued by the Governor or that authority or person.



*Hon. Roland Symonette
...willing to give power*



*Sir Raynor Arthur
...wanted power to arrest*

Objects and Reasons

It is common practice to provide for certain exceptional powers to be exercised only in times of emergencies by the Governor. There is at present no such legislation in the Colony.

L.A.W. ORR, Attorney General.

Thus with one stroke of the pen His Excellency, The Governor sought power to arrest any person and to violate his human rights. Not satisfied with the fact that he, as the Queen's Representative, was already in control as Chief Executive Officer in the colonial administrative system, he wanted to hold the legislative and judicial branches too. Sir Oswald Raynor Arthur was setting the stage for himself to become the classic example of the severe doom of Lord Acton, "Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely." Without respect for human rights it is impossible for one to lead a decent and civilized life.

That is why on the very night His Excellency delivered his "Let Us Forget the Past" speech, my reply went out from Windsor Park in swift succession: "We shall forget the past when all the poor of this country are happy and nei-

ther ignorance nor hunger is to be found among them. We shall forget the past when the taxes are not oppressive and our streets are empty of beggars. We shall forget the past when all men and all women are free to participate at all levels of government without regard to race, color, creed or sex; when the poor as well as the rich are guaranteed equal justice under the law - when these things can be said about The Bahamas, then, and only then, will we forget the past.”

On Monday, February 10, 1958 at 2:30 a.m., we were still in the House of Assembly listening to the Leader of Government Business, the Hon R. T. Symonette, move the second reading of the Emergencies Powers Bill. Pretending to be a spotless dove, he claimed that it was necessary merely to secure public safety. But this pretense of innocence did not protect him from the wrath of an aggressive opposition.

In an effort to assist his embattled leader, Stafford L. Sands offered an amendment “that this Bill be referred to a Select Committee for further consideration.”

I immediately moved “that this Bill be read this day six months.” We, the P.L.P. and Labour, entertained the extravagant hope that if my motion were adopted it would be the end of the matter. When the question was put by the Speaker, the Magnificent Six - Clarence A. Bain, Milo B. Butler, Samuel Isaacs, Lynden O. Pindling, Cyril Stevenson and I voted as a block.

On a call for the Yea’s and Nay’s it was discovered that the Bay Street Boys used their eighteen votes plus one - Gerald (now Sir Gerald) Cash - to jolt us back into reality. We lost again. The Bill therefore went to a Select Committee for further consideration.

But the Bay Street politicians still dragged their feet when it came to implementing the reforms announced by His Excellency, The Governor of the Bahamas. They continued to billet foreign soldiers at the people’s expense and refused to reinstate the strikers on their former jobs.

I now realized that if the Royal Commission were not forthcoming soon, the quiet revolution would run amuck. As President of the Bahamas Federation of Labour, I needed to fight one more round but the more I fought, the closer I came to sedition or worse, to treason and the Government tried hard to lure me into this trap. I was at wit’s end. I had reached my extremity.

I locked myself in the little office in the Federation Hall and recapitulated

the recent past and the thousands who expressed implicit confidence in my leadership. I recalled how they sang and shouted upon hearing fraternal greetings from other workers from home or abroad but most of all, I remembered how fervently they prayed in times of crisis. So, in the tradition of the laboring masses I prayed, "Lord, you held the waters back so the children of Israel could walk on dry land. You locked the jaws of the lions when Daniel prayed to you. Well, Lord, I need one of those miracles right now. Lord, for Christ's sake, send me a miracle now."

I had scarcely gotten off my knees when the telephone rang. "Mr. Fawkes? Is this Randol Fawkes?" inquired a cultivated voice on the other end.

"Yes it is."



Presents Cheque - James C. Quinn, secretary-treasurer of the Central Trades and Labour Council, presents cheque to President Randol Fawkes of the Bahamas Federation of Labour to help the workers.

"This is James Quinn, the secretary of the Central Trades and Labour Council in New York City. We want you to come to New York and tell us what we can do to help you in your Labour crisis."

A lump stuck in my throat. I couldn't talk; I couldn't believe my ears. Could it be that my prayer was being answered so soon? Indeed, I did believe that He wished to remove me from this hostile environment for a while.

"Can you come, Mr. Fawkes?" the voice inquired urgently.

On regaining my composure I blurted out, "Yes! Yes!! Tell my brothers, God willing, I am coming."

In another few days, more invitations were received. In obedience to His will I formally accepted the invitations to be the guest of the Central Trades and Labour Council, the Caribbean League of America Inc., and of the Abyssinia Baptist Church in March, 1958. This New York lecture tour gave me a larger stage from which to launch a new offensive.

When my wife, Jacqueline, and I arrived in New York City, Sister Coreene Fountain alias Gertrude handed to us a full timetable. At the downtown Hotel Belmont Plaza, I related the story of "A Mighty Meekness" to a most cosmopolitan audience of assemblymen, mayors, senators, U. N. ambassadors and West Indians. "What can we do to help the Bahamian people in their struggle for freedom?" they all asked.

"Send telegrams now to the United Kingdom Government and demand an on-the-spot investigation into the economic and social conditions of the Bahamas," I replied.

Whether in the committee rooms or in the auditoriums of New York's Temples of Labour, the questions and responses were always the same. In a frenzy of activity, our brothers and sisters in this great American Republic electrified the air until one seemed to hear the messages being Morse-coded across the seas into the heart of Number 10, Downing Street in London: "BAHAMAS - NOW!" It all sounded like music. Now I began to understand Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

Our perseverance paid off. On March 25, 1958 the good news rang out over the telex systems: *The Colonial Secretary, The Right Honorable Alan Lennox Boyd, will be leaving London early in April for the Bahamas, to investigate the underlying causes for the recent disturbances there and to make on-the-spot recommendations for the solution of the problems.* We immediately curtailed our stay in New York and flew to Nassau to help prepare Labor's case for major economic and constitutional reforms.

One week after the press release of the proposed visit by the U.K.'s Colonial Secretary, the white tour companies were hauled into the Magistrate's Court and charged and convicted for illegally plying for hire without first obtaining taxi-drivers' licenses.

The U K's Colonial Secretary arrived at Nassau's International Airport on the afternoon of April 6th, and was met not only by Nassau's dignitaries, but also by groups of workers carrying placards, which read:

"We asked for bread, you gave us soldiers."

"We asked for ballots, they gave us bullets."

On Tuesday and Wednesday, April 8th and 9th, the B. F. of L.'s delegation consisting of Brothers Anthony Roberts, Assistant Secretary, Cadwell Armbrister of the Airline, Airport Workers' Union, Charles Fisher, Herbert H. Minnis, and L. Garth Wright conferred with the Secretary of State at Government House.

Both in form and substance, the case for the workingmen and women was well presented. In addition to an interview, a petition was signed by thousands, calling for Labour legislation in conformity with International Labour Organization standards. On the second day's appointment, Labor's case for a Royal Commission of Enquiry was debated at length.

On Sunday night, April 13 at Windsor Park, the results of Alan Lennox Boyd's visit were announced. Briefly they were:

1. A Labour Department will be established immediately
"as a matter of urgency;"
2. Labour Laws in keeping with modern thought are to be enacted;
3. The company vote is to be abolished; and the plural vote reduced to two;
4. Every male of 21 years will be permitted to vote regardless of his property holdings.
5. There shall be four additional seats in the House of Assembly for New Providence raising the total membership from twenty-nine to thirty-three.
6. The hotel and agricultural workers will hereafter have the right to



Explains Crisis - Bahamian Trade Unionists Explain the social crisis to New York's Hotel and Catering International Union officers. Above, from left are: E. Sarni Zucca, Corene Fountain, David Siegal, Ramdol Fawkes (author) and Joseph Rodriguez.

join unions of their choice and to engage in collective bargaining.

The announcement was vociferously received. My brothers and sisters and their children held hands as they sang to the tune of John Brown's Body:

*On the twelfth of January,
We stood up against the foe;
And demanded Justice Now,
And that Tyranny must go;
For we have seen the glory,
That's beyond the status quo;
And we won't be slaves anymore.*

*SOLIDARITY FOREVER
SOLIDARITY FOREVER
SOLIDARITY FOREVER*

FOR THE UNION MAKES US STRONG.

II

*On that sacred morning we did knock on freedom's door,
And demanded from the bosses decent treatment evermore;
'less we get our rights we shall strike till kingdom come.
'Till final victory is won.*

Yes, the battle for human rights and duties is now a legend. In the years to come, old men and women will tell their children and their children how a group of descendants from former slaves displayed uncommon courage and good sense in breaking the chains which had hitherto bound the hands, feet and minds of their forebears. Not a drop of blood was shed. Not a strand of hair lost. A MIGHTY MEEKNESS HAD TRULY WON THE DAY.

"Sing on brave hearts! You shall not be slaves anymore."

* * *

CHAPTER VIII

* THE ARREST *

The General Strike marked the beginning of the end of British Colonialism and all that it stood for: white supremacy and racial discrimination; economic exploitation and votelessness of the Bahamian masses; inequality before the bar of justice, illiteracy and all the sordid aspects of second-class citizenship. Outwardly we wore the mask of happiness, but with bleeding hearts we pressed forward.

So on the first day in June, 1958 - Labour Day - the stage was set for a mighty drama. The first act was laid against the backdrop of the rolling hills and plateau of the Southern Recreation grounds appropriately decorated with flags of every colour and description flapping in the breeze.

The curtain rose on a scene of pure delight as the new and confident workers filled the stage, marching shoulder-to-shoulder to greet the dawn of freedom. After the march we held a Labour Rally.



*Clara McPhee (Nee Roach)
...in the tradition of Marion Anderson*

The programme was opened with a prayer by Brother Joseph Zonicle. Next, Clara Roach, the daughter of one of the B. F. of L.'s carpenters, sang: "Go down Moses." Her emotion rent voice stirred the massive audience and was carried over the public address system into all the surrounding villages.

Sister Roach sang with painful honesty. At a critical period in our history, one saw in her an attempt to use the only weapon at her disposal - the Negro Spiritual - to expose the evils of the system. With her mezzo-soprano voice appealing for social justice she, in the tradition of Marion Anderson, delivered truth in every line:

*When Israel was in Egypt's land,
Let my people go!
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go!*

CHORUS

*Go down, Moses,
Way down, in Egypt's land
Tell old Pharoah
To let my people go!*

*"Thus spoke the Lord," bold Moses said,
'Let my people go!
If not, I'll smite your firstborn dead.
Let my people go!'"*

REPEAT CHORUS

Up to this time - 3:00 p.m. - we were not sure whether His Excellency, The Governor, Sir Raynor Arthur, would be with us despite all written assurances that he would deliver the principal address. The last word we had heard of him was that he had boarded a B.O.A.C. plane in London 12 hours ago bound for Nassau.

During the Labour Rally that followed Peter Ottley and Jim O'Hara of the Hotel, Restaurant and Bartenders Union of New York brought fraternal greetings to us while Nicholas Zonarich of the United States Steel Workers of America read the following message from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Brussels, Belgium.

"On this joyful occasion when organized labour in The Bahamas pauses to celebrate Labour Day, the 55-million strong International Confederation of Free Trade Unions shares your rejoicing and congratulates you upon your splendid record of positive trade unionism.

"After a long struggle, your Federation achieved a more realistic approach of the workers' fair demands and revision of inadequate wage scales. All who are united in the free Labour movements throughout the world hope this result will herald a new era of social justice for the workers of The Bahamas.

"We are pleased and proud to note that you have also achieved notable success in living up to the high aim you set for yourselves at your founding congress on the 1st June, 1955: 'to bring about the effective organization of the

working men and women of The Bahama Islands, regardless of race, colour or creed, and unite them in Labour Unions for common action.’

“You have just given practical proof of unity in action, which is an indication of your magnificent will to battle against and triumph over reactionary forces and hostility. That is how trade union organizations become strong in surmounting what at the time seems to be insuperable difficulties.”

Then Sister Margueritta Wallace, our Third Vice President, read a resolution pledging the B.F. of L.’s support for the Women’s Suffrage Movement. Suddenly, it happened: Brother Jerome Wright whispered in my ear, “Chief, he’s here.” The labouring masses were happy to see the Governor. They all knew that he had recently gone to London to confer with the British officialdom on how best to introduce the long awaited reforms.

On behalf of the workers I welcomed Sir Raynor Arthur and handed him the microphone.



Waves to crowd - His Excellency Sir Raynor Arthur, in high spirits, waves to the crowd waiting to hear his address. At far left is Leonard J. Knowles, Chairman of the Labour Board and at the extreme right is Randol Fawkes (author), President of the B.F. of L.



His Excellency, Sir Raynor Arthur, addresses the crowd.

“Mr. President, members of the Bahamas Federation of Labour, Ladies and Gentlemen.

“I am very glad for the opportunity of addressing the annual meeting of the Bahamas Federation of Labour and to welcome their guests from abroad. I am sure that our friends will enjoy their brief visit here and that they will be of assistance to the Federation in considering some of the matters which face them. I also want to welcome to Nassau the large delegation from the Out Islands.

“It looks as though this year will be a very important one for the development of trade unionism in the Colony.

“The present session of the legislature will produce legislation which will provide for the Labour Department, whose primary role will be the guiding of trade unions. This will be a great step forward and I am not exaggerating when I say that in future the trade unions will play an important role in the life of the Colony.

“Trade Union law confers certain immunities on trade unions which are not enjoyed by the public in general. If I were a private individual and were under a contract to serve someone for a certain period of time for a certain wage, and left that employment, I would be sued by the master. Trade Unions cannot be so sued if they call a strike, which is, in fact, a breach of contract. This is an example of only one of the immunities they enjoy.

“Now everyone, if he is to have privileges must understand that with those privileges there must be responsibilities. The employee needs his employer and vice versa and each has a responsibility to the other.

“A colony, or indeed a community, is in a way like a family, the members of which grow up one by one to play their parts in family life. You are now growing up to take your part in the life of the Colony. It is up to you to see that the part you play is a worthy one.

“You have my best wishes in your efforts.”

I thanked His Excellency for his wise counsel and sealed our sincerity with “three cheers.” The Governor was so pleased with the unexpected warmth of his reception that he joined in the festive mood of the occasion. Throwing his hands into the air he bade us, “Godspeed.”

“What’s the next step, Chief?” inquired the youthful Sam Stubbs as he locked his arm into mine.

“Sam,” I replied, “to build a nation dedicated to the ideal of perfect obedience to perfect laws.”

“Brother Fawkes,” Sam smiled approvingly, “I want to be in that number.”

“It’s possible Sam. A little faith can move a mountain.”

By this time, my faith had become so strong that I fully understood the scripture verse: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen.”

I saw myself as the first black Minister of Labour in a new dispensation. This was my hope and because of my strong faith, my brothers and sisters caught the vision.

But lurking in the wings of the stage were two strangely sinister and divisive forces: the U.B.P. and the top brass of the P.L.P.; the one, terribly afraid of the power I wielded as President of the Bahamas Federation of Labour; the

other, envious of the free trade unions' national and international acclaim as the spark-plug of the quiet revolution. Added to woes was the infighting among the officers of the B.F. of L. itself.

When London's Colonial Secretary, Alan Lennox Boyd, visited The Bahamas in April, he sensed this rift in the progressive movement and immediately put his D and C theory - divide and conquer - to work. Instead of insisting, as promised, that the minority Government introduce labour legislation that would commend itself to modern thought, he lent his support to their renewed efforts to outlaw the B.F. of L.

The legal draftsman for the U.B.P. Government was a portly, middle-aged gentleman by the name of Kenneth Potter. With his razor-sharp mind he sliced the B.F. of L. into many pieces, thereby radically weakening its solidarity.

The new Trade Union and Industrial Conciliation Bill called for the dissolution of all Labour unions and left the matter of re-registration of each application to the discretion of the Registrar. I moved an amendment to this Bill which would have secured automatic re-registration for the B.F. of L. but when I looked around in the House of Assembly for my comrades' support, no one - I repeat, "no one" - stood up to second my motion! The amendment was therefore lost. The U.B.P. and P.L.P. had joined common cause to stab the B.F. of L. in its chest.

This was a traumatic experience for the labouring masses. To them, life without the B.F. of L. was unthinkable. They refused to part ways with the organization that had put more bread on their breakfast table, more clothes on the backs of their children and stopped the leaks in their roofs. To keep this dream alive, the construction, longshoremen, transport and general workers came together, incorporated the outlawed Bahamas Federation of Labour under the Companies Act and continued the crusade for bread, peace and freedom under the same name, the B.F. of L. From that moment on, I was known as the lone Labour representative in the House.

On June 28, 1958, L. Garth Wright and I, as Secretary and President respectively of the Transport and General Workers' Union, responded to a call for help from labourers at the lumber camp on Mastic Point, Andros. We arrived on the premises of the Bahamas Lumber Company Limited in the early afternoon and were horrified by the scene of men, women and children toiling under conditions that wronged the dignity of man.



L. Garth Wright

The fact that every tenth employee showed us some broken leg, fractured arm, missing finger or sawed-off, bleeding limb underscored the need for safety regulations and a modern workmen's compensation law. The rationale behind the employment of women and young boys was to further depress an already low wage scale and to increase the margin of profits for the employers.

Another ruse of the Bahamas Lumber Company Limited was to require their employees to toil long hours under the "Truck and Tommy Shop" system. Under this system workers were paid in something other than cash; Vouchers were given to the Bossman Commissionary Shop where they would be exchanged for groceries , rent, drinks, tools etc.

One finds it difficult to describe the evils of the "Tommy Shop" system without pain and shame. One worker told me, "Man, if you agree to work long hours on straight pay and close your eyes to wrong-doing then everything is fine. But if you stand up for your rights, then your credit is stopped and you can't get groceries. Soon you, your wife and family will find yourselves out of doors."

Another said, "Brother Fawkes, anyway you look at it, we just can't win.

It's just like the song: 'The more we work, the older we get and the deeper in debt.' Soon the company will own us lock, stock and barrel."

I thought then that human waste and exploitation at the lumber camps at Lake City and Snake Cay, Abaco, were bad but the situation at Mastic Point, Andros, was worse than any of those. Here my sisters and brothers worked their lives away. They seemed no more important than the electric saws and the machines that made the monotonous noises around them. There was no park in the workers' compound in which children could play, no boulevard or garden where mothers could give their babes a breath of fresh air, but standing in the centre of the workers' huts were yard toilets and three pyramidal mounds of brown saw dust. The whole one and a half hours that Brother Wright and I toured the jobsite, I did not hear a laugh or see a smile.

One result of all this blood, sweat and tears was that the employers lived in splendour and their children went to some of the best schools. Another result was that the workers were often sick in their bodies and minds and their children seldom ever completed their schooling or childhood.

Brother Wright and I organized a meeting for the workers along the high-water mark on the beach surrounding the lumber camp. We spoke out against worker exploitation to an extremely receptive audience. Men, women and children began to chant the songs of freedom and clap their hands at the prospect of another slice of bread, improved working conditions and, at last, a voice to speak for them.

The white boss man, William N. Russell, sensing a moment of truth, ordered us to leave the premises immediately. The workers pleaded with us to talk some more and to sing some more; both of which we did in abundance.

*I knocked on the door and asked for some bread,
The lady said, "Scram bum, the baker is dead."*

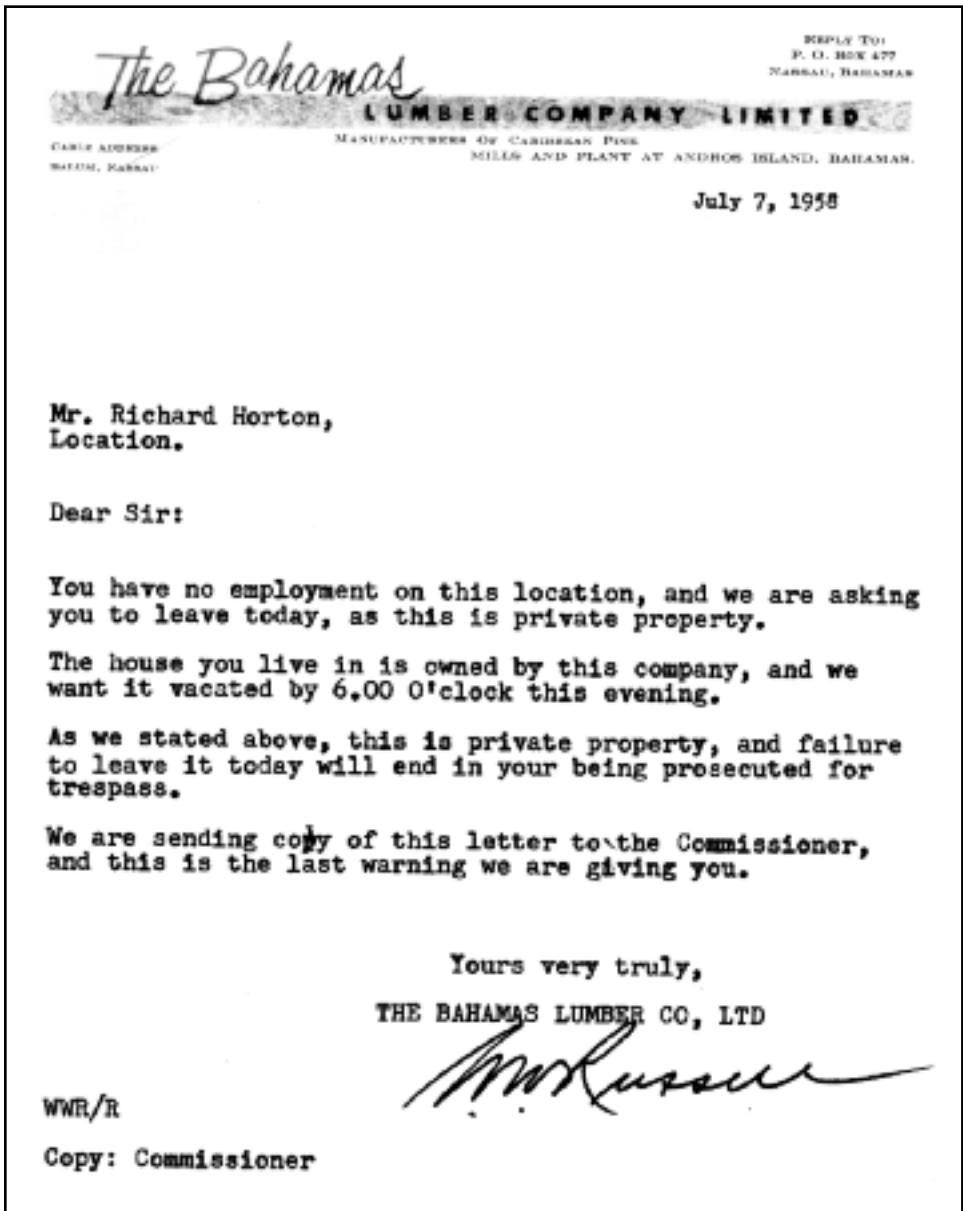
CHORUS

*Hallelujah, I am a bum Hallelujah, bum again,
Hallelujah, gimmie-a-hand-out
To revive me again.*

The boss, on observing that we had stolen the hearts of his former serfs, stormed out of the meeting shaking his fists, "We will get you for this ."

A few days later Richard Horton, an employee who befriended us at the

lumber camp, received the following letter from the boss man:



Here the concept of “dismissal at pleasure” was carried to its ridiculous extreme. It was established in the days when the Crown could not be sued in the courts on any account; when the entire common law of dismissal from employment was heavily weighted against the servant and in favour of the master.

In the above letter no just cause of dismissal is stated. No severance pay in lieu of notice is given. No grievance procedure is set in motion in defense of the worker's rights. All Brother Horton knew was that he had better collect his family and his "Georgie Bundle" and get packin' or else the Commissioner, the Island Governor, would be after him. Shame!

When we returned to Nassau, I was charged in the Magistrate's Court with trespassing and disorderly behaviour in the lumber camp.

His worship the Magistrate, Maxwell J. Thompson, gave me a suspended sentence. He required that I sign a bond in the sum of 200 pounds to be of good behaviour and to keep the Queen's peace for the next three years.

I appealed against the conviction and sentence, but even my right of appeal was denied. In fact this meant no more Labour meetings, no more picket lines, no more crusading. "Why live?" I asked myself.

On the very night after my conviction for trespassing - August 8, 1958 - I held a monster mass meeting at Windsor Park. There I excoriated Colonialism, likening it to a tired old horse that had been mortally wounded



*Maxwell J. Thompson
...Stipendiary and Circuit Magistrate*



*A.S.P. Stanley Moir
...be wanted a statement*

by the General Strike.

In an extremely tense atmosphere, I delivered a blistering broadside against the minority Government. No one escaped the wrath of my brimstone and fire. This done, I focused my attention on the Magistrate: “He spoke with the voice of Esau but the lips of Jacob.”

While I was developing this theme, the rain came and the crowd dispersed.

The following day, I was in the inner office studying Labour law. Suddenly the silence of the moment was broken by the sound of military footsteps tramping towards me. On looking up from my desk, I saw Inspector Carl Ginton, Detective-Sergeant Courtney Strachan and Edward Ellis. They motioned for me to come with them.

I hesitated, so Sergeant Strachan blurted out, “You are under arrest!”

“Why?” I inquired.

“At the mass meeting last night at Windsor Park you made a seditious speech,” he said and then continued. “You brought the Queen’s Government into disrepute and caused disaffection among Her Majesty’s subjects.”

There was nothing else for me to do but go. To have resisted would have been to court only another offence. So off to jail I went.

On the way out of my law offices, I stopped at the secretarial desk of my wife, Jacqueline.

“They have come,” I told her, “to arrest me for making a speech last night



They made the arrest - From left are: Inspector Carl Ginton, Detective Sergeant Courtney Strachan, Detective Edward Ellis.

at Windsor Park. Take care of the children. Have no fear. God will not forsake his people.”

Jackie stood up. She hugged and kissed me.

“Ran, we shall be strong,” she said as a smile shone through the clouds of anxiety. “Don’t worry about us.”

As I tore myself away from her embrace I heard the crisp, gruff voice of Detective-Sergeant Courtney Strachan, “Come on! Let’s go!”

When we arrived at the Central Police Station, I telephoned Leopold Garth Wright, Secretary of the Bahamas Federation of Labour. “Hello Brother Wright, this is Brother Fawkes, I have been arrested.”

There was a long pause.

“Wright! Wright!” I shouted, “Are you there?”

“Yes Chief, I’m here. But what did you say?”

“I’ve been arrested,” I replied, “Tell friends!”

On the other end of the phone I could hear Wright breathing excitedly.

“Chief, Chief... they can’t arrest you; you are a member of the House of Assembly. You have parliamentary immunity. No Chief,” he sobbed, “they can’t arrest you.”

“Well, Wright,” I replied in exasperation, “I am calling from the jail house right now.”

The waiting seemed interminably long. However, 15 minutes later I knew that the word had gone forth. Through the bars of the prison cell, I could see people gathering outside.

Later, the British Assistant Superintendent of Police, Stanley Moir, led me to his offices on the third floor of Central Police Station.

“The charge is sedition,” he confirmed. “Would you like to make a statement or would you prefer to write it yourself?” he inquired.

“I would like to write it myself,” I replied.

The Superintendent then passed a sheet of paper and pen to me whereon I

wrote, "The Bahamas Government is the most corrupt system I have ever seen in my life."

Sensing that something amiss was going on, Moir snatched the paper perused it and said in disgust, "This is not what we want."

He then took me before the Scottish Magistrate, James Liddell. In short crisp language I was formally charged.

Nothing was said about bail, pending my trial in the Supreme Court. I knew that if I were ever to get free again, I would have to seek foreign counsel because the local Bar Association and I were not on particularly good terms.

As His Worship rose to adjourn, I instinctively said, "I hereby demand bail."

"Mr. Fawkes," the Magistrate replied, "the nature of this case, Sedition, does not readily lend itself to the granting of your request. Nevertheless, I shall grant bail on one condition: that there are no more mass meetings and or demonstrations. If there are any, I shall cancel bail immediately. Do you understand?"

I heard what he said, but I thought it wise not to answer.

As I started to walk out of the court, a triumphant shout went up from the street below. This annoyed the Magistrate. He sucked his teeth as he stormed into his office and slammed the door behind him.

We marched to the B.F. of L.'s Wulff Road offices in the Bodie Building where we planned a mass prayer meeting at Windsor Park for the night.

I did not have a moment to lose. I had to confer with Premier Norman Washington Manley on the advisability of retaining Jamaica's best advocate. Furthermore, I wished to make representations to the Colonial Office in London in a last-ditch attempt to forestall Queen Elizabeth's Royal assent to that iniquitous piece of legislation: The Trade Union and Industrial Conciliation Bill, 1958, which sought to outlaw the B.F. of L.

The British Overseas Airways Corporation flight to Jamaica was scheduled to leave at that night. My Brothers and sisters at Windsor Park, however, had come to expect me to appear dramatically at 10 p.m. at every mass meeting.

Everybody, except the poor, was happy about my arrest. The middle and professional class claimed that I needed to be taught a lesson.

My boon companion, L.O. Pindling, harangued from the Southern Recreation Grounds, "There is only one humbug in the ointment now - Randol Fawkes - but soon he will be gone."

The white aristocracy chided and mocked their domestic servants and employees, "Aaah! We got your lil Moses in a bottle now. All we have to do is cork him up."

Another said, "Jail too good for him. We should put Fawkes under the jail."

Etienne Dupuch, Kingmaker and Editor of the *Tribune*, demanded, "Strike Fawkes down now!"

In such a hostile environment, objective reporting was important, but this was not available to me.

The Labour Movement was founded on the principle that tyranny anywhere was a threat to freedom everywhere and so I dispatched B.F. of L.'s secretary, L. Garth Wright to New York to acquaint my comrades there of the new turn of events and to ask them to keep the sedition case before the world press. Their response was heart-warming.

There was nothing wrong with this procedure. When in 1775 the 13 American Colonies fought against Britain for their independence, France came to their assistance. When in 1947 and 1948 Israel struggled for nationhood, America was its most ardent supporter.

On my side, always, were my wife, my mother and the massive poor. My mother maintained an inner peace born of years of Bible reading and prayer. Suspension, exile, strikes, arrest, sedition - although these were a far cry from the marital bliss we envisioned for ourselves, Jackie's love remained constant. Throughout the passionate years that followed our marriage, she did not escape the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. Some of the darts which were meant for me pierced her own heart.



Jacqueline Fawkes
"...each, a fort to bold"

The night after my arrest, I made yet another demand on her affections. I asked Jackie to stand in and speak for me at the mass meeting scheduled at Windsor Park, as I had to leave for Kingston, Jamaica, the same evening.

At 10 o'clock, as my taxi wormed its way through the throng in the vicinity of Windsor Park, I heard a feminine voice over the microphone:

“My brothers and sisters, because of a previous engagement, my husband, your own Brother Fawkes, was prevented from being here with you this evening. Duty called elsewhere.

“The lesson we have all learned in this struggle is that each one of us has a fort to hold - a duty to perform - before the full history of Bahamian freedom can be written.

“As for Brother Fawkes, he has asked that I let you know that he is pleased that God has called him to lead so faithful a flock as you. Let us pray that this same God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, will continue to strengthen him so that he will deserve your trust and goodwill.

“Whatever happens, never lose faith in the final victory of good over evil. The wicked will prosper only for a season. They shall be removed.

“Over 2,000 years ago, He, who came not only to give us life but that we might have it more abundantly, proclaimed:

For verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain ‘remove thyself hence to yonder place’ and it shall remove and nothing shall be impossible to you.

“My brothers and sisters, one of these mornings after God shall have given you this battle and your children are walking in beauty, in dignity and in truth, you shall say unto that Bay Street mountain of corruption, ‘Move, mountain’ and it shall move.

“If you remain true to God, if you walk in His ways, and obey His commandments then I am sure that soon He will deliver into your hands the Promised Land.”

The applause was vociferous. There were also, “hallelujahs” and “amen’s.”

That night as my plane soared through the dark and lonely skies, the melody of Sam Stubbs’ singing lingered on:

*I sing because I'm happy,
I sing because I'm free;
For His eye is on the sparrow
And I know he watches me.*

* * *

CHAPTER IX

* THE SEDITION TRAIL *

On the eve of the trial, a number of the officers of the B.F.of L. found it convenient to break off relations with the Federation and form the Bahamas Trade Union Congress as a rival organization. Three of the Magnificent six - L.O. Pindling, Milo B. Butler and Clarence A. Bain - forsook me and fled the country via B.O.A.C. and remained abroad until the Sedition Trial was finished. At the same time, I became the butt of violent abuse not only by the morning and evening press but also by our own tabloid, the *Nassau Herald*. All of these swift and dramatic measures aimed at breaking my spirit.

But the stars in their courses fought against it. As fast as my former colleagues deserted my cause, little known carpenters, masons, longshoremen and hotel workers stepped forth to fill the breach. When the U.B.P. called me profane things and the P.L.P. labelled me a "nut," the workers responded, "Well if bredder Fawkes is a "nut," den he mussy screw on to the right bolt 'cause when he raise hell for us, we get jobs and plenty of money."

"If there is trouble, let it be in my day so that my child can be free." Armed with this quotation from one of my speeches, the Fawkes Freedom Defense Fund, consisting of Brothers L. Garth Wright, Leonard Dames, Cleveland Rolle, Dudley Cooper, Joseph Zonicle, Sam Stubbs, Hysel Roach, Dudley Marshall and Sisters Marguerita Wallace, Lillian Miller, Marion Stuart and Bartholomew Bastian of the first allegedly illegal Hotel Workers' Union raised enough money to pay legal fees and my traveling expenses to Jamaica and London.

By November 17th, 1958, the Police Force had chased us off Windsor Park. From then on, we were told that we needed permits to sponsor public meetings there. We therefore, transformed the upstairs porch of Heastie's Brothers Hotel into a stage with various levels of the streets, yards and walls as mezzanines. With an effective public address system we could still reach thousands. The workers were delighted with the improvisation. They sloganized, "Don't get mad, get smart!"

Always behind me were the common people and at the back of us was God. During this testing period, I read my Bible from cover to cover. Why? Because everything else failed to give me the faith that I needed to believe that in the end all would be well.

THE NASSAU HERALD

SATURDAY, SEPT. 13, 1958

If there is trouble, let it be in my day so that my child
may be free

The Fawkes Freedom Defence Fund
Committee

Will Sponsor

A SPORT DANCE

At Cat and Fiddle

On Wednesday, September 24th, at 9 p.m.



Music by Freddie Munnings
and His Orchestra

Come and support the father of the Country in the People's Fight for

Bread, Peace and for freedom

COMMITTEE: L. GARTH WRIGHT, CHAIRMAN

DUDLEY COOPER, LEONARD DAMES, CLEVELAND ROLLE,

JOSEPH ZONICLE, SAM STUBBS, MARGARITA WALLACE

M. STUART, H. ROACH AND DUDLEY MARSHALL

Every night at Windsor Park, I prayed fervently with thousands of faithful souls who regarded me as their unquestioned leader. We prayed that God would not surrender me into the hands of Bay Street.

One night after my return home, I opened my Bible in search of answers. My eyes fell on Psalm 41:1 - "Blessed is he who considers the poor, the Lord delivers him in time of trouble."

I cast my eyes upward and prayed, "Well, Lord, here am I. You know I'm in trouble again. I'm depending on you, Lord, to deliver me, for I do ask it in Jesus' name."

From that moment on, I did not worry anymore about the outcome of the case. The verse was so reassuring. "Blessed is he who considers the poor; the Lord delivers him in time of trouble."

The Bible declared it; I believed it and that was it. That verse was better medicine for me than any tranquillizer. It was as if the Bible were speaking directly to me.

I fell asleep.

On November 19th, 1958 - the morning of the trial - there were two organized ground swells of public **opinion**: one was of the rich who swore that I was guilty; the other was of the poor who claimed my innocence. There was no happy medium between these two extremes. What was right or who was right could only be decided by the Supreme Court.

During the General Strike, I had witnessed the effectiveness of "A Mighty Meekness" I had seen this philosophy of non-violence survive triumphant over the armed might of British Colonialism. Since then a "Mighty Meekness." had been refined into a kind of "soul power," "truth power," - "God power" - which was fast proving itself invincible in every crisis. Again I appealed to the workers to be calm and stay calm throughout the trial.

Promptly at 10 o'clock His Lordship, the Chief Justice, Sir Guy Henderson, convened the special sessions of the Supreme Court. In addition to his appointment as a Magistrate in 1932, Sir Guy also served in East and West Africa. The only thing Sir Guy Henderson and I had in common was that his first name - Guy - and my last Fawkes - when placed together we identified that inflammable character who attempted to blow up London's House of Parliament with some barrels of gunpowder. Guy Fawkes has since

been described as “the only man who went to Parliament with the right ideas.”

The great office of Chief Justice was the richest prize of the legal fraternity. Sir Guy Henderson sat on his exalted bench in all the splendour of scarlet and ermine robes reminiscent of the days when the law was wedded to the clergy. Behind this majestic facade, however, were two hazel grey eyes which stared daggers at me.

In the pit of the Court were the Acting Solicitor General, Edward P. St. George and Defense Counsel, Vivian O.S. Blake. I sat in the Prisoner’s Box about three feet behind my lawyer.

Edward P. St. George was an English Barrister with a record of public service as a former magistrate. Since that time he had been the legal advisor to Bhutan, an independent sovereign nation of a million inhabitants adjoining Tibet. St. George was a master of sardonic wit and tried every trick to have me convicted.

Vivian O.S. Blake was just 35 years old when he accepted my brief. He was the youngest Queen’s Counsel in the British Empire. In his short time at the Bar, he had been associated with such giants of the profession as Sir Hartley Shawcross, a former Attorney General of England, and the Right Honourable Norman Washington Manley who had recently become Chief Minister of Jamaica.

Blake’s close relationship with Manley gave him an uncanny grasp of the problems of the trade unionist. With this sympathy and understanding he was able to enter fully into the lives of my brothers and sisters. He had fire and passion and zeal. He was dramatic and histrionic. He could speak simply to ordinary people and rise to the heights of pure eloquence to sway the hearts and minds of men. Furthermore, throughout the struggle, he remained incorruptible. This was the measure of the man in whose hands I had placed my case.

At 10:15 a.m. the bailiff of the Supreme Court turned in my direction and said, “Randol Francis Fawkes, you are charged with sedition contrary to section 436 (1) (b) of the Penal Code (Chapter 69). Particulars of the offence are that you, Randol Francis Fawkes, on the 8th day of August, 1958, at New Providence, in the hearing of liege subjects of our Lady, The Queen, uttered a seditious speech, the purport of which was to bring into hatred or contempt or to incite to disaffection against the administration of justice in the Colony. “Randol Fawkes are you guilty or not guilty?”

“Not guilty,” I pleaded.

I was not sure that a black man such as I could receive a fair trial in The Bahamas. Although British justice as practised in England was ideal to all mankind, in the Colonies, patronage and privilege were still the order of the day. Colonial jurisprudence recognized the right of the Crown to the first and last words in every criminal trial. Furthermore, the Registrar General had resurrected an old statute that provided for the impaneling of a “special jury” for my sedition trial. The special jury list contained the names of mostly white men who, the administration maintained, possessed a higher degree of intelligence than the black.

“Randol Francis Fawkes,” the Bailiff continued, “I am about to call the names of the men who will act as special jury to try the charge against you to which you have pleaded, “Not Guilty.” If for any reason you prefer any of them not to be jurors at your trial, you will say, “challenged,” when their names are called before they are sworn, and they will be excused from being jurymen at your trial. You may challenge as many as 10 without giving any reason for so doing.”

We did the best we could with the challenges we had. At the end of the morning session, the following persons were selected as jurors;

Henry Nixon, Foreman (white); Stuart Black (white); Granville Kelly (white); Juan Pablo Baldwin (white); Hartley Albury (white); Alonzo Kemp (white); Inglis Russell (white); Robert A. Pinder (white); Dudley A.M. Taylor (white); Donald Black (white); George Bowleg (white); James Clark (Black). At last, one black among eleven white. This was tokenism on a grand scale.

The Prosecution was anxious to learn all about my man from Jamaica whose reputation as a sure winner had preceded him. Would Blake attempt, through skillful cross examination, to adroitly lead the Prosecution’s witnesses to commit themselves irretrievably to certain absolute statements, then suddenly confront them with what he knew to be the truth? Perhaps he would rely on an abstruse point of law or seek to prove a fatal flaw in the indictment itself.

Whatever Blake’s tactics would be, the Solicitor General could hardly wait to lay him low and rid the body politic of public enemy number one - me.

The Bailiff called the five Prosecution witnesses and asked them to remain outside during the hearing of the Court. All of the Crown’s witnesses were professional policeman, despite the fact that there were thousands of civilians

present at Windsor Park on the night of the alleged seditious speech. But Edward P. St. George, the acting Solicitor General, would hazard no mistake. He would give Blake no quarter.

“Mr. Blake,” inquired the Chief Justice, “do you have the names of the wit-



*Sir Guy Henderson
...Chief Justice*



*Edward St. George
...Solicitor General*



*Vivian O.S. Blake
...Defence Counsel*

nesses for the defense? The Crown is willing to assist in having them summoned.”

The Solicitor General craned his neck in readiness for Blake’s answer. He wanted to know the names of our witnesses if only to gain a hint on the character of our defense. But Blake was a good chess player. Throughout the case he would reduce the intervention of chance to a minimum.

“My Lord, the Defense has not yet decided on a sure list of names,” was Blake’s answer. “As soon as a decision is made among us,” he continued, “the court will be informed.”

“Very well,” the Chief Justice responded. “Mr. Solicitor General, please begin.”

Standing up and facing the jury, the Crown Counsel began:

“May it please your Lordship, Gentlemen of the jury. In this case I appear on behalf of the Crown, and the accused is represented by my learned friend, Mr. Blake, who, as you know, has come over from Jamaica for the express purpose of his defense.

“Now as you will observe, the accused is charged with the crime of sedition.

Before I tell you about the offence I feel it my duty to give you a word of warning. When you come to consider your verdict, you must cast out of your minds anything you may have heard or read about this case or anything you may know about the defendant personally. It is your duty to consider this case solely on the evidence that is called before you in this Court. This case has absolutely nothing to do at all with politics, race or creed, and anything you may have heard you must cast out of your minds completely; any personal feelings you may have one way or another, regarding the accused, you must dismiss out of your mind, and you must try him solely on the evidence which I will be calling before you.

“Now, gentlemen, you and I, and all of us, are subjected to the rule of law. Without the rule of law there would be anarchy, and the contention of the Prosecution in this case is that the accused has attempted to put himself apart and above the law, ridiculing and degrading the administration of justice in this Colony. He has committed, in the submission of the Prosecution a most serious offence. Anyone who attacks the administration of justice in any country and, particularly, in a small Colony of this nature, brings the whole administration of justice into disrepute, and makes people inclined to ignore and be dissatisfied about decisions that are given by courts of law.

“Sedition may seem to be a unique sort of offence. It’s not, gentlemen of the jury. It’s a misdemeanour, which is, in fact, a crime against the Penal Code of this Colony. Section 436 of the Penal Code says this: ‘any person who utters any seditious words shall be guilty of an offence.’

“So far it is quite simple. Now we come to examine the meaning of ‘seditious words.’ Those are defined as words having seditious intention.

“Then we see the meaning of ‘seditious intention’ as defined in our penal code, and this is an intention to bring into hatred or contempt or to incite disaffection against the administration of justice in the Colony. That is the subject of this indictment in this case.

“Now those words are designed to bring into hatred or contempt or to incite disaffection against the administration of justice. In other words, gentlemen, when you are considering your verdict as to whether there was a seditious intention, it needn’t be hatred and contempt. As long as one of those elements has been proven to you by the Prosecution and that the speech was intended to bring into hatred or contempt or to incite disaffection against the administration of justice, that would be a foundation for a verdict of guilty.

“Now it’s not for me to anticipate what defense my learned friend will put forward to you. However, it’s difficult to see anything but two defenses. Firstly, that the words were not spoken at all, and, secondly that the words could not be seditious. That is, unless my learned friend has one or two things up his sleeve. They, as far as I can see, are the only defenses which are open to the accused.

“Now when you hear the facts of the case, gentlemen of the jury, it is my submission that in spite of the accused having such an able and distinguished advocate to defend him, it is difficult to see how he can overcome such a prosecution.

“The whole story starts on the 8th August when Magistrate Thompson gave judgment in a case in which the accused was charged with trespassing, and convicted him. When he sentenced the accused this is what Magistrate Thompson said, ‘In passing my sentence, Mr. Fawkes, I want you to know that it is with real pain and grief that I have been compelled to find you guilty of these offences, even though they are somewhat of not too serious nature.

“You are a member of our Bar and as such my colleague. But when I assumed the duties of my office I took an oath that I shall do right to all manner of people after the laws and usages of this Colony without fear or favor, affection, or ill-will.

“As Counsel and Attorneys of the Court of this Colony we also took an oath, when we were called to the Bar, that we would demean ourselves as Counsel and Attorneys.

“I cannot say that your behaviour at Stafford Creek was in keeping with our Bar traditions which relate to decent and proper behaviour. You did not on that occasion, demean and deport yourself in keeping with the propriety expected of members of this Bar.

“Crusading of any kind must be done within the framework of our legal system. Do not forget that.

“I am not going to treat you with leniency because you should know better. I therefore make the following order: that you are hereby bound in the sum of 200 pounds with two sureties to be approved by me, for a period of three years to keep the peace and be of good behaviour and to come up for sentence if called upon.’

“That was the end of the case, but it was not the end of the case as far as the accused was concerned.

“Now the same evening, after he had been bound over to be of good behaviour - and this is important, gentlemen, because on the same day (the same evening) - there was a meeting of the Bahamas Federation of Labour at Windsor Park. The accused was to be the principal speaker at that meeting, and he was introduced at that time as ‘Our Moses.’ You may think that’s somewhat ironical, gentlemen of the Jury. Moses the Father and giver of our laws and the accused, who the prosecution alleges, has very little respect for them. When he was called upon he made a speech and it is the subject of that speech which is the subject of the charge before you today. Now whether it was known or unknown to the accused, a number of police officers were there; a number of police officers who were there for a particular purpose, and it is on their evidence that the Prosecution found their case. On the evidence of the words that they said they heard the accused use on that occasion.

“When he starts off he says, ‘I’m not afraid to go the limit if your rights depend on it.’ Those words ‘the limit’...what does he mean by that Gentlemen of the Jury?

“Then he says, ‘The time is coming when we will have to go to the limit because the men we put in positions have forgotten why we put them there and are being used by our enemies for our own destruction. We will have to whip them back into line and teach them to know whose interests they are supposed to protect.’

“The accused referred to the Court case and went on to say, ‘They thought they won a victory this morning.’ Again you have to consider what ‘they’ means. You will hear that it means some politicians.

“‘He spoke with the voice of Esau but the lips of Jacob. Anyway you have learnt a lesson. Are we going to allow him to set our standards as others have set his standards?’

“What an appalling, dreadful thing to say gentlemen, about a magistrate administering the law of the Queen; that others set his standards, and that it is the standards of others that he is imposing quite unjustly on the public.

“The decision today strengthens us for a greater battle to come. This is a battle that the other side has been fighting with lies and treachery. I want them to know that no verdict, unless founded on absolute justice, could ever

stop a people.’ This is a suggestion that the verdict given in court that day was not founded on absolute justice.

“I want you to know that the decision was given but the case is far from closed.’ That seemed to have a simple straightforward meaning. Could it mean that the accused intended to have His Lordship, the Chief Justice review it? It could have another meaning altogether. ‘In the future you will witness the most amazing piece of strategy that Bay Street has ever seen here.’

“Having likened himself to Moses, he now likens himself to another Person of messianic mission.

“He says, ‘Christ preached the same as the Bahamas Federation of Labour is preaching today.’

“Now again he comes back to this case and again these are the words that I am relying on: ‘A new chapter was written in the Magistrate’s Court today. It was a shock. Judgment delivered without evidence.’ Again, what an allegation to make about a Magistrate. ‘I was put on a suspended sentence. I was bound over to keep the peace for three years! Why man, the maximum penalty was only five pounds. This man went over and above the law. If he stands in our way for freedom, he will have to be removed.’

“By whom, gentlemen of the Jury? By the people whom he was addressing?”

“I was convicted to assure the death of the Trade Union Movement.’ Presumably that explains the motive which the Magistrate had in mind when he convicted him. ‘Fawkes was not on trial, Thompson was, and the world convicted him.’ He then goes on to say, ‘Thompson wanted me to plead for leniency but I did not. That was an insult. I never asked him for leniency and will never ask him for anything, ever.’

“It is the common practice of magistrates to invite the accused person to ask if he wishes to say anything by way of mitigation - a plea for leniency. He on the other hand, thinks that is an insult. At the time of the meeting, there was a crowd of about 2,000 people. The reaction of the crowd you will hear about later. These are the words upon which the Prosecution is relying to prove this case. Gentlemen, can you imagine a more seditious speech - a speech more intended to undermine the administration of justice in the Colony?

“Now, as you know, in this Colony the administration of justice is in very few hands. In the Island of New Providence, there are three administrators of

justice -there's His Lordship, the Chief Justice and there are two magistrates at this time. One is Magistrate Maxwell Thompson and one acting Magistrate who is normally the Registrar General. Again, as you know, all criminal cases in the Island of New Providence must, of necessity, come before one of the two magistrates. Some cases go beyond the magistrates, as in this case, to come before a Jury. But all cases start off by coming before the magistrate. All criminal cases in a particular jurisdiction come before the magistrate.

“Now, regarding the Out Islands, again, as you know, the Magistrate is the Court of Appeal for the decisions of the commissioners. As regards the Out Islands, he stands in the same position as His Lordship, the Chief Justice, does throughout New Providence. When you attack the magistrate, gentlemen of the Jury, it is the submission of the Prosecution that you are attacking and shaking the very foundation of the system of justice in this Colony. Because, by having a corrupt, weak magistrate, a magistrate who is apparently a tool of politicians, you have in the hands of one of the administrators of justice corruption and the sort of justice, which in the submission for the Prosecution, does not exist in the British Empire. It is still a further reflection on the higher policies, because to allow a corrupt magistrate to keep his post, gentlemen of the Jury, this means that somebody is allowing the administration of justice to be corrupt.

“Those are the facts upon which the Prosecution is relying. There is only one final thing for me to tell you, gentlemen of the Jury. I'm afraid I have been a long time addressing you, but in a case of this nature, it is important that I should do so. The burden of proving the charge against the accused rests squarely on the shoulders of the Prosecution. It is not up to the accused to prove his innocence - It's up to the Prosecution to prove his guilt. Now, when you're considering the verdict, you must consider the defences which are given to the accused by statute:

An act, speech or publication is not seditious by reason only that it intends to point out errors or defects in the government or constitution of the Colony as by law established or in legislation or in the administration of justice with a view to the remedying of such errors or defects.

“Now, gentlemen of the Jury, if you are satisfied that Mr. Fawkes' speech was that innocent, then it will be your duty to acquit him. If, on the other hand, as the Prosecution suggests that what he was attempting to do was to undermine the authority of the Magistrate and undermine the administration of justice, then gentlemen of the Jury, in that case, you must bring in a

verdict according to your oath, which is a verdict of guilty.”

The first witness for the Prosecution was William L. Gibson, the clerk of the lower Court. He read into the record the August 8th judgment of Magistrate Thompson binding me over to keep the Queen’s peace and to be of good behaviour for the next three years.

The other witnesses testified as to the form and substance of the speech I made immediately after the judgment, where I was criticising the colonial administration and allegedly holding up the Magistrate to public ridicule and abuse. So professional was their performance, so rehearsed their evidence describing the mass response to my diatribe, that not even Blake could shake their fortresses.

“The crowd yelled for the removal of the Magistrate. ‘He’s an ass,’ ” asserted Sergeant Paul Thompson, the star witness for the Crown.

But, gentle reader, there was no clear and present danger of violence of a breach of the Queen’s peace.

Inspector Carl Ginton related how he heard me say, “The Magistrate spoke with the voice of Esau but the lips of Jacob. It was a pity that someone would



*Sgt. Fletcher Johnson
...be had a speech*



*A.S.P. Stanley Moir
...be had stopped meeting*



*Sgt. Paul Thompson
...took notes*

allow himself to be used in that way. However, no verdict, unless founded on absolute justice, could ever stop a people in their march to freedom.’ ”

The Assistant Superintendent of Police, Stanley Moir, recalled my haranguing: “Fawkes was not on trial but Magistrate Thompson was and the whole world convicted him and condemned Colonialism.” Moir paused and then continued, “The meeting was finally dispersed by a fortuitous rain.”

The other two witnesses, Sergeant Fletcher Johnson and Detective Courtney Strachan, corroborated the evidence of their colleagues.

Blake realized that if my case went to the Jury, my fate was a foregone conclusion. Already, overseers from Her Majesty's Prison waited outside to escort me as word went around that my cell and number were already reserved. Therefore, to turn the tide of events, during Thursday's luncheon break, Blake threw himself into the history of sedition.

Volume 10 of Halsbury's Laws of England (on page 569) agrees that sedition is the misdemeanour of publishing verbally or otherwise any words with the intention of inciting disaffection, hatred or contempt against the sovereign, the government, the constitution of the kingdom or either Houses of Parliament or the administration of justice, or of inciting Her Majesty's subjects to attempt otherwise than by lawful means the alteration of any matter in Church or of State or of exciting feelings of ill-will and hostility between different classes of her Majesty's subjects. Sedition was one short step away from treason.

When the Court convened, the Acting Solicitor General, feeling overly confident that the defense had been inextricably caught in his web of chicanery, suddenly closed the case for the Crown.

But to their surprise, Blake was more than prepared to meet the challenge. He submitted on a point of law that I had no case to answer because the Acting Solicitor General had failed to prove certain ingredients essential to the offence of sedition. After the Jury had excused themselves from court, he went on to develop his theory that this case should be tried not under Section 436 (1) (B) of our Local Penal Code, but on the English Common Law.

"My Lord, a distinction has always been drawn between a judge of a superior court and the magistrate of an inferior one," Mr. Blake argued. "Disparaging utterances," he continued, "reflecting on the superior court are always criminal whether the remarks were made in or out of court or behind the backs of the judges, for these judges are regarded as direct agents and personal representatives of the Queen. They are appointed by the Queen's Letters Patent to dispense justice in her name. Any attack upon them is always an attack upon the Queen who is the Fountain of Justice.

"On the other hand, abusive words against a magistrate of an inferior court, spoken behind his back and out of court as in this case are not indictable either as sedition or contempt of court unless the words incite others to commit a

breach of the peace. All the cases from time immemorial support this view. The judge of any inferior court, such as a magistrate, is in no better position than any other public officer.”

This submission of Defense Counsel brought Edward R. St. George, the Acting Solicitor General, to his feet. He turned up his nose, curled his lids and chuckled up his sleeves at Blake’s proposition. “My Lord! Thy learned friend, Mr. Blake, should know that according to our Declaratory Act of 1789, the Common Law of England applied to the Bahamas only when it had not been altered by a local statute. The offence of sedition is fully provided for in our Penal Code.”

His Lordship, The Chief Justice, who was an excellent social dancer in his younger days, swung and swayed from one side to the other according to the weight of the argument of each Counsel. He said, “Mr. Blake, you see, our statute law lays down what is and what is not a seditious offence. In The Bahamas, if anyone utters disparaging words about a magistrate with seditious intention of inciting among Her Majesty’s subjects disaffection against the administration of justice in the Colony, then he is committing a seditious offence. Mr. Blake, while I agree with you that the alleged speech under the English Common Law would not be an offence, but here in The Bahamas I am in some difficulty as to the position. When the Common Law infringes upon the Statute Law which we now have in this Colony, then it is the Statute Law which must take precedence.”

“My Lord, my immediate reaction to your proposition,” replied Mr. Blake, “is that a statute is not to be interpreted as changing the Common Law unless there is some expressed wording in the statute to that effect. Furthermore, when a statute interferes with the liberty of the subject, it should be narrowly construed against the Crown and in favour of the individual.”

Blake then proceeded to quote authority in support of his contention. Then, in an effort to drive home his point he pleaded, “My Lord, I ask you to consider whether the words used by the accused are reasonably capable of being construed as an incitement to personal violence. If your Lordship’s answer to this question is ‘No’ then it is my submission that there can be no case to answer. If your Lordship is doubtful, then I submit that your Lordship’s answer to that question should denote doubt. If your Lordship continues your course, the next question to the jury would be whether this speech of Mr. Fawkes did, in fact, amount to an incitement of personal violence; and on that question, I invite your Lordship to consider the evidence.”

“Provided the Common Law is the law I should administer,” responded the Chief Justice.

“Exactly, My Lord, exactly,” was Blake’s reply.

The object of these questions was all too clear. Should the case go against me then Blake on his appeal, would use as his grounds the Judge’s answers to his carefully phrased propositions.

The court adjourned to Friday morning.

The battle lines between the Prosecution and the Defense were drawn. This was neither conciliation nor negotiation, but literally combat. Each sought the weakest spot on his enemy’s armour to draw blood. Everyone inside and outside the courthouse was either for one or the other of the contending parties. Local neighbourhoods, churches, schools, lodges and entire Out Island communities were divided on the issue. Telegrams and letters were received from trade unionists in Washington, London, Brussels, Ghana (Africa) and in every part of the free world, pledging solidarity with our cause. The Sedition Trial became a cause celebre of the eminence of the Alfred Dreyfus dispute.

On Thursday night at 9 o’clock, my telephone rang. “Hello Mr. Fawkes,” said a cultivated voice with a southern accent, “This is Martin Luther King, Jr.”

“Do you mean the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King of Montgomery, Alabama, and President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference?” I inquired.

“Indeed,” came the reply. “I read about your struggle for human dignity and I am coming to Nassau to give whatever moral support I can.”

“ May I see you after the case?” I asked.

“Certainly. And until then, I shall continue to pray for you.”

The following morning, Blake reported to me that search as he might, he could find no case where a person was charged with sedition because he uttered words disrespectful of and behind the back of a magistrate. Therefore, it was Blake’s opinion that the attack which I launched on Magistrate Thompson at Windsor Park could form the basis for a civil action for damages, but could not constitute the crime of sedition.

This was the first trial of its kind in the history of The Bahamas. The only thing approaching sedition was a contempt of court case in 1893 when Alfred E. Moseley, the Editor of the *Nassau Guardian* published a letter signed

“Colonist” severely criticizing a Chief Justice for not accepting a gift of pineapples. The Judge demanded seizure of the manuscript and the identity of the writer, both of which the Editor refused to deliver. The Editor was therefore jailed during the Judge’s pleasure.

On a matter of special reference to the Privy Council, London, England, via telegrams, the Editor was later freed on the grounds that the letter did not obstruct or interfere with the course of justice and, therefore, could not constitute either contempt of court or sedition.

On Friday morning my counsel, Vivian Blake, stood again to give the court the benefit of his homework. The Chief Justice was visibly impressed by the manner of his presentation. Yet there were no flights of oratory, no elegance of expression but only the cool and calm advocate disclaiming any use of the dramatic art but at the same time brilliantly employing all of them. Blake appealed to the Judge’s head rather than to his heart. At times, relentless, resourceful and satirical, it is no exaggeration to say that he positively intrigued the Chief Justice and destroyed the Acting Solicitor General’s argument.

“My Lord,” Blake asked, “when one looks at Section 436 of the Penal Code and compares it with the English Common Law, what does one find?”

“My Lord,” Blake answered his own question, “one finds that the Penal Code definition of sedition is an exact reproduction of the Common Law definition in every single particular. The wording of the offences provided by each is the same and the intent and meaning of both are identical. The penal code does not alter the common law, it confirms it. The question now, My Lord, ceases to be one of construction. The issue now turns on whether The Bahamas is a settled colony or not.

“I need hardly mention the fact that the constitutional history of The Bahamas - as well as of thirteen American colonies - reaches far into the English past. The Common Law, jury trial, the Writ of Habeas Corpus- all were brought to these shores by the early settlers as their birthrights, having been already deeply rooted in the England of the Magna Carta, the England of the Bill of Rights. According to ‘Halsbury’s Law of England,’ since The Bahamas is a settled colony, the Common Law applies until it is expressly altered by statute law. In a conquered or ceded territory it is different. The Common Law, My Lord, is still what Blackstone called it, ‘the best birthright and the noblest inheritance of mankind.’”

Blake continued far into the morning. Suffice it to say that persuasion hung on his lips. The crowds were unable to drag themselves away even during the luncheon break. Of all the attitudes and qualifications that together make up the complete forensic advocate, Vivian O.S. Blake Q.C. possessed them in abundance. The Judge was not only impressed by Blake's argument and scholarship, he was quite overwhelmed. From that point on, the extraordinary deference shown by the Chief Justice to Mr. Blake was impressive to the extreme.

After the luncheon adjournment, the Acting Solicitor General struggled to maintain his composure under Blake's onslaught. He did not seem to be the same prosecutor who had opened the case for the Crown. Then he was on the mountaintop of confidence, but now he was in the quick sands of uncertainty. Like a swimmer who changes his stroke many times to keep pace with his competitor, Edward P. St. George changed the weight of his body from one foot to another until in desperation he finally concluded, "My Lord, I don't think that my learned friend's submissions have anything to do with what we are concerned with today."

"Very well," His Lordship replied, "I would like to take the weekend to consider Mr. Blake's submission that because the British Common Law precludes an attack on an inferior court Judge being made the basis for a sedition charge, his client has no case to answer."

But there were others who would also be considering sedition over the weekend. They were the street sweepers and garbage collectors, the longshoremen and transport workers - all who saw the liberty of their leader threatened by an outmoded legal system.

My brothers and sisters eschewed violence as a solution. Instead they chose faith and works. Under the leadership of Harold King, Fred I. T. Cooper, Isaiah McPhee, John Delancy, Vincent Walks, L. Garth Wright, Thomas Smith, Ike McKenzie, Stanley Russell, Maxwell Taylor and Rupert Demetreus, we broke ground on the Southern side of Wulff Road and poured the foundation for the workers' own House of Labour. The two-story building measuring 50 feet on the street and 100 feet deep was to be the permanent reminder to all tyrants that the 'free' trade movement was here to stay.

While some of the B.F. of L.'s members poured the concrete, others sang praises to God and began to thank Him even for what He was going to do on Monday morning. We worked, we prayed and we sang until the wee hours of the morning when I was forced to retire.

At six a.m. on Monday, a gentle rap on the front door awakened my family. Upon opening, Rev. Eugene Butler, greeted me, pastor of St. Peter's Evangelistic Baptist Church situated on Andros Avenue. He handed me a note which read, "Brother Fawkes, don't worry. The victory is the Lord's. You



*Secy. Maxwell Taylor
...a solid citizen*



*Rev. Eugene Butler
..."You done free"*



*Joseph Zonicle
...Onward, Christian Soldier!*

done free."

On Monday morning, November 24 at 10 o'clock, the court was packed to overflowing. The Acting Solicitor General, the Defense Counsel and audience waited expectantly for the Chief Justice to make his ruling on the submissions of Mr. Blake. There was not a breath, nor a movement among us, but yet I was touched by the vigil of thousands the night before and the reverence with which they now followed the proceedings. They even refused to go to work until a verdict was given.

This was the first time in my life that I noticed the effect of mountain-moving prayer. I waited patiently in the Prisoner's Box with police guards on each side of me "but I feared no evil." Alas, the Chief Justice had started to give his opinion. As if coming from an electric dynamo, the massive prayers of the people for my liberation generated enough energy to cause a complete turnaround in the attitude and thinking of the Judge. After a lengthy summation, he ruled:

- (i) That the Common Law of England applied in this case of sedition;
- (ii) That what could not be sedition under the Common Law as practised in England could not be sedition under the Bahamas Penal Code; and

(iii) That the Magistrate's Court was an inferior court within the meaning of the Common Law of England.

Edward P. St. George, Counsel for the Prosecution was visibly shaken. Only a week ago, his English cousins had come to Nassau to witness what he called "this fight between the matador and the bull." But now he felt the ground slipping from under his feet. He knew where the Judge was coming from and where he was headed. It was one of the most dramatic scenes in the whole case, abounding as it did in human drama.

"That, Gentlemen," continued the Judge, "is my ruling of these three points. Therefore, subject to what either or both of you wish to say to me, it



The author assists Ed Sullivan, President of New York's Building Services Union (AFL-CIO), as he prepares to speak in the gravel and debris found during the early stages of construction of the House of Labour. Marion Stuart stands in the background.

seems to me to follow that we shall have to consider whether the words which are alleged to have been used do indeed amount to such as would or could be said to incite a provocation or break the peace by inciting others to violence. I would appreciate any expressions of opinion which either of you have as to the procedure. In my own view, I think that in the first instance, it is for me to decide whether the Prosecution has established a prima facie case against the accused. I think the procedure from here on is a matter for me to decide. And it seems to me gentlemen, if I come to a certain decision then I must direct the jury fully.”

Both Counsels agreed with the reasoning of the judge as the jury, who had been excused during the legal arguments, returned to court.

But the jurors had scarcely taken their seats when up jumped the Solicitor General and exploded in a final act of desperation. “My Lord, My Lord, it is my respectful submission that what Your Lordship is about to decide is a question of fact which should be left for the jury. To do otherwise would be to usurp the functions of the jury.”

From here on the court record speaks for itself:-

CHIEF JUSTICE: Mr. Solicitor, the point that I have tried to make is this: that in my ruling I have already said that I consider the Stipendiary and Circuit Magistrate courts are inferior courts for the purposes of Common Law. I read that. I read it rather carefully and the point, which I am trying to equally make, now is this: that being so, it’s not for me to decide on the evidence to go to the jury at all.

SOLOICITOR GENERAL: With the greatest respect, My Lord, what amounts to the administration of justice in this Colony has not been decided by any court. If your Lordship does not leave that to the jury if...

CHIEF JUSTICE: Mr. Solicitor, what I have ruled is that the Common Law applies. It is now possible to say that what has been said by the accused in this case amounts to provocation to break the peace by inciting to violence, then it is an offence under the Penal Code, which is exactly the same as under the Common Law. The person, in my view, who has to decide whether there is evidence of that to go to the jury or not, is I. If I decide that there is evidence of that to go to the jury, then it is for the jury to decide whether they, in turn, are convinced that it amounts to a provocation to break the peace by inciting to violence. But I still maintain that in every case it’s for the judge to give his opinion as to whether there is sufficient evidence of this particular offence to

go to the jury at all.

SOLICITOR GENERAL: I entirely and respectfully agree with your Lordship. What I'm putting to your Lordship is that the other matter is one that should be properly left to the jury on your Lordship's interpretation of the Common Law and it is a matter for your Lordship's final address to the jury rather.

CHIEF JUSTICE: I am sorry, Mr. Solicitor, I cannot agree.

SOLICITOR GENERAL: As your Lordship pleases.

CHIEF JUSTICE THEN TURNS TOWARDS THE JURY: I have received all the evidence in this case most carefully. I have come to the conclusion that there is no evidence that the utterances made by the accused in this case amounted to a provocation to break the peace by inciting to violence. I think it is possible that the accused was lucky in that the weather broke up the meeting, otherwise the answer might have been the other way; "fortuitous rain" Moir called it. I don't know. But, as it is, as things are, I do not see that on the evidence that he said, reprehensible though it may be, and I will speak of that later - it was not in my mind, sufficient to found a case of seditious utterances under what I know to be the law in this Colony. The point, gentlemen, is this, Mr. Foreman: That I have ruled and it is my opinion that in this Colony a seditious utterance such as you have heard, namely, to vilify a magistrate or to say what he said about the judgment of a magistrate's court, is not a seditious utterance here. I have ruled that the Magistrate's Court here is an inferior court in the meaning of the Common Law of England, which applies here. It is exactly the same as the Code and that, therefore, the prosecution has to show the court, without any reasonable doubt, that any utterances made must amount to a provocation to break the peace by incitement of violence. That means to incite the crowd, to incite anybody to violent behaviour and it's only if those utterances do that that there is a case of a seditious utterance to come before this court and by consequence to come before you. I maintain, and I have ruled, that it is within my province in the first place to say whether in my opinion the evidence which we have heard provides any case to go to you at all. If there was a prima facie case to go to you, it would. As I have come to the conclusion after a very, very serious consideration over the weekend for that matter, not only on the question of the order which I have written, but also on this point - that I cannot honestly say, in my own view, that there is a prima facie case, that there is evidence that what this man said amounted to a provocation to break the peace by inciting to violence, which is what has got

to be shown. And because of that, there is no case to go to you, gentlemen. Therefore, I must direct you on that point to come to a verdict of not guilty. Mr. Foreman, I direct you to return to me a verdict of not guilty on this account. There was no clear and present danger of violence.

FOREMAN: Our verdict is not guilty, My Lord.

CHIEF JUSTICE: Randol Fawkes, you have heard the verdict of the jury which they have given me on my direction. I hereby discharge you.

Mr. Blake, I would like to compliment you upon your courtesy to me generally throughout the whole case and for your assistance. Thank you very much.

MR. BLAKE: First of all, My Lord, I should like to say publicly how much I have enjoyed appearing before you and I should like to let you know that I have appreciated the patience and the tolerance with which you have listened to submissions which were sometimes gruelling, and cross-examination that was, perhaps, on occasions, wearying. My Lord, please don't think me presumptions if I say that the ruling that you have handed down this morning is a vindication of the fact that justice in this Colony is administered calmly, dispassionately, without fear or favour, without affection or ill will and that the Courts of this Colony appear to uphold the highest traditions of administering justice for the purpose of protecting and guarding the liberties which we enjoy under the British law. I hope you do not think me presumptions if I say that.

Secondly, My Lord, may I congratulate my learned friend on my right for the very able way in which he has conducted this case. He, too, has conducted this case in the best traditions of the English bar as a prosecutor and minister of justice seeking to further the ends calmly and dispassionately.

Thirdly, My Lord, I think I should thank the jury for the patience which they have shown, and the interest that they have taken and I feel that on their behalf I should thank you for not having exposed them to the rigours of an intolerable address from the Counsel for the Defense.

And finally, My Lord, I thank the Registrar of the Supreme Court, the Clerk of your Supreme Court, the note takers, the police orderlies, the librarian and all of those who have been so kind to me in my stay here. And, of course, my thanks go to all the other members of the community who have overwhelmed me with their hospitality and I will always remember this week in The

Bahamas as a very pleasant stay.

And subject to you, subject to the Bahamas Bar Association, and subject to the immigration authorities, I certainly look forward to crossing swords in the future with my learned friend on my right.

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NASSAU, BAHAMAS, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1964

SIX PENCE

Fawkes Discharged

Fawkes Acquitted Of Sedition Charge

Randol F. Fawkes, president of the Bahamas Federation of Labor, was acquitted last week of a charge of sedition, brought by the anti-labor administration of the British colony.

"Fawkes free. Crown's case falls down like house of cards," said a wire received here by Local 144 President Peter Ottley from L. Garth Wright, secretary-treasurer of the Bahamas federation.

The courtroom was crowded with Bahamas unionists, and others filled the streets outside when Sir Guy Henderson, chief justice of the Supreme Court, announced that Fawkes' speech to a gathering of underpaid workers did not constitute treason.

Meanwhile the newly organized "American Friends of the Bahamas Federation of Labor" was completing its plans to enlist financial and other support by unions in this area. Co-chairmen are Harry Van Arsdale, Jr., president of the Central Trades and Labor Council, and A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Ottley is treasurer.

Not Guilty Verdict Ordered

Chief Justice Sir Guy Henderson yesterday upheld the acquittal of Randol F. Fawkes, M.P., of the Bahamas Federation of Labor, leader of the case to improve the Dependent Islands, trial on a charge of sedition.

Fawkes was charged with uttering seditious words and published in his speech, in violation of section 10, of the Constitution of the Bahamas.

Quoted in the Daily Justice.

CHIEF JUSTICE: Mr. Foremen, Gentlemen, I should thank you for your kind attention in this particular case, and you are now, of course, discharged.

I declare this Special Session closed.

Yes Sir, there was a great camp meeting at Windsor Park that night. For five hours - from 7 p.m. to 12 midnight - We demanded the freedom of the streets as “over the hill” re-echoed praises to Almighty God for what He had done that day.

Old Sister Florie Smith spoke in tongues and waxed poetic in prayer. The Cinderella Sisters from Andros on the wings of their Negro spiritual carried us almost to the Pearly Gates:

I'm on my way up to Canaan Land,

I'm on my way up to Canaan Land;

I'm on my way up to Canaan Land.

Glory Hallelujah, I'm on my way.

Brothers Irwin Saunders and Alfred Rolle, Sisters Ruth Martin, Edith Miller and Shirley Bridgewater, the first Bahamian woman ever to carry a placard for freedom; gospel singers, combos - they were all present and sharing in the festivities.

At 9:30 p.m., Joseph Zonicle, the embodiment of “Onward Christian Soldiers,” said a prayer.

At 9:45 p.m. the Rev. Hudson read Psalm 138:7: “Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou dost preserve my life; Thou dost stretch out Thy hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Thy right hand delivers me.”

Promptly at 10 p.m., I introduced Blake to the labouring masses. The applause was deafening. When the cheering died down, Blake urged the crowd not to harbour any feelings of hatred or malice towards anyone for to do so would only impede the progress of our march to freedom.

Next Sam Stubbs sang, “Bahamas Glorious Homeland,” after which L. Garth Wright called on “Our Li'l Moses!” (applause), “Our Chief!” (more applause), “Our Commander!!!” to address his people.

I strode to the microphone.

“My Brothers and Sisters, I was glad when I saw the Crown’s case collapse this afternoon. I was overjoyed when the Prosecution’s Attorney, Edward P. St. George, sat down in his chair, thoroughly disgusted with himself but nothing, I repeat, ‘nothing’ moved me to tears of happiness than when I gazed outside



Photograph taken on the upstairs porch of Heastie's Restaurant. From left to right: Joseph Zonicle, Assistant Secretary; Randol Fawkes (now Sir Randol Fawkes), B.F. of L.'s President and L. Garth Wright.

the court and saw that you were still there. It was then I realized that you, thousands of my brothers and sisters, had remained off your jobs that day and refused to return until the freedom of your leader was secured

“Amen brother!! Glory Hallelujah.”

“Your loyalty was equal to the love and devotion that the soldiers held for David as he hid in the hills of Judea from the violent attacks of the Philistines. The Good Book tells us that while David was in the ghettos, three of his bodyguards crept through the lines of the enemy to fetch him a drink of water from the well of his beloved Bethlehem. You see, David, in one of his weak moments, had expressed the nostalgic wish for a cup of water from his own beloved country's well, and three of his brothers risked their lives to satisfy their leader's thirst.

“So moved was David by this show of devotion that he refused to drink the water, but poured it on the ground and replenished God's earth with it and he said, “Be it far from me, Oh Lord, that I should do this. Is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?”

“My brothers and sisters, I realize what risks you took by remaining off your jobs until the outcome of the trial was known. Does not your sacrifice repre-

sent what would otherwise be slices of bread into the mouths of your children?

“Tomorrow morning, my brothers and sisters, I shall win security of employment for each one of you. Let us now set this bargain between you and me and I call on the moon and the stars, the heavens and the earth to bear witness to my pledge: ‘entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you, for where you go, so I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God; where you die, I will die and there I will be buried.’

“And so, my brothers and sisters, what is our next task? What message shall we take back to Bay Street and all those who would deprive us of the glory of winning what is rightfully ours? Let the word go forth, my brothers and sisters, so that the world may know:

*‘We shall not rest,
Nor shall the sword sleep in our hands,
’Til we have built Jerusalem
In Bahamas green and pleasant land.’”*

There was thunderous applause. They clapped. They shouted, “We shall build Jerusalem - Jerusalem - Jerusalem.”

The meeting was at an end, but no one would leave the grounds. They kept shaking the hands of one another - a hug here and a kiss there. While Sam Stubbs and I watched and marvelled at the spirit that had taken hold of the people, a little man from Fox Hill, Brother John A. Johnson, strode toward the microphone. His friend, a guitar player, followed him. Johnson said, “Brother Fawkes, I want to sing a number that I composed just today.”

I raised my hand and the people gave me their undivided attention. As the guitarist strummed his instrument, a strong calypso beat filled the air. Hips started to sway to and fro as Brother Johnson took the microphone and lost himself in song:

*When Randol Fawkes was brought to Court
The charge: “you make seditious talk,”
But Blake stood up and began to shout,
“Please strike that word ‘seditious’ out.”*

CHORUS

O Blake, O Blake, who brought you from Jamaica,

*To make Bay Street eat hot potato?
The jurymen they looked askance,
To see if Randol had a chance;
But Blake enquired, "Where's the Law?
I heard you've done this trick before."*

III

*When Sergeant Thompson took his place,
Fear put its trademark on his face;
"How did you put your statement down?"
And Thompson, he began to frown.*

IV

*If they called Fawkes, as you imply,
Their leader Moses, tell me why?
Did Moses not his God obey,
When he the proud Egyptian slay?*

V

*Then Glinton he was brought to task,
A legal man how long 'twill last;
To speak a dozen words and slow?
Here take this Tribune make a show.*

VI

*But Q.C. Blake's a tricky man,
He had the trump card in his hand;
But did not want St. George to see
That English Law they must agree.*

VII

*The Judge asked Blake to give him time,
For him to concentrate his mind;
And Blake said, "Yes, my Learned Friend,
I thank you for a long weekend."*

VIII

*But when that Monday morning break,
Fawkes' reputation was at stake;
The Judge looked at St. George and said,*

"The Crown don't have a case, 'tis dead."

IX

*Blake knew he had St. George at bay,
And said, "I'll be upon my way.
I sure enjoy this long weekend
But I sure hope to fight with you again."*

X

*And now I'm saying this my Friends
That things like this must have an end;
For all of Bay Street really mourned
When Fawkes jumped out the box and gone.*

On Tuesday, the 25th November, 1958, the Bahamas Federation of Labour played host to the distinguished bus strike leader, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther



Compare Philosophies - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King and Randol Fawkes (author) compare their respective philosophies: "Non-violence" and "A Mighty Meekness."

King and his close associate, Dr. Abernathy.

Dr. King spoke to a capacity audience at the Federation Hall. He congratulated the Federation on its historic stand during the 19-day General Strike. His speech elicited loud applause as he ended: "The whole world is moving forward today and you must move with it. If you cannot fly, run; if you cannot run, walk; if you cannot walk, creep, but in any case keep moving."

A thousand untrained voices but well tuned hearts then sang for him:

*If each little child could have fresh milk each day,
If each working man had a good job with pay;
If each lonely soul had a good place to stay*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Pastor Abn. Baptist Church

454 Baxter Avenue

Montgomery, Ala.

Telephone 2-2272

December 15, 1958

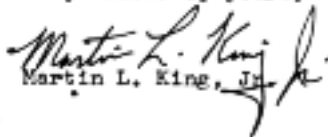
Dear Mr. Fawkes:

This is just a note to acknowledge receipt of your very kind letter. I too, was greatly helped by my visit to Nassau. I will long remember the expressions of genuine goodwill and moral support on the part of the people of your community.

Please allow me to again express my personal appreciation to you for your determined courage and dedication to the cause of Freedom and Human Dignity. I am sure that your name will long live in the annals of your nation's history for your willingness to suffer and sacrifice for a cause that you know is right.

I hope I will have an opportunity to visit Nassau again in the not-too-distant future. Please extend my best wishes to all of the kind people that I met there.

Very sincerely yours,


Martin L. King, Jr.

Mr. Randol F. Fawkes, President
The Bahamas Federation of Labour
P. O. Box 451
Wulff Road
New Providence, B A H A M A S

E P I L O G U E

THE BAHAMAS FEDERATION OF LABOUR

Affiliated to

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

C. R. I. T. and CADORIT

RANDOL F. PARKES, M.H.A.
PRESIDENT
RICHARD J. COOPER
1ST VICE-PRESIDENT
GUIDLEY MARSHALL
2ND VICE-PRESIDENT
MRS. MARGUERITA WALLACE
3RD VICE-PRESIDENT
LEONARD JAMES
4TH VICE-PRESIDENT
L. GARTH WRIGHT
SECRETARY-TREASURER

TO WHOM ALL COMMUNICATIONS MUST BE ADDRESSED



JOSEPH A. ZONICLE
ASST. SECRETARY

P. O. BOX 481
WULFF ROAD
NEW PROVIDENCE,
BAHAMAS

TELEPHONE: 6941
TELEGRAMS: FEDERATION, BAHAMAS.

1st December, 1958.

THE HON. NORMAN W. MANLEY, Q.C.,
Chief Minister,
Kingston,
JAMAICA,
The West Indies.

Dear Mr. Manley,

Just a note to thank you for recommending Mr. Vivian O. S. Blake Q.C., as the Barrister most able to conduct my Defence in the recent Sedition Trial.

Your confidence in his integrity and ability has been more than justified. His victory reflects great credit on the Jamaican Bar and his sociability has advanced good neighbour relations between our two countries.

Again with thanks and the best of all good wishes for a Happy Holiday Season,

Fraternally yours,

Randol F. Parkes.

It could be a wonderful world.

BACKLASH

The story should have ended here but it didn't. The following morning our landlord, Ortlund H. Bodie Sr., served an eviction notice on us, requiring the B.F. of L. to vacate the Federation Hall forthwith.

When I appeared in the lower court to represent the B.F. of L., Landlord and Tenant Case, Mr. Maxwell J. Thompson, still aggrieved by the content of my allegedly seditious speech, refused to recognize my right to audience as a Counsel and Attorney in the Court.

"Mr. Fawkes," he exploded, "on the 8th August, you vilified me at Windsor Park. You held me up to public ridicule and abuse. I will not hear you in the court until you apologize."

There was no other Magistrate's Court in New Providence. So this meant that my livelihood would be effectively stopped again.

"But Your Worship," I replied, "the charge of Sedition against me was duly tried by the highest court in the land and dismissed. Surely, British Justice will not permit a British Subject to be vexed twice for the same offence?"

Magistrate Thompson suddenly bolted from his elevated bench and stormed unceremoniously out of court and at the same time shrieked: "You heard what I said Mr. Fawkes. I am adjourning this court so that you can make up your mind what you wish to do."

I apologized. I won the landlord - tenant case. My family and I and the whole community enjoyed the Christmas holiday season.

Praise the Lord !!

* * *

CHAPTER X

* REACTION AND REFORM *

On Friday, June 3, 1962, one of the happiest days in the life of the Labour Movement, I wept unashamedly before approximately 20,000 people. The occasion marked the first workers' celebration of Labour Day as an official public holiday.

As usual, I was standing before a microphone reminiscing our whole story from slavery to within a glimpse of the Promised Land. "In the past I may



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have addressed you as the trembling organizer of an ordinary union, but today I call you forth as the captain of a mighty host. In tribute to all our brothers and sisters who died, whether by industrial accident or otherwise, I now invite you to bow your heads in observance of a moment's silence."

They did.

During that minute, the picture of the past sacrifices of my people so flood-



Sam Stubbs leads the gathering in song.

ed my mind that at the end of the sixty seconds, with tears streaming down my face, I uttered aloud, "In a seventh heaven of freedom, pray God let my brothers and sisters awake!"

Freed from the bosses' rule, the working classes were advancing under the



The author on Labour Day 1962

slogans: "ONE for ALL and ALL for ONE with MAN to MAN A FRIEND - A COMRADE and BROTHER;" secondly, For "BREAD, PEACE and FREEDOM;" and finally "RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH THE NATION."

But despite the lessons of the General Strike and the Seditious Trial, the reactionaries still had to be pressured or cajoled into making any further concessions to Labour. The attitude of government to the B. F. of L. in those early years was reflected in

the following letter addressed to our Secretary-Treasurer:



Alvin R. Braynen
...opposed Labour Day law

OUR REFERENCE -- 15252

May 28, 1959

Sir,

I am directed to refer to your letter of the 19th May addressed to His Excellency, The Governor who has requested me to inform you that it is not intended to give official recognition to a Labour Day in the Colony and that he does not propose to send a message to be read at your ceremonies on Friday, the 5th June, the reason for which is the same as that conveyed to you in the Colonial Secretary's letter No. 15252 of the 16th February. In the circumstance, His Excellency has directed me to say that no useful purpose would be served by giving an appointment to the President and yourself to discuss the matter.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. K. KNOX JOHNSON
Acting Colonial Secretary.

The immediate reaction of the workers to this letter was to inform their bosses not to expect them on the jobsites on Labour Day as they would be marching out of the dead yesterdays into the brighter tomorrows.

Legislation was necessary to constitute Labour Day a public holiday. This meant facing a House of Assembly where I was a lone member. In order to overcome Government's and the P.L.P.'s rank hostility toward me, I decided to take the matter in stages: first a resolution; and later, the law itself.

On May 2nd, 1960, I piloted through the House without arousing any suspicion the following:

IT IS THE OPINION OF THIS HOUSE THAT A DAY SHOULD BE SET ASIDE AND DESIGNATED "LABOUR DAY" AS A FITTING MEMORIAL TO THE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY THE WORKING PEOPLE TO THE PROGRESS OF THIS COLONY.

The vote was unanimous! Government saw the resolution as a harmless measure. It was merely a wish, not a law. The resolution might not have created Labour Day as a public holiday but it was a commitment - a means

towards an end.



AN ACT

To constitute Labour Day a Public Holiday.

WHEREAS on the Second day of May, A.D., 1960, the Honourable House of Assembly unanimously agreed to the following Resolution:

"RESOLVED, that it is the opinion of this House that a 'day should be set aside and designated as 'Labour Day' as a fitting memorial to the contributions made 'by the working people to the progress of the Colony.'"

AND WHEREAS, it is deemed desirable that the first Friday in the month of June in each year should be designated "Labour Day" and declared a public holiday:

MAY it therefore please the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty that it may be enacted and be it enacted by His Excellency Sir Robert de Stapeldon Stapledon, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Bahama Islands, the Legislative Council and Assembly of the said Islands, and it is hereby enacted and ordained by the authority of the same as follows:

1. This Act may be cited as The Labour Day Public Holiday Act 1961. Short title.

2. The first Friday in June of each and every year, being the day celebrated and known as "Labour Day", is hereby made a legal public holiday, to all intents and purposes, in the same manner as The Birthday of the Sovereign, the 1st day of January, Good Friday, the 1st Monday after Easter, the 1st Monday after Whitsunday, Empire Day (24th of May), the 1st Monday in August, 12th of October, Christmas Day and Boxing Day (26th December), are now legal public holidays. Establishment of Labour Day.

One year later - Thursday, July 22nd, 1961 - with an election in the making, I moved the first and second readings of a Bill for an Act to constitute

Labour Day a public holiday. On each occasion I used the resolution of May 2nd, 1960 as a preamble to the Bill itself. The majority of the members of the House, feeling already committed, supported their previous stand.

When the time for the third reading and passing of the Bill arrived, there was one dissenting voice, Alvin R. Braynen, the white representative for Harbour Island. “Mr. Speaker, I wonder if any other country has a holiday on Labour Day? The name alone implies that that day should be a day of work and not a day of rest. I could understand a holiday to mark the birthday of a member of the Royal Family, but Mr. Speaker, as for a holiday for Labour, I cannot support this Bill since we have enough holidays already.”

Like Brutus, I struggled against myself to remain silent on a matter on which I was most informed. “Mr. Speaker,” I commented in low key, “the Bill merely seeks to give the working population a day to call their own as a mark of respect from a grateful Government.”

I feared that the halo above my head would fall a few inches and become a noose around my neck; but IT DIDN'T.

The Bill was then given a third reading and passed by all except that one - Alvin R. Braynen. It was then sent to the second chambers, the Legislative Council, for the concurrence of that body. On the afternoon of the debate, the



Labour Day, 1962.

Council was evenly divided. On this rare occasion the fate of the Labour Day Bill was in the hands of the President of the Senate, the white Honourable G. W. K. Roberts. He used his casting vote to break the deadlock; and he did in favour of the labouring masses. Later His Excellency, The Governor, gave his assent by signing same into the Law of the land.

Undoubtedly, the free trade union movement had won for itself an honourable place in Bahamian society. By 1962 not only were workers' organizations registered under the new trade union law, but employer associations as well. They both worked together with a government referee for the maintenance of industrial peace and improvements in our social and economic development through that irreplaceable democratic institution: Collective Bargaining.

As I spoke to thousands on Labour Day, 1962, I reflected on that first of June morning twenty years ago when Albert Stubbs, alias "Sweet Potato," Joseph Rolle, alias "Joe Billy" and Lawrence Green, alias "Giant" led that rag-and-bone army up the Burma Road toward Bay Street and demanded better working conditions on the jobsite. Thanks to them, we, labour statesmen, have now learned how to substitute the Conference Table for the Riot Act. It took a lot of sweat and a lot of tears. But this thought needs the soul of the Barbadian poet, H. A. Vaughan who in his address "To the Unborn Leader in the British Caribbean" wrote:

*But what so e'er of ours you keep,
Whatever fades or disappears;
Above all else we send you this:
The flaming faith of those first years.*

Future Labour Days will outshine the greatest of the past, but what breathtaking changes had already happened since my return to The Bahamas in 1955. Try as they might the old guard minority Government could not stop the forward march of the people. They might have well have tried to hold back the dawn or to squeeze the four winds into a thimble, for history had already written its verdict.

I employed similar strategy in winning the unanimous agreement of the House of Assembly on two other economic and social reforms. I reckoned that if I could get the legislators firstly to accept, in all innocence, the raw-boned principle involved in my proposals, it would be only a matter of time when the measures would be clothed in flesh and blood. The first resolution was predicated on the view that poverty was not due to moral wickedness but to

the improper management of public affairs by their elected representatives. The record will show that on March 7, 1960 I moved the following resolution:

“RESOLVED THAT IT IS THE OPINION OF THE HOUSE THAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN BY THE LABOUR BOARD FOR THE CREATION OF A LABOUR EXCHANGE TO FACILITATE THE REGISTRATION AND PLACEMENT OF THE UNEMPLOYED WORKERS IN THE BAHAMAS.”

I sat down; no speech; no rhetoric; no further comment. The Riot, the General Strike, the Sedition Trial and my forefathers had already spoken eloquently for me.

The idea of an employment agency galloped through all stages in the House unopposed! It was implemented with all deliberate speed. Victor Hugo, a French Negro, once wrote “There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world, and that is an idea whose time has come.”

The other resolution had to be approached with greater care and wisdom because the white minority Government had since 1948 consistently rejected it. Page 385 of the 1960 Votes of the House of Assembly recorded that May 19th event as follows:

“On motion of Mr. Fawkes, the following Resolution was agreed to:

“Resolved that this House agrees in principle to The Bahamas becoming more closely associated with the University College of the West Indies;

“Resolved further, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to His Excellency, The Governor respectfully requesting His Excellency to explore the possibility of this Colony becoming associated with the University College of the West Indies and the financial obligations involved.”

This resolution was the forerunner of the present day College of the Bahamas.

In March 1959, in response to an invitation from fellow trade unionists, I visited Hamilton, Bermuda, to assist the black majority in their struggle for social justice. There the United Bermudan Party (U.B.P.) practiced victimization and discrimination against Negroes in every facet of their lives. After a week of discussions with His Excellency, The Governor, Sir John Woodall, and our comrades, Walter Astwood, Charles Bean, Leon Parris, Alex Romeo, Leonard Bascombe, Lois Francis, Dr. Rattray and others, plus a series of semi-

nars throughout the length and breadth of the island Colony, I left them all - workers, middle-class professionals and the rest - singing "Bermuda - Glorious Homeland" and with their own Progressive Labour Party (P.L.P.) firmly established as a viable alternative to the minority Government then in power.

Nineteen fifty-nine (1959) was a good year for The Bahamas too, more so after the General Strike than before, mainly because of the remarkable sense of responsibility displayed by the leaders of the P.L.P. and the B. F. of L. in effecting labour and constitutional change without resorting to violence. Further, Castro's reign of terror in Cuba led to increased activity in the field of hotel construction and tourist arrivals in Nassau as well as in Freeport, Grand Bahama.

That year also witnessed the establishment of the Labour Department and, at last, the enactment of laws to allow hotel and agricultural workers to join unions. All males of twenty-one years and over were granted the franchise, without regard to property qualifications. The iniquitous company vote was abolished and the plural vote reduced to two. The four additional seats recommended by the Secretary of State for the Colonies were won by Henry Milton Taylor, Arthur D. Hanna (Sr.), S. Spurgeon Bethel and Charles A. Dorsett - all P.L.P.'s. Again, in the 1960 by-election, Warren Levarity, another P.L.P., was chosen by the people to represent Grand Bahama and Bimini. The P.L.P. and Labour opposition now occupied a total of eleven seats; the U.B.P. - twenty-two. "Next year," we exulted, "we shall be the Government. Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition - more ballots, not bullets; more faith, not fiction."

With the ramparts of the opposition thus strengthened, the debates in the House of Assembly became so spirited that the minority Government limited the speeches of each one of us to fifteen minutes. This time-bar could only be extended by leave of the House on motion duly put, seconded and passed. Henceforth, Mr. Speaker kept fifteen-minute hour glasses on his desk. Every so often he could be seen inverting one of these instruments whenever the sands of time ran out on the opposition members.

But the P.L.P. and Labour representatives could not be silenced. We marched, we sang as we took our cases to the Universities of Windsor Park and the Southern Recreation Grounds. There we lectured to a responsive student body on the social and economic problems of the day.

We, the little band of prophets, we brothers, had seen people born in pover-

ty and reared in ignorance, and we wanted to do something about it. From every available platform we called for the recognition of public health as an integral part of Government's programme in its own right and not merely as an adjunct to sanitation. Housing, we contended, was an essential part of environmental improvement and one which was inextricably involved in overall health considerations. We wanted to ban the renting by landlords of shacks as living accommodations and holes in the ground as toilets.

There were so-called investors who booked housing for people in lower income brackets with mortgages that guaranteed unmercifully high interest profits to their shareholders. These investors discouraged Government from helping homeless families until it soon became an article of faith that private enterprise, not Government, would help the poor. But the poor soon learned that private enterprise was not interested in welfare but only in wealth - their own. Hence the much vaunted Public Housings and Mortgage Corporation never intended to help the poor but was an institution that brought to the lender (investor) repayment of his principal loan with a handsome interest; oft-times compounded and at the expense of the poor man's life-long savings and, alas, his home.

We had seen old people, who constituted a high proportion of the poor, pining away without a hope in the world and we wanted to give them pensions. Having convinced the House of Assembly of their predicament, Government authorised by special resolution the payment of non-contributory pensions in the sum of ten shillings per month to males of sixty-five years and females of sixty, provided they were of limited means.

But the shame of it all still remained. More than one half of the adult population of The Bahamas - the women - were vote less. In 1958 they lagged far behind their male counterparts in the field of human rights. The chief road-blocks to full citizenship for Bahamian women were:

- (i) The traditional attitudes of men and women towards their respective roles in society;
- (ii) The lack of equal education and training, vocational guidance and counselling in the schools;
- (iii) The division of the labour market into traditionally male and female sectors; and
- (iv) The lack of child-care facilities for working mothers.

In 1948, when I was called to the Bar, there were no women in policymaking positions in the executive, legislative or judicial branches of government. Then again, women employed in the homes often worked ten to twelve hours a day for a pittance while those who toiled outside were not given equal pay with men when they performed work of the same value.

Progress towards equality was often obstructed by the deep-rooted beliefs that the female was inferior to the male. The birth of a female was often an occasion for sorrow, not a joyous time as was the birth of a male child. Right from the start male children were favoured with better education and career opportunities.

To be more specific, Bahamian inheritance laws were (and many still are) unfair to women. Should a husband die in testate and without lawful children, the wife can claim only a third of her husband's real estate for as long as she might live. The remaining two-thirds of the land went to the nearest male relative of the deceased and his line must be fully exhausted before any female could even be considered as an heiress-at-law. If, however, a man dies in testate leaving only lawful daughters and no lawful son, then all the daughters took equally.

Various rules of inheritance produced various social consequences. Under the system of primogeniture which discriminates against females, each generation saw a division into the "haves" and the "have-nots" so that an economic differentiation was perpetuated even among close kin.

With regard to Personal Estate (money, movables etc.) if these are valued less than fifty pounds (approximately \$143:00) then all will go to the wife; if, however, the personal estate is in excess of fifty pounds, the wife gets only a half interest providing there are no children of the marriage; if there are children, she gets a third of her husband's Personal Estate and the remaining two-thirds are shared equally among the children provided the deceased made no will.

Women and their children also suffer in The Bahamas because of the inadequate maintenance awards given by the Magistrates' Courts. A Maintenance Order made by a magistrate after a wife has been deserted cannot exceed six pounds (\$16:82) a week, for the wife alone. When the order is made for the maintenance of children, the amount payable cannot exceed three pounds weekly for each child. However, an order can be made for the maintenance of a wife and children or for the maintenance of children alone for an amount

exceeding twelve pounds a week.

It should be also noted that the wife forfeits her right to maintenance for herself, if, in the opinion of the Magistrate, she has been guilty of misconduct.

In order for a single woman to obtain maintenance through the Magistrate's Court for her illegitimate child, she must apply for a summons to have the alleged or putative father appear in Court.

If the putative father denies paternity and the magistrate is satisfied by the mother's evidence, corroborated in some material particular by two or more witnesses or by a witness and other material and independent circumstances, the magistrate can adjudge the man as the father of the child and grant maintenance to the mother or anyone who has the care of the child. The weekly sum paid, however, cannot exceed three pounds (\$8:40) and the medical, not



*Dr. Doris L. Johnson
...a ringing voice*



*Georgina Symonette
...tireless suffragette*

more than ten pounds (\$28:00).

If the mother or person having custody allows the weekly payments to fall into arrears for more than eight weeks, the putative father is not required to pay more than eight weeks in discharging the whole sum.

The period of support for the legitimate child is fifteen years and for the illegitimate child: fourteen. In all these cases, the female children, "legitimate

and illegitimate,” travelled the journeys of life second class.

Mary Ingraham, the founder and president of the Women’s Suffrage Movement, believed that the vote was essential if the women and children were to be liberated from their inferior status. Since 1939, she, ably assisted by her friends, Georgina K. Symonette, Mable Walker, Eugenie Lockhart and Gladys Bailey, bombarded the House demanding the franchise for women. When these efforts failed, a petition containing more than three thousand signatures was dispatched to the Colonial Office in London.

Twenty years later, 1959, the basic attitude of Number 10 Downing Street, London had not changed. The imperialist British Government still maintained that there was not a sufficient demand to justify giving women the vote. Despite the high sounding words of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, their old fashioned thinking persisted until Dr. Doris L. Johnson appeared on the scene and from that moment the militant suffragette movement began. On September 6th, Dr. Johnson snatched the ball out of the hands of Mary Ingraham and ran with it speedily towards her goal of full emancipation for all women.

Dr. Johnson was a short, stocky, buxom, starry-eyed black visionary who believed that she was called to the kingdom for such a time as this. In her late 30’s she sought fulfillment firstly in teaching and later in politics. “Not being able to vote and share in the government of the country,” she told the Editor of the *Nassau Herald*, “is a serious disability which the women must fight hard to remove.”

And fought hard she did. With the help of the Progressive Liberal Party and the Bahamas Federation of Labour, she mobilized the Women’s Suffrage Movement into a fighting force and demanded on January 19th, 1959 an opportunity to address the members of the House of Assembly in their own Chamber.

On that morning, Brother Lynden O. Pindling sought the unanimous consent of the House to have Dr. Johnson address the members on behalf of the women. “If the Women’s Suffrage Movement has a grievance,” reasoned Robert (Bobby) Symonette, the son of the Leader of the Government, “a petition should be presented for them by a member of the House. The Petition would, in the ordinary course of events, be sent to a Select Committee for consideration. If and when,” he continued, “that committee presents its report, the House will then decide whether to accept or reject its recommendations.”

Faced with this opposition, Brother Pindling craved the indulgence of House members to listen to Dr. Johnson after the adjournment. Brother Stevenson and I made speeches supporting Pindling's suggestion. Of course, I fed an overdose of threats of strikes and boycotts and reminded them of what harm could befall the Colony because of their shortsightedness. When this did not work I finally appealed to their sense of reason: "None of us, Mr. Speaker, would deny that our wives perform the executive, legislative and judicial functions in our homes. They set the policy, they legislate the rules and they interpret the laws in disputes which come before them. Mr. Speaker, if government is about good housekeeping, then it is time that we bring into the House of Assembly some good housekeepers. Let the women in, Mr. Speaker. Again, I say, let them in now."

"But this would be creating a dangerous precedent," remonstrated Robert (Bobby) Symonette.

Immediately after Symonette's reply, about six of the Bay Street clique bolted from their chairs and headed for the stairway where they were confronted by a group of angry straw vendors and other sisters who sent them pell-mell back to their seats in the debating chamber to do their public duty. A few minutes later, Mr. Speaker informed the House that he had made arrangements for members to listen to Dr. Johnson in the Magistrate's Court nearby. So off to Court the legislators went to hear her.

In the streets, women carried placards with the legend: NO NATION CAN RISE HIGHER THAN THE STATUS OF ITS WOMANHOOD. In the Courthouse, Dr. Johnson, attired in an all black dress, made an impassioned plea.

"Mr. Speaker and members of the Honourable House of Assembly, today invincible womanhood, mother of men and ruler of the world, raises her noble head and approaches the courts of justice with the clarion call for equal rights for all Bahamian Women."

Her voice rang throughout the corridors of the old building and raced up and down the streets to inspire her colleagues.

"Mr. Speaker and members of the Honourable House of Assembly, the Women's Suffrage Movement speaks today on behalf of over fifty-four thousand women; more than one half of the total adult population of our islands. The women of The Bahamas have been awakened to their responsibilities and duties as citizens for many generations, and in the last thirty or thirty-five

years women have vigorously carried out their duties and responsibilities in a manner comparable to those performed by the women of any highly civilized country. True, we have not been violent agitators because we have accepted the traditional theory that civic and political responsibilities were ably carried out by our men.

“Today women have, by force of circumstances, taken on increasing responsibilities to ensure the proper development and growth of our homes, our children and our social institutions. Bahamian women have risen to give outstanding leadership services in business activities, welfare work, home and school organizations, as well as the extension of brotherly love in one hundred fraternal and friendly societies throughout the Islands.

“In nearly all these organizations women have already learnt how to use democratic techniques of government and the principles of choosing their representatives. We nominate and elect officers, and keenly watch their services to the group, returning them again to leadership when they have served us well. We know of the many selfish intrigues which sometimes motivate men and women to seek re-election to offices and are aware of our responsibilities to rid the group of corrupt and improper leadership when once the welfare of the group is threatened. We have therefore learnt to choose our leaders well and wisely. The same principles will guide us now as we seek to assume our duties and responsibilities in guiding the destiny of our beloved Islands.

“An earlier petition for Women’s Suffrage was presented in 1952 by the Great Improved, Benevolent, Protective Order of Elks of the World, an organization with membership of over ten thousand and with six temples in the Out Islands.

“We regret that the petition submitted to the House on the 1st December, 1958, was grossly misrepresented as coming from thirteen petitioners and five hundred and twenty-nine others. The forty-five page petition, of which photostat copies have been preserved, was signed by two thousand eight hundred and twenty-nine persons living in such widely scattered islands as Exuma, Grand Bahama, Abaco, Long Island, Cat Island, Eleuthera, Andros and New Providence.

“We wish to go on record in protesting to the House that a great injustice has been done to the people’s cause and that this rash, irresponsible deed can only be vindicated by a noble act on the part of the Assembly. To be deceived is regarded by women as one of the greatest crimes against their faithful trust,

since faithfulness is the basic principle upon which we build our homes, rear our children and build our nation.

“We women have accepted and paid all the taxes which are imposed upon us by a Government in which we now have no representation. Since we are powerless to limit these taxes, we are forced to bring charges of tyranny and despotism against this, our Government, if it further denies us our rights to choose those who must rule over us and share in the making of our laws.

“Should the Government agree to abolishing all taxes of every kind including stamp duties, and custom duties on goods and properties owned by women, we would regard this as detrimental to the progress of our country, but mind you, we would be justified in refusing to pay your taxes, since we women are ineligible to vote.

“We do not wish to be regarded as rebellious, but we would point out to you that to cling sullenly or timidly to ancient, outmoded ways of government is not in the best interest of our country.

“We therefore earnestly desire that this regime go on record as an enlightened democratic body, by ordering the immediate enumeration and registration of all women twenty-one years and over so that they may carry out their duties as full citizens in the next by-election or general election.

“WE WOMEN PRESS THIS DEMAND AND ASK SUCH ENACTMENT ON THE BASIS OF NOT WHO IS RIGHT, BUT WHAT IS RIGHT FOR OUR COUNTRY. WE JUDGE EXPEDIENCY ONLY ON THIS BASIS. WE SEEK NO COMPROMISE. THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE. WE ABHOR ANY DELAYING ACTION. WE WOMEN ASK ONLY THAT YOU GENTLEMEN MOVE NOW TO SECURE THE RIGHTS OF FIFTY-FOUR THOUSAND WOMEN, INCLUDING YOUR WIVES AND DAUGHTERS.

“Approximately half of the female population are working women, many of whom are the entire support of their families. Many have built their own homes, have bank accounts, established themselves in business and pay government taxes. An earlier petition points out to the Honourable House that it is a violation of the principles of democracy to grind out taxes from people who are without the power to limit or extend such taxes. Taxation without representation as you will recall was the basic principle upon which the American Revolution was based, and which due to the short-sightedness of the British King George III and his Ministers lost for Britain our great and benef-



Parliamentarians - Above are members of the Honourable House of Assembly before whom Doris L. Johnson delivered her impassioned plea on behalf of Babamain women. From left are: Leonard Thompson, Stafford L. Sands, Randol Faukes (author), Warren Levarity, Alexander Pinder, third clerk; George Johnson, secretary and sergeant-at-Arms; L.O. Pindling, Eugene A.P. Dupuch, Robert (Bobby) Symonette; Asa H. Pritchard, Speaker; Charles A. Dorsett, Donald d'Albenas, H.G. Christie, John Smith, Chief Clerk; Geoffrey Kelly, Trevor Kelly, Canon Addington Johnson (chaplain), Roy Solomon, Peter Betbell, H.M. Taylor, Gerald Casb, George Baker, Dr. Raymond Sawyer, Clarence A. Bain, A.D. Hanna, John Betbell, Samuel Isaacs, Freddie Broun, Alvin Braynen, Spurgeon Betbell, Cyril S. Stevenson and R.T. Symonette(1959).

icent neighbour, The United States of America. It is this principle which still stirs a revolt in the hearts of Bahamian women and energizes us to make our plea before honourable men.

“We women grieve and are deeply concerned when our sons and daughters, tried in the courts of law, find always that they are faced by a male group of jurors. We firmly believe that it is our democratic right that women should serve on these juries, but without the vote, the whole country is denied the benefit of full and impartial judgment.

“We women are extremely concerned that the plight of delinquent girls is taken so lightly by our Government. The hearts of mothers grieve at the revolting practice of sending poor girls eight, nine, ten and eleven years to live in jail with seasoned criminals. Active participation in government by Bahamian Women will see an end to such practices, and proper care and guidance will be given to those whose real crime is only poverty and insecurity.

“There are other grievances which we women have. Local government in our islands is administered through boards and committees. There are eleven boards consisting of 56 members. There are twenty-one committees assisted by advisory committees and on these there are seven women who are privileged to serve only in inferior capacities. There are two hundred Justices of the Peace from whose ranks women are totally excluded. There are Out Island



Votes for women - The suffragettes stage a demonstration. In the centre is the English wife of Cyril Stevenson - June Stevenson. The others are native Bahamians.

Commissionerships in which no woman is invited to serve.

“The Houghton Report on Education suggests to Government the advisability of including women on the proposed Advisory Committee to the Board of Education. While wholeheartedly endorsing this suggestion, we further wish to show the advisability of including women on the Board of Education and any other Board which deals with the welfare of our homes, schools and communities.

“Gentlemen, hear me. It requires the insight and interests of women to investigate, report on and seek improvement for many projects that men are not naturally interested in and you would be free to turn your energies to more manly pursuits. We women wish to serve our country and assist your efforts in attending to such projects as housing schemes, slum clearance, establishment of libraries and local welfare services, supervision of food and drug supplies, and the establishment of reasonable and respectable lodgings for temporary visitors from our Out Islands.

“Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly, putting aside our grievances, we women raise our hearts and heads to loftier things: our willingness and



Making History - Miss Ruby Ann Cooper (left) made history on July 2, 1962, when she became the first woman to register as a voter in The Bahamas. Here, she is being congratulated by a fellow Bahamian

readiness to participate as full citizens in the affairs of our country. We women are ready, willing and able. YOU MUST NO LONGER DENY US OUR RIGHTS.

“Your humble petitioner thanks God for this opportunity to speak to your hearts and consciences and prays that speedy action will be taken by you to bring about the enumeration and registration of all Bahamian women twenty-one years and over.”

Everyone was impressed by the content of her oration and the histrionic manner in which it was delivered. There could be no doubt about her sincerity. Dr. Johnson’s speech inside the Courthouse and the noise outside were sufficient to blow down the walls of Jericho; but nothing happened. So the following day, Mary Ingraham led the Women’s Suffrage Movement to Government House for answers, but when none was forthcoming, the Movement sent a delegation to London to confer with the Colonial Office.

One year later - January 10, 1960 - another petition shrieked: “The adult female population is desirous of having the vote NOW!” But since the Government and the Colonial Office turned a deaf ear to the cries of the women, the Progressive Liberal Party and the Bahamas Federation of Labour took their cause for help to Windsor Park and the Southern Recreation Grounds and to every nook and cranny in the Out Islands until the winds of change developed into a veritable hurricane.

To quicken their stride to greater citizenship responsibilities, I wrote and published the *Bahams Government*. This second edition of my former treatise became a textbook for children and adults. In establishing Bahamian freedom, my pen and Cyril Stevenson’s *Nassau Herald* had merit equal to that of the sword and a shield.

At last, on the 31st July 1961, His Excellency, the Governor assented to an Act to enable women to have and exercise rights of registration as voters and of voting and of membership of the General Assembly similar to those accorded to men under the provisions of the General Assembly Act 1959.

In the November, 1962 General Elections, the women voted for the first time in history. They unleashed tremendous political power, but in the wrong direction. After the contest, the combined P.L.P. Labour Opposition Coalition in the House dropped to nine; two less than before the women were granted the right to vote. Even Dr. Doris Johnson was a casualty. On the other hand, the old guard minority Government now boasted a parliamentary membership

of twenty-three; an increase by one, while Harold DeGregory, an Independent, became the representative for Grand Bahama by defeating Warren Levarity, another P.L.P.

“I meant to vote for our boys,” remarked one suffragette, “but Mr. Geoffrey Johnstone (white) looked so pretty and talk so sweet that my head started to swing as I went to mark my ‘X’ on the ballot paper. I like him.”

Another one of our sisters said, “I had to vote *fa da oder man* because he even look like *da Master*.”

But the seasoned political observers took a more positive view of the elections. When we studied the results against the background of “gerrymandering,” an entirely different picture emerged. The minority Government had divided the Bahama Islands into electoral districts in such an unnatural and unfair manner so as to give themselves a distinct political advantage. The predominantly white districts such as Abaco and Harbour Island returned three representatives, while the more populous areas in the black belt were allowed two representatives and in some cases only one. The bald facts showed that in the recent general elections, the combined P.L.P.-Labour coalition votes totaled over 34,000 as opposed to the Bay Street Boys’ 26,826. Paradoxically, we had won the election but lost the country. This, indeed, was the cutting edge of wry humour.

There was no doubt whatsoever that come 1967 General Elections, we would be the government of The Bahamas! We therefore renewed our campaign for greater participation in our country’s affairs, a larger measure of internal self-government and local government for our entire Nation to be!

In 1956, the Bahamas Constitution had roots of considerable antiquity, much of it dating back to 1728. The Governor represented the Queen of England, not the people and there was a nominated Legislative Council and a House of Assembly that was neither fully representative nor responsible. Additionally, the Queen, via the hands of a Governor, appointed the Executive Government. He had the power of veto and was advised by an Executive Council of not more than nine members. Various executive powers and the right to enact certain subsidiary legislation were vested by law in the Governor in Council. The Queen, however, had a general power to disallow any legislation. The Legislative Council consisted of nine members nominated by the Crown. The members served during the Queen’s pleasure, which sometimes meant for life. In 1956, the House of Assembly comprised twenty-nine mem-

bers elected by an adult male suffrage. In addition to the franchise based on residence, there was a limited second vote in respect of ownership or rental of real property in any constituency other than that in which the elector resided.

In addition to the usual Government Departments, there were Public Boards dealing with public works, education, health, pilotage, agricultural and marine products, oil exploration, telephones etc. These Boards were appointed annually by the Governor and consisted of seven members, two of which were required to be members of the House of Assembly. In our system there were no local or municipal authorities.

Any political scientist would agree that this 1728 Constitution, modified only by Letters Patent and Royal Instructions was doomed to failure. With the Governor having a party of not more than four or five members of his Executive Council in a twenty-nine member House of Assembly, no government measure could be assured of safe passage. Furthermore the Deputy Speaker, who was regarded as the Leader of the Opposition, was Chairman of the powerful Finance Committee. To confuse the matter more, although the House of Assembly represented the people, no vote of censure by the legislature could remove the Governor or any one of his appointed council of advisors.

In England the Queen reigns but does not rule. In France the President of The Republic neither reigns nor rules, but the constitutional system in The Bahamas allowed the Governor both to reign and rule. This system, according to history, should have collapsed long ago but it lasted for over two hundred years because of the restricted franchise and the limited education of the masses. With the introduction of party government in 1953 and a national Labour movement in 1955, however, the minority Government became shockingly aware that their nemesis was at hand and they could do nothing to stop it.

During the 1962 general elections, the United Bahamian Party, the Progressive Liberal Party and the Labour Party announced their intentions of seeking to obtain for the elected representatives of the people a greater degree of responsibility for the government of the country. When the Secretary of State for the Colonies visited The Bahamas in December, 1962, he met with the representatives of the two main political parties and of the Legislative Council and in response to an expression of the desire of the two main parties for constitutional advance towards internal self-government, he invited them to a Conference to be held in London in 1963 to discuss proposals for this pur-

pose.

No invitation to this important Constitutional Conference, however, was sent to the Labour Party. True, the Labour Party was only one parliamentarian crying in the wilderness, but I had been elected in the 1962 General Elections on a Labour ticket with opposition from all parties. A Constitutional Conference without a Labour representative was unthinkable. The P.L.P. couldn't care less and the U.B.P. was happy, but the House of Labour was saddened at the prospect of my absence.

I wanted to overthrow the status quo and replace it with men and women of integrity - statesmen and stateswomen more interested in the next generation than in the next election and who would put public welfare above personal gain.

I wanted to see in The Bahamas a government of good laws and not of bad men and bad women. I wanted a government which was not afraid to enact legislation to ease the burden of taxation for the poor and place it on the shoulders of those who were best able to pay and those who benefited most from government services.

I wanted to see a government that offered employment to every qualified Bahamian not because he was a U.B.P. or P.L.P. but because he was a Bahamian ready, willing and able to serve.



The Old Regime - The United Bahamian Party delegates to the May, 1963, Constitutional Conference. "The old regime took one last look at the old Constitution." From left are: G.A. D. Johnstone, G. K. Kelly, the Honourable S. L. Sands, Sir Ronald Symonette, the Honourable D. E. d'Albenas, P. D. Graham and R. M. Solomon.

I wanted to see a Bahamas in which my children would be free of racial and political victimization. For them and for all who walk on Bahamian soil I wanted equality of opportunity.

I wanted a government in which Labour was adequately represented by men and women who would not stoop to bribery and corruption.

I wanted a government of righteousness based on justice.

So the B. F. of L.'s free trade unions called an emergency meeting. They dispatched, on the wings of prayer, a letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies pointing out the omission of the Labour Party from his list of invitees; three weeks later, a police officer handed to me an envelope from His Excellency, The Governor. In it was the invitation from the Secretary of State himself asking the Labour Party to send a delegation of one - me - to the Constitutional Conference in London.

On April 29, 1963, Brother Maxwell N. Taylor, Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union and I left Nassau on Pan American for New York, where we boarded the London-bound B.O.A.C. 500. On the same flight was Sir Roland T. Symonette, the Leader of Government, with whom I had crossed swords so often. Upon seeing me he quipped, "Man had I known that you were on this flight, I would have walked on the waters!"

For the Conference, memoranda were prepared by the United Bahamian Party, the Progressive Liberal Party and the Labour Party. These were circulated to delegates and formed the basis of the discussions at the Conference, particularly in the cases where differences between the various memoranda were revealed. A full record was made of all the proceedings and this formed the basis for drafting of the new Constitution.

The proposals of the two major parties differed from my recommendations in that they sought an entrenchment of power in the Central Authority in Nassau. The Labour Party supported their demands but in addition wanted to see the introduction of a system of local government in New Providence and throughout the Out Islands. Had the Conference been held in The Bahamas rather than in London, the delegations would have seen this need more clearly. But London wanted us to see the majesty of its Kingdom and experience the genius of the Westminster System and to plant it in the minds of people of The Bahamas regardless of their present stages of social, economic, political and cultural development.

The Conference was convened on May 1, at the Colonial Office, and consisted of fifteen sessions. The Bahamas delegation was comprised of the President of the Legislative Council and two of its members; the Speaker of the House of Assembly and two independents; seven parliamentary members of the United Bahamian Party, four parliamentarians of the Progressive Liberal Party and the leader of the Labour Party. Biographically speaking, the founding fathers of this New Bahamas which was to be were:

SIR GEORGE ROBERTS C.B.E. - President of the Legislative Council since 1954. Former member of Executive Council (1946 to 1954) and Leader for Government Business in the House of Assembly from 1949 to 1954. Knighted in 1958. Ship owner and managing director of various companies in Nassau. "Not a brilliant man, but a respected one."

ROBERT SYMONETTE - Speaker of the House of Assembly. Elected Speaker in 1962 having been a member of the House since 1949 and was at the time, the Senior Member of Exuma District. A former Chairman of the Board of Pilotage and member of the Development Board and other public authorities. Managing Director of various Nassau companies and hotel owner. Son of Sir Roland T. Symonette. "Bobby wore his conceit like a halo over his head."

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

GODFREY HIGGS C.B.E., - Barrister-at-Law. Member of Legislative Council since 1950. A former member of Executive Council (1942-1949) and Leader for Government (1946-1949). Former Chairman of Board of Health and Chairman and member of Public Authorities. Partner in law firm of Messrs. Higgs and Johnson and called to the Bar at Inner Temple. His famous quotation: "I do not believe in mass education."

ETIENNE DUPUCH - Editor, publisher and proprietor of the *Nassau Daily Tribune*. Member of the Legislative Council since 1959. A former member of the House of Assembly (1925 to 1942 and 1949 to 1961). A former member of various public authorities. "With my paper I can make or break politicians."

THE UNITED BAHAMIAN PARTY

SIR ROLAND T. SYMONETTE – Was at the time the Leader for Government Business in the House of Assembly. A member of the House of Assembly continuously since 1925 and was the Senior Representative for the

Eastern District of New Providence. First appointed to Executive Council in 1949 and appointed Leader of Government Business in 1954. Knighted 1959. Shipyard owner and managing director of various firms. "I can govern as easily as I can eat a breakfast."

SIR STAFFORD SANDS, C. B. E. -Attorney-at-Law. Member of the House of Assembly since 1937 and was the Senior Representative for the City District of New Providence and Chairman of the Development Board. Former member of the Executive Council (1945-1946) and Leader for Government Business during the same period. Reappointed to Executive Council in December, 1962. Former member of various public authorities. In addition to an extensive law practice, he had numerous commercial interests. "He deals in deals."

DONALD d'ALBENAS - Member of the House of Assembly since 1956; was the Junior Member for the Long Island District and Parliamentary Leader of the United Bahamian Party. Chairman and member of various public authorities. Appointed to Executive Council, December, 1962. Proprietor of d'Albenas Agency (Commission Merchant). Canadian by birth. Clarence A. Bain M. H. A. referred to him as the "politician with Bible in one hand; dagger in the next."

GODFREY KELLY - Barrister-at-Law. Member of the House of Assembly



UNITED FRONT -Above, at the 1963 Constitutional Conference, are from left: L. O. Pindling, Paul Adderley, Orville Turnquest, A.D. Hanna (all members of the House of Assembly representing the Progressive Liberal Party), and R.F. Fawkes (representing the Labour Party). "We little band of prophets, we brothers."

since 1956 and was the Junior Member for Cat Island. Member of various public authorities. Partner in the law firm of Messrs. Higgs and Kelly. Called to the Bar at Middle Temple. A mild man who always followed the lead of the old regime.

PETER GRAHAM - Barrister-at-Law. Member of the House of Assembly since 1956 and was the Senior Member for the Long Island District. Chairman and member of various public authorities. Called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, London. "He tries so hard to be a gentleman."

GEOFFREY JOHNSTONE - Barrister-at-Law. Member of the House of Assembly since November, 1962 and was the Junior Member for the Eastern District of New Providence. Chairman of the United Bahamian Party. Chairman and member of various public authorities. Member of Law Firm of Messrs. Higgs and Johnson. "The golden boy of the old guard."

ROY SOLOMON - Member of the House of Assembly since 1949 and the member for San Salvador. Chairman and member of various public authorities. Owner and director of various foreign trade companies. "Business first; business second and, if any energy is left, business again."

THE PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL PARTY

LYNDEN PINDLING - Barrister-at-Law. Member of the House of Assembly since 1956 and the Senior Member for the South Central District of



Sir Robert Stapledon ...Governor



Kendal Isaacs...Solicitor General

New Providence. Parliamentary Leader of the Progressive Liberal Party.

Former member of various public authorities. Called to the Bar at Middle Temple. "Astute."

PAUL ADDERLEY - Member of the House of Assembly since November, 1962, and the Senior Member for the Western District of New Providence and Deputy Parliamentary Leader of the Progressive Liberal Party. Barrister-at-Law. Born with a silver spoon in his mouth. "Thorough."

ORVILLE TURNQUEST - Barrister-at-Law. Member of the House of Assembly since November, 1962 and the Junior Member for the South Central District of New Providence. Partner in the legal firm of Dupuch and Turnquest. Called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn. "Ambitious."

ARTHUR HANNA - Barrister-at-Law. Member of the House of Assembly since November 1960 and was Senior Member for the Eastern District of New Providence. Called to the Bar at the Inner Temple. "Seemingly impersonal but actually a patriot."

THE INDEPENDENTS

EUGENE DUPUCH C. B. E. - Barrister-at-Law. Member of the House of Assembly since 1950 and presently Junior Member for the East Central District of New Providence. Appointed to the Executive Council in 1953. Formerly chairman and member of various public authorities. Senior partner in the legal firm of Dupuch and Turnquest and called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn. "Independent in thought and deed."

ALVIN BRAYNEN - Member of the House of Assembly since 1936 and the Junior Representative for Harbour Island District. A former member of the Executive Council from 1953 to 1958 and a former Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly. Chairman and member of various public authorities. Businessman. Agent for a petroleum company. "A political maverick."

RANDOL FAWKES - Attorney-at-Law. Member of the House of Assembly since 1956 and the member for the Southern District of New Providence. President of the Bahamas Federation of Labour, leader of the Labour Party. Author of numerous articles on Labour and Constitutional Reform.

Representing the Government was His Excellency, The Governor, Sir Robert Stapledon. His advisor was the Solicitor General, the Honourable Kendal G. L. Isaacs. Nigel Fisher, the debonair Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for the Colonies, served as Chairman.

At the Constitutional Conference, topics were taken up, discussed, postponed, referred to committees, dropped and sometimes later resumed. At one point the talks were drama in high order; at another, it was feared that Sir Roland Symonette, the Leader of the Old Guard, would walk out. The Conference was nearly always illuminating. The debates contained lessons in moderation and compromise.

Hitherto one had to look among the bits and pieces of England's parliamentary history for our Constitution. Of course, there were certain written forms peculiar to The Bahamas, but on the whole, most of it was derived from the Common Law of England.

After approximately three weeks of work, the delegates finally agreed that the new Constitution, written in the Western tradition, would provide for ministerial internal self-government with a two-chamber legislature - the Senate and the House of Assembly.

There would be a cabinet consisting of a premier and at least eight minis-



WELCOME HOME! - Chippie (Howard Chipman) and his boys welcomed the P.L.P. and Labour delegates home from London's constitutional talks in May, 1963.

ters. Except in matters of foreign affairs, defence, internal security and police, the Governor would act only on the advice of the responsible Minister.

There would be Executive Commissions to deal with the Public Service, the police and the Judiciary.

A Court of Appeal would, at last, be established within one year of the coming into force of the new Constitution which would contain, among other things, provisions safeguarding recognized human rights.

After we had settled the last of the “crunch” points in the Constitution, Nigel Fisher, the Chairman, in an attempt to calm the fears of the minority Government that they might be marching toward their own Waterloo remarked, “There is nothing in this Constitution of which anyone should be afraid. None of the clauses will bite you.”

Many of the delegates jerked their necks in his direction as if to ask, “Why the unfortunate choice of words?”

Still sensing a foreboding in the U.B.P.’s mind that they might be writing their own death certificate, he tried to reassure them, “Anyway, under this Constitution, you will expect responsible men to act responsibly.”

It was at this point that one of the U.B.P. delegates, Alvin Braynen, treated us to a bit of Bahamian humour, “Man, you never hear about my Fox Hill dog, eh?”

Nigel Fisher, still unruffled and speaking the Queen’s English, pure and undefiled, said “No. kindly enlighten us. Pray share your joy.”

“Man,” the delegate continued, “one day while I was sitting on ma porch the woman come hollerin’, ‘Fresh peas, corn, cassava and banana. Boss man,’ she say to me, ‘you want anyting today?’

“Sure, Sarah, come in,” I replied, beckoning her at the same time to open the gate.

“Me? Come in dere? Bossman, tie ya dog first!”

“Oh, Sarah, don’t worry bout dat dog. He gat rubber teet.

“Well, Boss man,’ she replied, ‘you know da dog gat rubber teet. I know da dog gat rubber teet. But da dog don’ know he gat rubber teet’.” The Conference dispersed on that note of humour.

In the meantime, when we, the P.L.P. and Labour delegates, returned to The Bahamas from our labours in London, we discovered that we had won a special place in the hearts of our brothers and sisters. They had shared vicariously in our struggle to win the best possible written Constitution for them. They too felt that something new and significant was about to happen in their lives and they reached up to catch hold of it with both hands.

Their enthusiasm was contagious. Some may have been indifferent to the movement before, but now we all wanted our country to be prosperous and respected by other nations. Hereafter each one of us wished to make it a point of duty to love our Bahamas, to work harder for it and to feel proud of it.

The mood of the times was captured by Bahamian poetess, Susan Wallace:

*Stress on education,
All gattie go to school,
Cause dey can't 'ford in de New Bahamas
To be anybody fool*

I, too, was caught up in the frenzied emotions of the times. At a P.L.P. mass meeting at the Southern Recreation Grounds on Monday, May 28, 1963, in a dramatic maneuver toward reconciliation, I marched on their platform and, in the presence of thousands, re-joined the Party. They shouted, "UNITY - NOW AND FOREVER!"

They invited me to remain with them and I invited them to march with me on Labour Day - the first Friday in June. The black people seemed to have realized instinctively that soon The Bahamas would be theirs and ours. Old attitudes were questioned and, in many cases, discarded. An advancing and united working class movement made men and women more conscious of their power and more anxious for improvements in the quality of their lives. They wanted to start now to build the new Bahamas with their own hands. To them, nothing was impossible.

Truth to tell, Gentle Reader, a new Bahamian spirit was "aborning." I wish you could have seen and felt the interplay of labour and politics, poetry and Goombay - all with many organs and themes but with one body and soul. We, the little band of prophets, never walked alone anymore. We were united with the people under one true God, with one true brotherhood and with one certain destiny - FREEDOM.

Come with me, Gentle Reader, and witness democracy fighting for its life on the public parks, stimulated by its former victories, organizing itself under

the banners of the P.L.P. and B. F. of L. and flowering into a new society under a new constitutional system. You will linger with pleasure over the spectacle of the Bahamian mind, liberating itself from the superstition that black people cannot govern themselves and that politics is "for whites only." Then, again you will see the idea of "freedom" bursting the narrow bounds of the city of Nassau and overflowing into the Island States - Out Islands - and enriching those formerly primitive lands with a dynamic concept: "NATIONHOOD."

When the House of Assembly convened early in June, 1963, Godfrey Kelly, the U.B.P. member for Cat Island, challenged the Opposition to prove its contention that there was spiraling unemployment in the country. We accepted the challenge and promised to bring the unemployed to Bay Street to prove it.

On the eve of the next meeting of the House, June 26, we held a mass meet-



*Mr. Randol F. Fawkes, of the Progressive Liberal Party,
is surrounded by policemen and supporters as he forces his way towards the U.B.P.'s Platform.*

ing on the Southern Recreation Grounds at which time we invited all of our brothers and sisters to report to Bay Street the following morning.

On the same night and at the same time - 8 :00 p.m. - the U.B.P. called another meeting at Windsor Park - the heart of the black belt- to advise the people not to show up on Bay Street the following morning.

At 10:00 p.m. Brother Pindling and I left the P.L.P. meeting on the Southern Recreation Grounds and headed towards Windsor Park. Our plan:

to address the U.B.P. audience from the U.B.P. platform.

We realized that if Stafford Lofthouse Sands and the Premier designate, Sir Roland T. Symonette, were to gain a foothold in the deep South, my constituency, we would not see a change in government by 1967; and our vision of an independent Bahamas would be postponed sine die.

That night there were about five thousand people scattered all over Windsor Park listening to those two representatives of white power. Also on the podium were the arrogant John Bethell, the chameleon Geoffrey Johnstone, and the impetuous John Morley of the Bahamas Chamber of Commerce.

Slowly, L. O. Pindling and I started to move among the shadows toward our goal: the U.B.P. platform. Suddenly I was spotted by John Morley and then by Inspector Reginald Deane-Dumont and the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Salathiel Thompson. They moved to encircle me. It was then that I realized the danger of the mission that we had undertaken, but it was too late. We could not turn back.

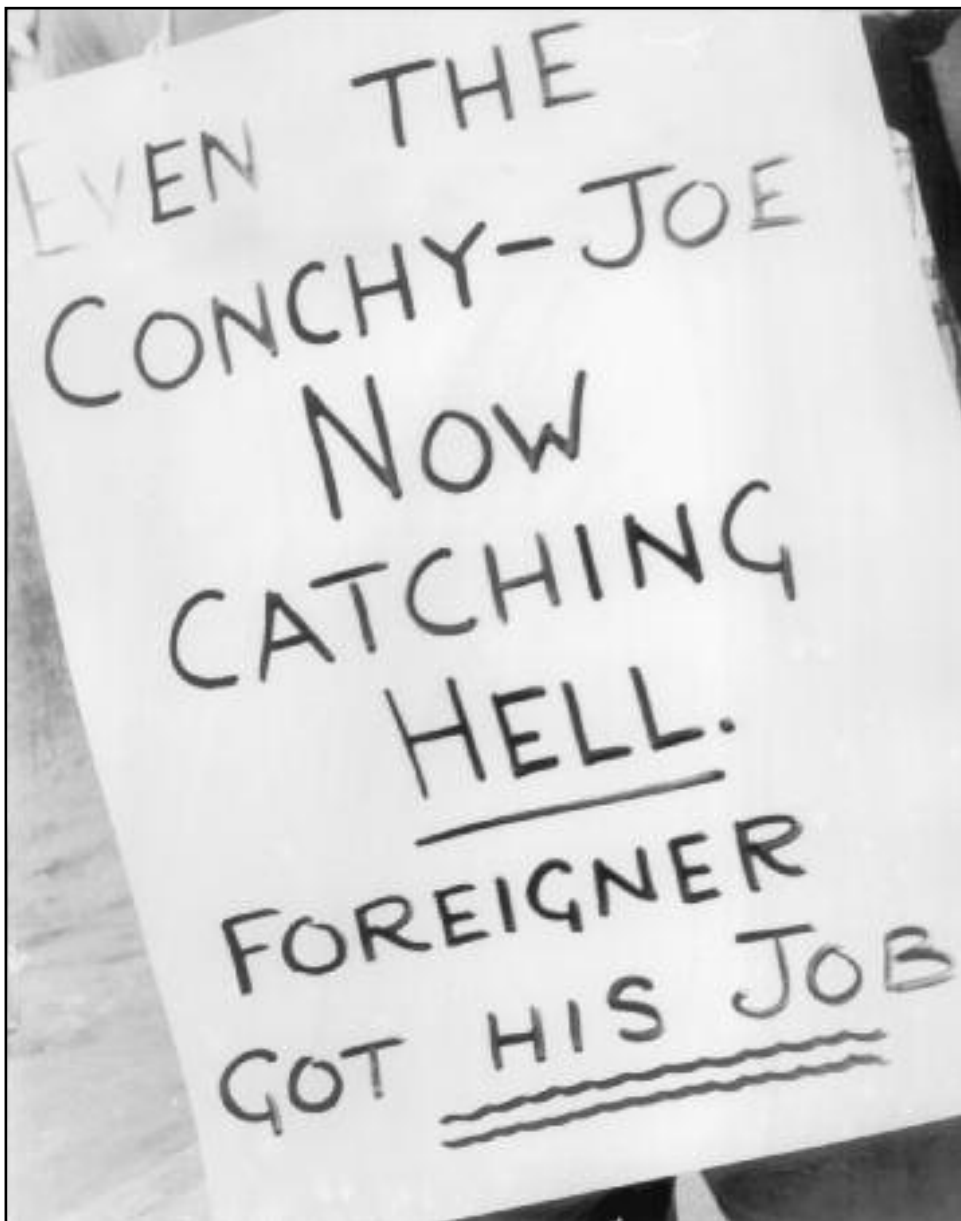
Minute by inexorable minute, inch by inevitable inch, they started to throw a dragnet around me. I looked to the left for an avenue of escape but the police closed that. I spied to the right but they blocked that too. They anticipated my every move. Like a stray dog, hounded on all sides by hunters waiting anxiously to pounce upon their prey, even so was I surrounded. There was only one weak link in their human chain: John Morley. So I dashed toward him. There was a scuffle, but I shook myself loose from his grasp and was lost again in the dark of night. Within a few seconds, Brother Pindling and I were on the U.B.P.'s platform waving to the policemen and our Brothers and Sisters. "Phew!" I sighed, "that was close."

Both Stafford Sands and Sir Roland T. Symonette were visibly shaken by what had just transpired. Like two lost men who had stumbled over the incontrovertible truth, they picked up their chairs and other belongings and silently walked away.

The following morning -Thursday, June 27 - was the day for our answer to Godfrey Kelly's challenge for us to bring the unemployed to the House of Assembly. No better time, we reasoned, for the governed and the government to become acquainted. At the meeting the night before at the Southern Recreation Grounds, I had announced that I would start walking on Thursday morning at 9 o'clock from the House of Labour in the deep South to the House of Assembly in the City.

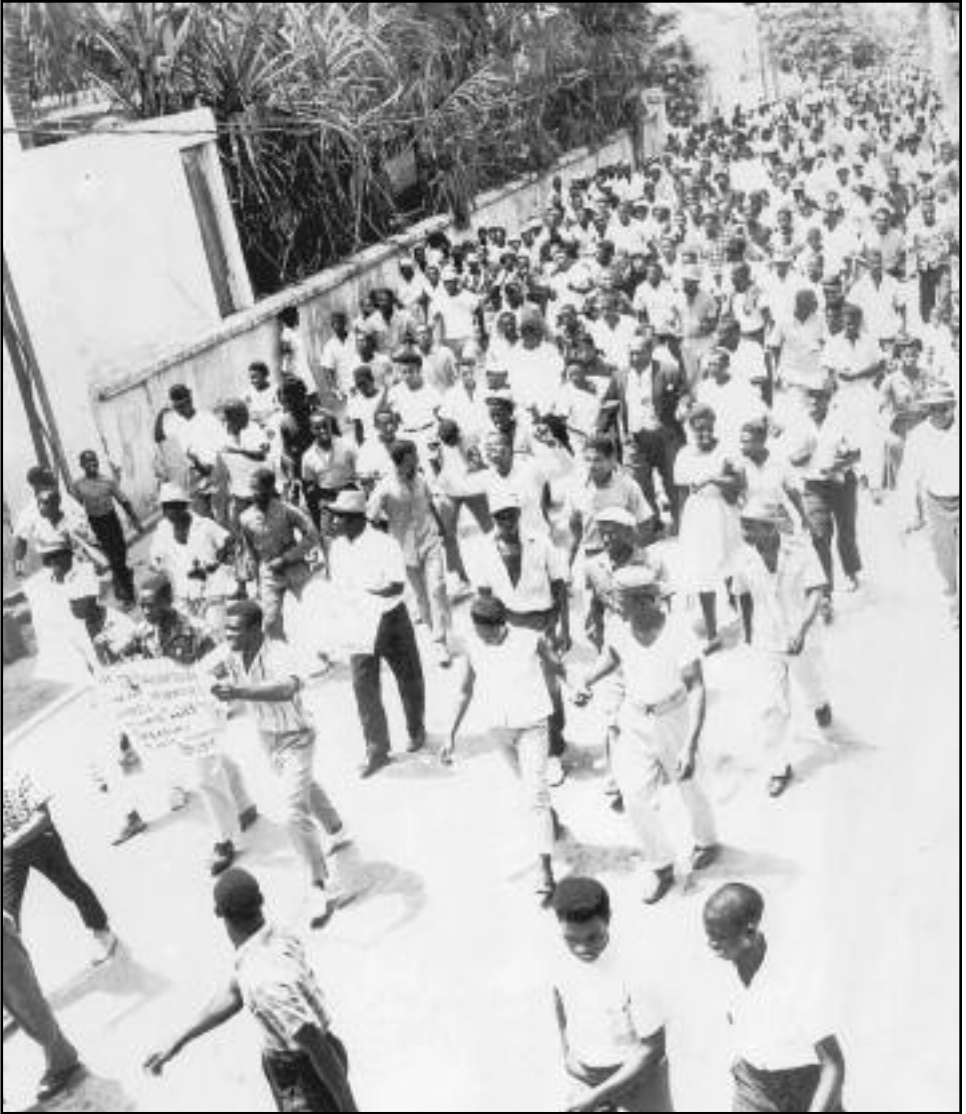


*Thursday, June 27th, was different.
I wanted to dramatise our demonstration for more jobs and more bread.*



Unemployment March. "Together we marched into the House of Assembly to do battle."

Shortly after my first election to the House of Assembly in 1956, I broke with tradition by trading my parliamentary dress of dark, pencil-striped pants, grey vest, tails and top hat for the ordinary business suit. Despite the insistent verbal and written demands of Speaker Asa H. Pritchard that I conform to proper decorum, I refused to wear "the organ-grinder monkey suit" on the grounds that it placed too much distance between me and the labouring



March that was staged in June of 1963 to protest unemployment and work conditions in the country. Among the crowd at the front is Milo Butler; towards the middle is Arthur Hanna; at the rear is Randol Fawkes.

masses that I represented. Furthermore, the House of Commons was made for the common man.

But Thursday, June 27, was different. I wanted to dramatize our demonstration for more jobs and more bread. The plan was that I would march from the South; Brother A. D. Hanna, from the East; and Paul Adderley from the West and that we would all converge on Bay Street. The Commissioner of Police, however, had persuaded a few of my colleagues not to walk with me.

Promptly at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, I started walking in top hat and tails etc. for effect. Streams of ragged humanity poured out of the ghettos on every side and joined me. At Windsor Lane we collected Dudley Cooper and his gang; at Rocky Road Corner we picked up Ikin Rolle and scores of other unemployed brothers and sisters. We gathered strength at every corner. By the time we reached Bay Street echoes of the foot beats of our mighty army and of their song were heard far and wide:

*We're building a grand new Nation,
We shall not be moved;
We're building a grand new Nation,
We shall not be moved;
Just like a tree that's planted by the waters,
We shall not be moved.*

I met my colleagues - all nine - on Bay Street. Together we marched into the House of Assembly to do battle.

In looking out of the windows of the House of Assembly, we noticed that the mob of over eight thousand was causing congestion on the main routes to



Addresses Rally - L. O. Pindling addresses the crowd at the unemployment rally, while Spurgeon Bethel and O. A. Turnquest look on.



DESPERATE PLEA - As the mob surrounded a car attempting to break through the masses assembled at Rawson Square, Randol Fawkes (author) leaped on top of the car to plead with the angry people to give its occupants a safe passage.



After the demonstration, the author is carried on the shoulders of the workers.

the Legislature; and they were still increasing by the minute. House members, including the Speaker, trapped in a traffic jam, had to abandon their automobiles and walk with police escorts. As it was, the House was fifteen minutes late in starting.

In the absence of the Chaplain, Canon Addington Johnson, the Speaker invited a motion to remove prayers from the agenda of the House. But the gigantic, boisterous and rambunctious Milo Boughton Butler, after registering the strongest of protests with voice and fists, led the House in a recitation of the *Lord's Prayer*. Prayer finished, a member of the old guard remarked, "I just couldn't understand whether he was praying for us or against us."

The first item on the agenda was a motion by me that members of the House be paid salaries. This was an attempt to erase corruption and conflict of interest from the escutcheon of the Bahamian parliamentarian. It was argued that if the present position of non-payment of salaries were to continue, then membership in the House would be unfairly restricted to the rich professionals and Bay Street merchants. Then again, with the launching of the proposed new Constitution in January, 1964, the practice of members voting on public matters in which they had some personal interest was bound to cause considerable embarrassment.

"If the member of the South is too poor to serve his people," responded Peter Graham, Minister of Labour designate, "if he is not prepared to make the necessary sacrifice, then he should resign. Mr. Speaker." He added, "If a salary were offered to me, I would give it to charity."

My motion was given strong support by Brothers Orville Turnquest, Cyril Stevenson, Paul Adderley, L.O. Pindling and A. D. Hanna. However on that morning, right was not associated with reason but lay on the side of the fattest battalion. The U.B.P. had the majority and they used it with devastating effect. We were defeated again; but not discouraged.

The United Bahamian Party then tabled the report from the Investigating Committee in the Carlton E. Francis Affair. Francis, a school teacher, had written a letter in the *Nassau Daily Tribune* criticizing certain diploma and certificate courses then offered by the University of the West Indies and had carried a placard focusing attention on certain abuses in the local Board of Education.

The Chairman of the Investigation Committee, Mr. Justice Scarr (white) and H. Thompson (white) condemned Francis' conduct as insulting and offensive

to the Director of Education (white). The third member of the Committee, H. Lancelot Smith (black) thought that Mr. Francis' reaction to the shabby treatment he had received while at the University, was justified.

Outside the House the crowd remained orderly until they sighted all nine of us P.L.P. and Labour representatives leaving the House during a luncheon break. We were cheered as we made our grand entrance into Bay Street and then onto Rawson Square. We took our stance at the junction of the Bernard Sunley Building and the new Straw Vendors' Market. There among the scaffolding and on the back of an old truck, a microphone was handed to Brother Pindling. "Thank you for showing your solidarity with our cause. You are," he continued, "helping us to preserve our dignity and self respect."

The rest of Pindling's speech, however, was drowned out by the noise of the mob which had suddenly gone mad. The crowd of workers now closed in on a small Hillman Husky station wagon, with white occupants, and had commenced to shake it to pieces. The chauffeur and his passenger had attempted to drive the vehicle through Rawson Square in spite of the fact that it was overflowing with demonstrators.

With shouts of, "Kill 'em! Kill 'em!" the crowd lifted the station wagon off the street and contemplated whether to overturn it or to throw it and its occupants into the sea near the Prince George Wharf."

Realizing what an ugly day this would be if this mischief were allowed to continue uninterrupted, I called on my untouched reserves of faith and strength. "Lord Jesus," I prayed quietly, "I place my life in your hands."

Then I took a leap of faith from the back of the truck. In an instant, I landed on the roof of the moving vehicle just in time to prevent the imminent disaster. My feet stuck solidly to the roof of the Hillman Husky station wagon. With my hands outstretched and with whatever voice I had left, I signaled to the crowd to let the motor car pass through. They did almost as quickly as they had picked it up. I remained on top of the automobile until it had wormed its way to a secure spot on Bay Street out of the maddening crowd.

At about 8 o'clock the same night while I was at the post office, a Conchy Joe builder and pillar of the Brethren Church, stopped me. "Mr. Fawkes," he said as he stopped me, "I want to thank you for saving the life of my son."

"I," I asked searchingly, "saved the life of your son? When?"

“You see, Mr. Fawkes, my son, Kenny, was in that station wagon that tried to force its way through that angry mob in Rawson Square this morning. But for you,” he continued, “both he and his friend Tony Treco would have been killed.”

At that time, I acknowledged his thanks but now I know that it wasn't I, but Christ who did it. It was He who had worked yet another miracle through me. Had I thought of the dangers involved, I never would have done it. After I had jumped, I realized that I was not in control, but Master-controlled. Hence, another miracle happened.

In 1954, the powers in being struck me down. Men like the Honourable C. O. Anderson and other cynics said that that blow was the end of me; but Christ said that that was only the beginning of a life full of meaning and purpose. Two years later, I returned to the stage as a leader of men.

Then again in 1958, the powers -in- being indicted me for Sedition. My friends, who had promised to be with me “all the way,” stayed clear of me. I had nothing with which to fight the high and the mighty, except prayers of the righteous poor. Again, Christ worked a miracle and delivered me.

Gentle Reader, if He can do this for me, He can do the same for you. If you have the faith, He has the ability.

Why don't you try Him now?

* * *

CHAPTER XI

* THE NEW BAHAMAS *

In January 1964, The Bahamas achieved full internal self-government after more than two hundred years of British rule. What did this mean?

In the first place, it meant that for the first time in our history, we were beginning to walk independently - making our own decisions, our own laws and governing ourselves.

In the second place, it meant that our Government hereafter would be responsible to us, the people, and not to some distant, foreign power whose background, mores and traditions were different from our own.

In the third place, it meant that the future of each one of us and the future of our Colony would lie in our own hands.

Just as a new Bahamas was born on January 7th, 1964, so a new Bahamian was also born with the coming into force of the new constitution. This new Bahamian will no longer accept second class citizenship. He stands tall with the light of wisdom in his eyes and the flame of freedom in his heart. The new Bahamian has, over the years, learned:

- (i) To love his country and to feel proud of it;
- (ii) To accept responsibilities of citizenship which have been won for him and others at great price;
- (iii) To pursue excellence and take pride in whatever he does;
- (iv) To show respect and courtesy not only to his brothers and sisters at home, but also to the stranger from abroad and
- (v) To respect the constitution under which he is governed.

Again, to what may we liken January 7th, 1964?

Well it was like moving out of a rented house into a home our own. This patch of earth, this sea, this Bahamaland may not of itself constitute a continent, but some day we shall make of it a NATION hallowed by the tears of our forefathers and consecrated by our own toil.

And so, Gentle Reader, because of those tears and because of that toil, you now hold in your hands the Title Deeds to the homeland. See to it that all who

dwell therein are secure. See to it that they are fed, physically as well as spiritually, for this land is at last, your land - LOVE IT, WORK FOR IT, FEEL PROUD OF IT.

The opening of Parliament in the year 1964 was of special significance to Bahamians. It was the first since the signing of the new Constitution in May, 1963 by the founding fathers at the Colonial Office in London, England.

For this time, too, the Leader of the Government, Sir Roland T. Symonette, and Brother Lynden O. Pindling were officially designated in the written Constitution as “Premier” and “Leader of the Opposition” respectively.

At the 1963 Constitutional Conference, The Bahamas took a giant step toward total independence. As a result of that conference, The Bahamas, has since January 7, 1964, enjoyed a more democratic form of government. Broadly speaking, this meant that the individual, through his vote, had the right to choose in free elections, the people who would govern this country; that the citizen as well as the state was subject to the rule of law based on the cardinal principle that the law of the land was supreme and all men and women would be equal before the Bar of Justice, regardless of race, colour or creed.



Addresses the People - Constitution Day, January 7, 1964. His Excellency, The Governor, Sir Robert Stapledon, K.C.M.G., C.B.E., addresses the people of the Colony. Seated at left, foreground, is Sir Roland Symonette, then Premier of The Bahamas.

Prior to January 7th, 1964, His Excellency, after consultation with an advisory committee consisting of four cabinet ministers, and the Attorney General, also exercised the royal prerogative of pardon for convicted criminals. Generally speaking, under the 1964 Constitution, the Governor acted only on the advice of the Cabinet or on the advice of the responsible minister.



Queen Elizabeth II received the first copy of "The New Bahamas" from wife of the author (now Lady Jacqueline Fawkes) during Her Majesty's official visit to The Bahamas in 1965.

THE FORM AND FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

The functions of government were performed by three main branches: the Executive, which initiated and carried out the policies of government; the Legislative, which made the laws giving effect to government's policies; and the Judicial branch consisting of a body of judges who interpreted the laws of the land and applied them to cases which came before it.

THE EXECUTIVE

When a new government was elected by the people, the Governor appointed as Premier that member of the House of Assembly who, in his judgment, was best able to command the confidence of a majority of the members. In practice, this usually meant the leader of the political party which had won the election. The Governor on the advice of the Premier appointed the remaining ministers.

THE CABINET

The Cabinet was the center of the whole system of government. It initiated all government policies and programmes and was responsible for the general direction and control of government. The Cabinet must consist of the Premier and not less than eight other ministers of whom at least one, but not more than three, must be senators, while the others must be appointed from the parliamentary members of the majority party in the House of Assembly. In 1964, there were fifteen members in the Cabinet - all old guard U. B. P's.

Originally "Cabinet" meant a private room for consultation, especially of a sovereign's confidential advisors. Hence, whenever we refer to the advisory council of the chief executive, in this case the Premier, the word "Cabinet" is used.

Each minister conducted the ordinary business of his ministry with the assistance of a permanent secretary. However, there was within the Bahamas Cabinet one minister to whom no specific ministry or government department was assigned. He was called a Minister without Portfolio. A folio meant a case for keeping, usually without folding, papers or documents of state, while "port" is derived from the Latin verb "portare" meaning "to carry." Hence, portfolio is a briefcase in which government business is carried and also the office or functions of Minister of State or cabinet member.

Since the Cabinet was collectively responsible to Parliament, the most important matters of any ministry were usually referred to it for discussion and

final decision.

THE PUBLIC SERVICE

The Public Service was composed of the body of officers known as Civil Servants who administered the laws and carried out the policies of government.

The important point about the Civil Service was that it was a group of trained administrators who served any government with impartiality.

The Civil Servant may belong to political parties but may not take too active a role in politics, such as speaking on public platforms at elections. They were employed by all, paid by all, to serve all.

In 1964 the Public Service of The Bahamas was divided into five main categories:

- (i) The Clerical, Typing and Stenographic Grade;
- (ii) The Executive Grade;
- (iii) The Technical Services;
- (iv) The Professional and Scientific Grades; and
- (v) The Administrative Grades;

Under the new 1964 Constitution, there was a Public Service Commission, which dealt with the appointment and removal of, and the exercise of disciplinary control over public officers other than judicial officers and the police. The Governor made appointments to the Commission after consultation with the Premier; however, the Governor was not obliged to accept any advice tendered by the Premier in regard to these appointments. The Chairman and other members of the Commission were appointed for periods of not less than three and not more than six years.

There were two other executive Commissions and these dealt with the Police and the Judiciary. The Governor may use his discretion in making appointments to the Police Service Commission. The Judicial Service Commission, however, consisted of the Chief Justice as Chairman, the Chairman of the Public Service Commission and a third member who had held high judicial office and was appointed by the Governor after consultation with the Chief Justice.

THE LEGISLATURE

The Parliament of the Bahamas consisted of:

- (i) Her Majesty, The Queen represented by the Governor;
- (ii) The First Chamber, the House of Assembly; and
- (iii) The Second Chamber, the Senate, formerly known as the Legislative Council.

The Governor's role in Parliament was purely formal. About once a year, he sat on the throne to deliver the speech, opening Parliament. Beyond this, his parliamentary function was limited to giving his assent to bills passed by both Houses. Prior to 1961, the House of Assembly consisted of thirty-three members elected on the basis of a restricted male franchise. Briefly, this meant that if a person was a British subject of twenty-one years or over and had the necessary residency qualifications, he was entitled to vote in a general or by-election by secret ballot. Each member represented a specific area, formerly called a "district" but now defined as a "constituency."

Of the two Houses of Parliament, the House of Assembly is the more powerful. The government of the day could only exist if it had the support of a majority of the members in the House of Assembly. It must therefore be prepared to defend its policy and all its actions on the floor of the House.

Although any bill, other than a money bill, may be introduced in the Senate, major legislation was initiated in the House of Assembly, which had control over government's finances. Further, no bill could become law or taxation levied without the prior approval of the House.

The rules governing the Order of Business and the manner in which debates may be carried on in the House were contained in a Manual of Procedure.

The Leader of the House of Assembly is primarily responsible for the conduct of business. It is his job to see that time is provided for debates on various matters in the House. The Leader of Government Business in the House of Assembly was the Premier.

THE SPEAKER

The Speaker was the spokesman, representative and chairman of the House of Assembly. He was the first Commoner of the land. He communicated the resolutions, thanks and censures of the House to the persons concerned, and signed all messages and bills. Except when the whole House resolved itself into a committee, the Speaker presided over all the deliberations.

MEMBERSHIP IN PARLIAMENT

Broadly speaking, under the new 1964 Constitution, any British subject of



The Mace is the symbol of the Speaker's authority. When the Speaker is in the chair the Mace is on the Speaker's desk. When the Speaker is not in the chair because the House is in Committee, the Mace is placed on the clerk's table on a bracelet. When the House is not in session the Mace is removed. This silver Mace was purchased from the Province of South Carolina in June, 1790.

21 years of age or over may become a member of parliament, provided:

- (i) He has been a resident of the Colony for five years or more; and
- (ii) He had been ordinarily resident in the Colony for a period of not less than six months immediately preceding his or her election.

A member of the Senate may not be a member of the House of Assembly at



Supreme Court - Above is a view of the opening of the 1966 January sessions of the Supreme Court. The second highest court in the land (after the Court of Appeal), it is presided over by a Chief Justice and two Puisne Judges. The Chief Justice is appointed by the Governor after consultation with the Premier. Puisne Judges are appointed by the Governor after consultation with the Chief Justice. In the picture Nigel Bouwe Esquire, the future partner of the law firm of Messrs. Cash, Fountain, and Bouwe, is being called to the Bar.

the same time.

DURATION OF PARLIAMENT

The normal life span of parliament was five years, but the Governor, acting on the advice of the Premier, could dissolve parliament at any time. The Governor could also dissolve parliament if a majority of the members of the House of Assembly passed a vote of no confidence in the government of the day.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

The office of the Leader of the Opposition was established in the 1964 Constitution. The provision was unique in modern constitutions and was designed to give the opposition a voice in the Bahamian system of government.

The Governor appointed as Leader of the Opposition the member of the House of Assembly who could command the support of a majority of those members of the House who did not support the Government; in practice this usually meant the leader of the minority party in the House.

POLITICAL PARTIES

There were no well-defined party lines in Bahamian politics until 1956. In June of that year, the Progressive Liberal Party returned six members to the then twenty-nine member House of Assembly. By 1964 there were thirty-three members in the House; twenty-four persons comprised members of the ruling United Bahamian Party; seven were in the Progressive Liberal Party. Additionally there was one Labour member and one Independent.

A political party consists of a group of persons united in opinion or action, more or less permanently organized, which attempts to bring about the election of its candidates to public offices and by this means, to control or influence the actions and policy of government. Its long-range goal is to put into effect its political, social and economic philosophy.

THE SENATE

The Senate or Second Chamber was a nominated House made up of fifteen senators. Under the 1964 Constitution, eight members were appointed by the Governor after consultation with the Premier and any other person he may in his discretion decide to consult; five by the Governor on the advice of the Premier and two by the Governor on the advice of the Leader of the

Opposition.

The Senate allowed for full consideration and revision of every bill passed by the House before it became Law.

Any Bill other than a Money Bill could be introduced in the Senate. Prior to the coming into effect of the new Constitution, the Senate (then known as the Legislative Council) had a veto power; now however, it has only a limited power of delaying legislation.

QUAINT CUSTOMS RECALL HISTORY OF ENGLISH PARLIAMENT

All of the traditions of British Parliaments take us back to some great episode in English history connected with the long fight to establish parliamentary democracy. For instance, there is only one man in The Bahamas who cannot sit in and listen to a debate in the House of Assembly - he is His Excellency, The Governor. As a representative of Her Majesty, The Queen, he is prevented from attending the sessions. This dates back to the days when Charles I forced his way into the House of Commons and tried to arrest five of its members.

Whenever His Excellency wants to speak officially to the members of the House of Assembly, the ceremony is performed in the Senate Chamber. The Commoners are summoned by His Excellency's Aide-de-Camp to come to the Senate Chamber. In England as Black Rod (as the messenger came to be known) reaches the House of Commons, the door is slammed in his face and he has to knock and receive special permission before he can enter. This act denotes that the members of the English and the Commonwealth Parliaments can express opinions without fear or favour, untrammled by the presence of the King or of his officers.

The present House of Assembly still jealously guards its rights to refuse admission of anyone to its sessions if it so desires. During the war years, the Prime Minister, Sir Winston S. Churchill, often rose from his seat to cry, "MR. SPEAKER, I SPY STRANGERS." The galleries were then cleared of the press and visitors, and the House of Commons went into secret session.

At the beginning of each new session of a newly elected House of Assembly, the members of the Royal Bahamas Police Force form a Guard of Honour, and at every meeting of the House at least one police officer is present.

At the opening of each new session of Parliament, all motor traffic within a

defined area is shut off. In England, members of Parliament are to have traffic held up for them in the vicinity of Westminster as a symbol that nothing must stand between the member and his obligation to do his duty on behalf of the people he represents in the House of Commons.

THE JUDICIARY

The Bahamas legal and judicial system was solidly based on the English Common Law. The administration of justice was vested in the courts.

The highest court of the land was the Court of Appeal which consisted of three Judges who had no former ties with The Bahamas. His Excellency, The Governor appointed them.

Next in order was our Supreme Court, which consisted of the Chief Justice and two Puisne Judges. The Governor appointed the Chief Justice after consultation with the Premier while the Governor appointed Puisne Judges after consultation with the Chief Justice.

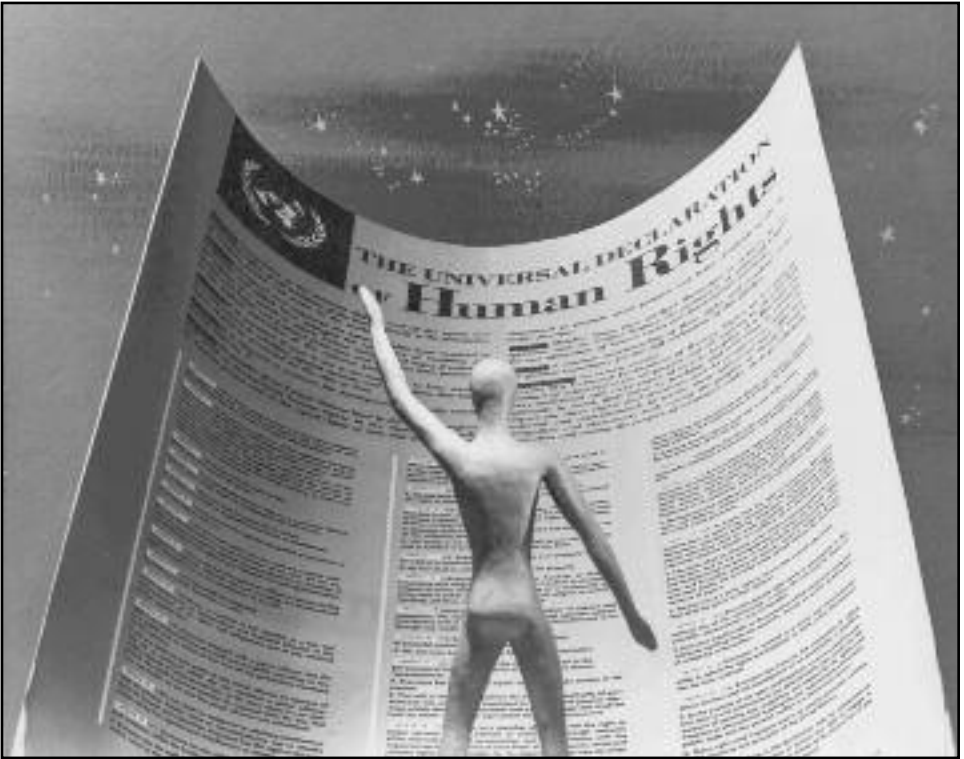
In addition to the courts already mentioned, there were three Magistrates' Courts in New Providence and all Out Island commissioners acted as magistrates in all of the Out Islands where they were stationed.

Civil suits and criminal proceedings are judicial ceremonies which take the place of what would otherwise be endless family feuds and public quarrels. The primary purpose of justice is therefore to substitute the notion of right for that of violence by ending disputes or punishing offenders.

Sir Francis Bacon once said, "The place of Justice is a hallowed place." It is essential that the courts remain free from all improper influences. Because of this, the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal Judges do not hold offices during the pleasure of the Governor. They cannot be removed except in cases of grave misconduct.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS

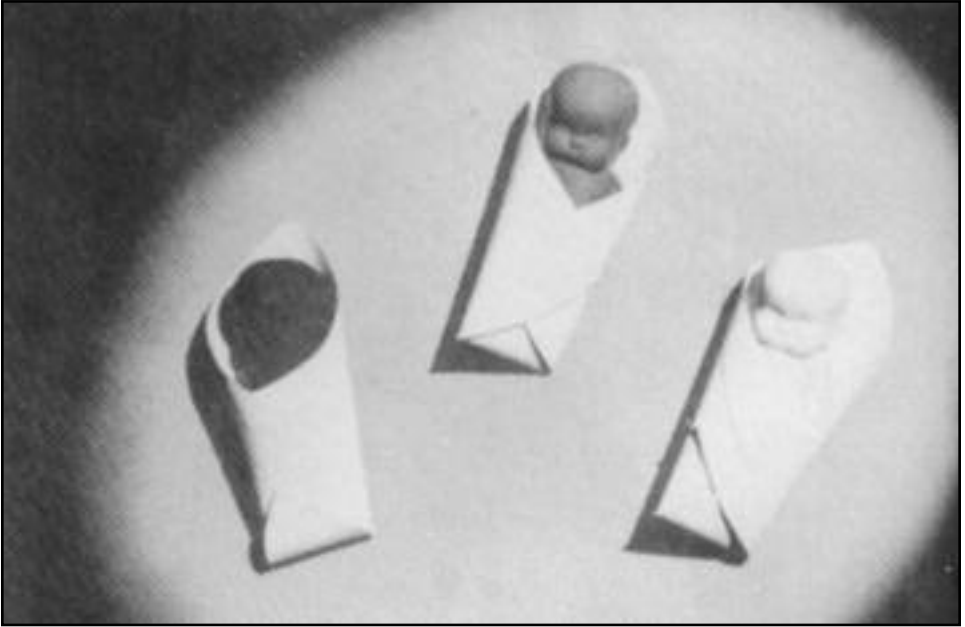
This was the legal department of the Bahamas Government, at the head of which was the Attorney General. He was the Chief Advocate and Legal Adviser to the Government, and as such represented the public interest whenever it was at stake. A distinguished Privy Councillor once remarked that while one of the prime duties of the Attorney General is to look after the administration of justice, it is no less important for him to be concerned with the justice of administration.



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a standard of conduct for all nations to live up to.

THE STANDARDS OF A GOOD JUDGE

LORD DENNING maintained that the principles which go to make a fair



Courtesy of the United Nations

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights - All children should be considered the same, whether born in wedlock or out of wedlock. All are entitled to the same social protection.

trial are as follows:

- (i) “The judge should be absolutely independent of the Government.”

So that he can adjudicate evenly between the parties, it is of the essence of fair trial that the judge should be dependent on no man (whether those are private citizens or whether a private citizen is opposed to a government official or to the government itself). And in jury trials, the absolute independence of the jury is no less important than the independence of the judge.

- (ii) “A judge must have no interest himself in any matter that he has to try. He must be impartial. No person can be a judge in his own cause.”
- (iii) “A judge before he makes a decision for or against a party, must

hear and consider all that each side has to say. No one ought to be condemned unheard.”

- (iv) “The judge must act only on evidence and argument properly before him and the court, and not on any information or gossip he receives from the outside.”
- (v) “The judge must give his reasons for his decision.”
- (vi) “A judge should in his own character be beyond reproach or at

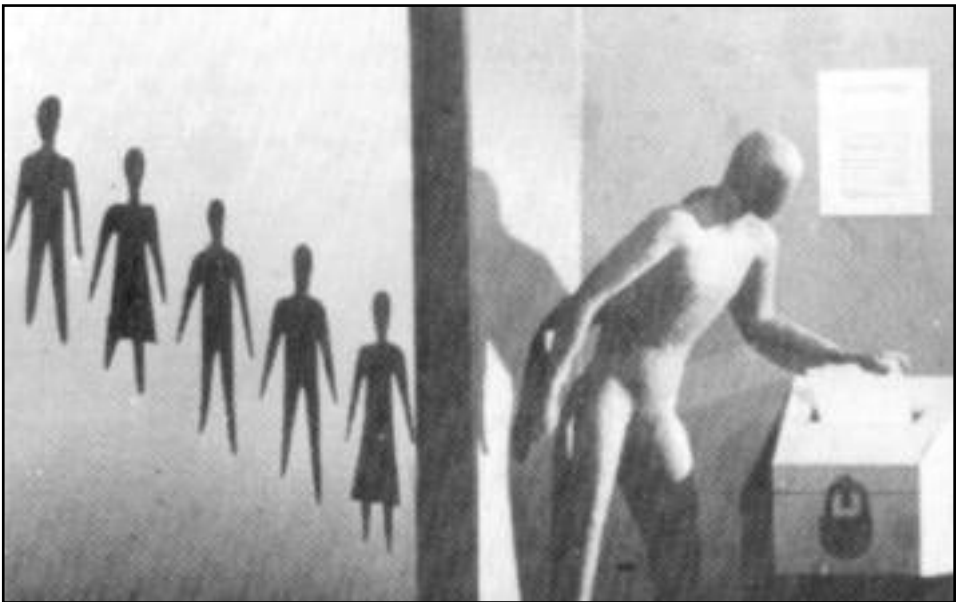
CIVIL RIGHTS	INTEGRITY RIGHTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - right to life - no slavery - no torture - freedom of residence - right to leave any country, return - protection of privacy, honour and reputation - protection of property - freedom of thought, conscience and religion - right to seek asylum from persecution - right to nationality - right to family life
	DUE PROCESS RIGHTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no arbitrary arrest, detention or exile - right to effective remedy - right to fair trial - equality before the courts - rights of the accused - nulla poena sine lege
POLITICAL RIGHTS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - opinion and expression - assembly and association - take part in government - equal access to public service - elect and be elected
SOCIO-ECONOMIC RIGHTS	LABOUR RIGHTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - right to work - equal pay for equal work - no forced labour - trade union - organize and col. bargaining - rest and leisure
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - adequate standard living - right to food - right to health - right to housing - right to education
CULTURAL RIGHTS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - take part in cultural life - to benefit from scientific progress - protection of authorship & copyright - freedom in scientific research and creative activity.

any rate should have so disciplined himself that he is not himself a breaker of the Law.”

- (vii) “Each side should state its case as strongly as it can, since truth is best discovered by powerful statements on both sides of the question.”

Lord Chief Justice Hewart in 1929 in his extra-judicial essays, the *New Despotism* agreed with most of the above canons and emphasized a number of others:-

- (viii) “The parties are to be treated as equals before the court.”
- (ix) “A case should be heard in public.”
- (x) “A judge should be identified and be personally responsible for his decision.”



Courtesy of the United Nations

The Ballot - The Will of the people is the authority of government. This Will should be expressed in periodic and genuine elections based on universal and equal suffrage and by secret ballot or equivalent free voting methods.

- (xi) “To ensure the regular application of the above canons in courts of first instance, the parties should have a right of appeal to a higher judicial tribunal on questions of procedure.”

The independence of the Judiciary does not mean that the independence must be absolute, that is, entitling a judge to act in an entirely arbitrary manner. The duty of the judge is to observe the Law and the assumptions which underlie it.

THE UNITED NATION'S PICTORIAL SYMPHONY OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DUTIES

No matter what the circumstances, nothing seemed to ruffle the composure of Mrs. Virginia Brown, the black, four feet eleven, one hundred and ten pound straw vendor. But when she saw the white, tall, robust British Colonial Secretary striding toward her stall at Prince George Dock on June 4, 1942 she became apprehensive. With an air of bristling superiority, he addressed her, "Virgie, the Duchess of Windsor and I shall be visiting your stall tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock. After the Duchess shall have chatted with you, I am sure you will find her a charming personality."

Virginia Brown sprang from the box on which she sat. With hands akimbo, she looked the representative of Her Majesty's Government squarely in the face and exploded, "Well Minster, lemme tell ya som'um. When dat Duchess finish chatting with me, she will find out dat I is a charming personality too."

The above anecdote illustrates the basic concept of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and in rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood." Article 2 of this historic document reinforces Article I - "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, poverty, birth or other status."

In the framing of the 1964 Constitution of The Bahama Islands, we placed great emphasis on the provisions which guaranteed the under mentioned civic, social, political, economic and cultural rights.

Before the advent of a written constitution, the legislature of colonial Bahamas was supreme; true, its supremacy was not absolute in the sense in which the United Kingdom Parliament is absolute. As we have already stated, Bahamian legislation was subject to the supervision of the Secretary of State who could withhold his assent if the proposed law infringed certain canons of justice or policy ingrained in the Common Law of England, the roots of which had spread throughout the British Commonwealth and which would protect the democratic rights of the people.

When internal self-government came into force on January 7, 1964 all those safeguards were entrenched into the Constitution and called fundamental

<u>NEW 1964 WRITTEN CONSTITUTION</u>			
<u>HER MAJESTY QUEEN</u> <u>ELIZABETH, The Second</u> <u>HIS EXCELLENCY</u> <u>THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL</u> (Representing The Queen)			
L E G I S L A T I V E	E X E C U T I V E	J U D I C I A L	
<p>SENATE 15 MEMBERS</p> <p>Formerly called "The Legislative Council." It consist of:</p> <p>5 appointed by Premier</p> <p>2 by Opposition</p> <p>8 after consultation with Premier and other persons</p>	<p>HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY 33 MEMBERS</p> <p>Preservation of Governor's power of "assent" to Bills or "to reserve the Bills for the signification of Her majesty's pleasure e.g. Bills which are:</p> <p>(i) Inconsistent with treaty obligations;</p> <p>(ii) likely to prejudice Royal Prerogative of Mercy etc..</p> <p>(iii) Repugnant to the Constitution;</p> <p>(iv) Involving breach of public faith (e.g. Hawksbill Creek Law)</p> <p>(v) Affecting foreign affairs, defence internal security and Police.</p>	<p>PREMIER and CABINET 15 MEMBERS</p> <p>Executive Council abolished. Governor to act "on advice" or after consultation with Premier and/or his Cabinet</p> <p>PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION deals with appointment, discipline and removal of members of the Civil Service other than the judicial officers and police</p> <p>Appointments to the Commission are made by the Governor after consultation with the Premier; and serve for not less than 3 years and not more than 6</p> <p>POLICE SERVICE COMMISSION may be appointed by Governor</p> <p>JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION consists of The Chief Justice as Chairman; Chairman of The Public Service Commission and a Third member who has held high judicial office</p>	<p>JUDICIAL COMMITTEE OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL IN ENGLAND</p> <p>BAHAMAS COURT OF APPEAL THE SUPREME COURT.</p> <p>Magistrates and Commissioners</p> <p>CHAPTER 3 OF CONSTITUTION GUARANTEES THE RIGHT TO:</p> <p>(i) Life</p> <p>(ii) Freedom of Conscience</p> <p>(iii) Freedom of Expression</p> <p>(iv) Freedom of Assembly & Association</p> <p>(v) Freedom of Movement</p> <p>(vi) Privacy, of Family Life and of one's own home.</p> <p>PROTECTION AGAINST:</p> <p>(vii) Inhuman Treatment.</p> <p>(viii) Slavery and forced labour</p> <p>(ix) Arbitrary arrest & detention</p> <p>(x) Deprivation of property without compensation</p> <p>(xi) Discrimination on grounds of race, colour, place of origin, political opinion or unionism.</p>

rights. Again, they were termed "fundamental" because, unlike any ordinary right which can be changed by the legislature in its ordinary powers of legislation, "fundamental rights and freedoms" cannot because they are guaranteed by and ingrained in the Constitution. No "fundamental" right can be changed or altered by any process other than that required for amending the Constitution itself; nor can it be suspended or abridged except in the special manner laid down in the Constitution itself.

If Government persists in abusing any of the long lists of human rights, we will soon find that a decent civilized life is impossible. It would be an act of good citizenship to assess and monitor the state's human rights performance in New Providence and in each of the Out Islands. Such a monitoring exercise can be used to warn us of an impending humanitarian crisis, the way the weather forecast draws our attention to an approaching thunderstorm.

Of course, Gentle Reader, if you will reach out and read it, there is a greater declaration of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms tucked away in your home. It is called the Ten Commandments. They have been referred to as the

greatest short moral code ever formulated -- the idealized model of Law. Some have argued that the whole of the Natural Law may be deduced from them.

Read them again this weekend. Compare the Ten Commandments with any chapter of our new 1964 Constitution. Measure them alongside the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and you will discover that word for word, line for line, paragraph for paragraph, the Decalogue below is the greatest:

- (i) Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- (ii) Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image of any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.
- (iii) Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
- (iv) Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, my God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within the gates.
- (v) Honour thy father and thy mother.
- (vi) Thou shalt not kill.
- (vii) Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- (viii) Thou shalt not steal.
- (ix) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
- (x) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is thy neighbour's.

These commandments, which, like a collection of diamonds, bear testimony to their own intrinsic worth, in themselves appeal to us as coming from a superhuman or divine source, and no conscientious or reasonable man has ever yet been able to find a flaw in them. Absolutely flawless, negative in terms but positive in meaning, they easily stand at the head of our whole moral system, and no nation or people can long continue a happy existence in open violation of them.

Over two thousand years ago a lawyer approached the Man from Nazareth. "Master," he asked, "which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, this is the first and great commandment. And the second," he continued, "is like it; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets."

* * *

CHAPTER XII

* CLOSE ENCOUNTER *

Clarence A. Bain was already fifty-two when he was first elected to the House of Assembly. Brother Bain represented Andros continuously for 12 years. Although the business of the Improved Benevolent, Protective Order of Elks of the World often took this man of destiny out of the island, it could not take the island out of the man. Next to life itself, he loved his Andros.

It was easy to spot Clarence Bain in a crowd. He was always in the center of action, spinning tall tales about the days when sponge was king; the days when one saw such things as electric lights, roads, schools, and running water only in picture books.

On this November morning in 1962, Clarence was addressing a crowd in Fresh Creek. One marveled when one observed this tall, black, robust figure of a man gesticulating with every part of his body as he addressed his people. C.B., as he was called, knew how to hold an audience without a rope.

“Man,” he said, “I remember when the first motor car came to Andros Island. It was a Saturday and all the people, dressed in their Sunday best, came to town to witness this Model T move. And among those who came to watch were my Ma and my Pa.

“Now Ma believed that this car could move 'cause the white man say so. And in them days, the white man didn't lie too much. But Pa, he was doubting Thomas. 'Dees Merikins always talkin' fool,' he said. 'Who would ever hear of a piece of scrap iron moving unless a horse would pull it?'"

At this point C.B. became excited. He threw out his chest and strutted up and down as he held the audience's undivided attention. He seemed to taste the relish of his own story. “At 10 o'clock sharp,” he continued, “the Merikan man sat down at the driver's wheel. He put his key in the ignition socket and turned it a couple-a-time; but, Man, not'n' happen. He then pullout the choke wire and turned the key again while the people held their breath in expectation of seeing the car take off. But still nothing happen.



“Pa then looked at Ma and smiled, ‘Ah, see? What I tell ya? Dis ting ain’t gwine ever move.’

“The Merikan man then got out of the car. He lifted the hood. He shook a few spark plugs and tightened the connecting wires on the battery. With the hood still lifted, he cranked the car from the front. There were three explosions that made the spectators jump. The spark plugs now ignited the mixture of fuel and air and this mixture in turn forced the pistons up and down the cylinders. The smell of gasoline was like perfume and the sound of the motor was like music. At last, the engine was running.

“The Merikin man then ran around the car and jumped into the chauffeur’s seat. He placed his right foot on the accelerator button and, at the same time, slowly raised the left clutch. The engine backfired another explosion as the car suddenly jerked forward and raced along the rocky terrace amid loud applause.

“It moved, ladies and gentlemen. Indeed it moved.

“Ma then looked at Pa and asked, ‘Well Pa, what yo’ got to say now?’”

“Pa replied, ‘Well, Ma, it’s just-like-a-tell ya. Dis ting ain’t gwine ever stop.’”

When we started the progressive movement about ten years ago there were those who told us that we would never get it off the ground. We radicals were regarded as lunatics from another planet as we talked about the new Bahamas that was to be, the new Bahamas with a black Bahamian as Governor and a wife who could identify with Bahamian womanhood; the new Bahamas with a black Prime Minister and black Bahamian men and women as Ministers of State. Back in those days, the early 1950’s, it was only a dream but now we were beginning to make that dream a reality.

Current surveys revealed that the natives had made significant strides in the fields of politics, business and education since the advent of the P.L.P., and B. F. of L.

Shortly after the 1956 march on the banks by Milo Butler and I, Mizpah Wallace, a graduate of Government High, became the first black Bahamian teller at the Royal Bank of Canada. Today many others of our own kind occupy the majority of responsible positions in the banks and trust companies.

By 1962 there was a new high in the number of people who believed that a black government was possible within the foreseeable future. Thousands of

Chart Showing Organization of Government of The Bahamas before 1964

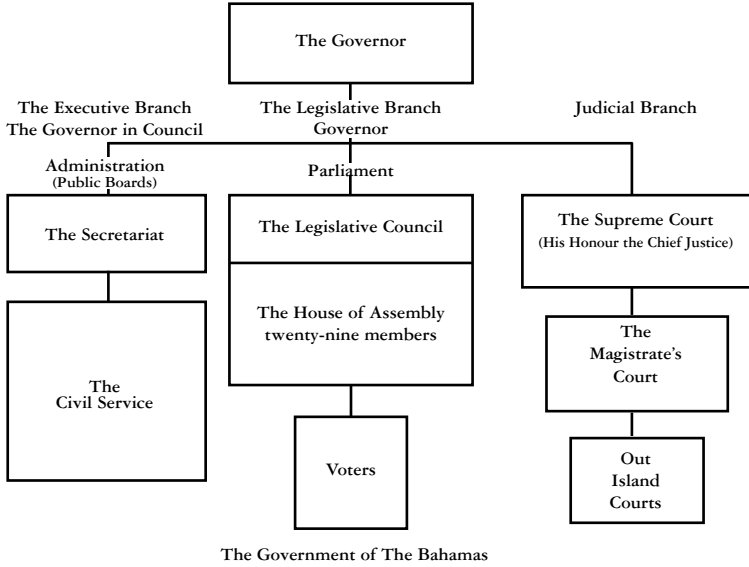
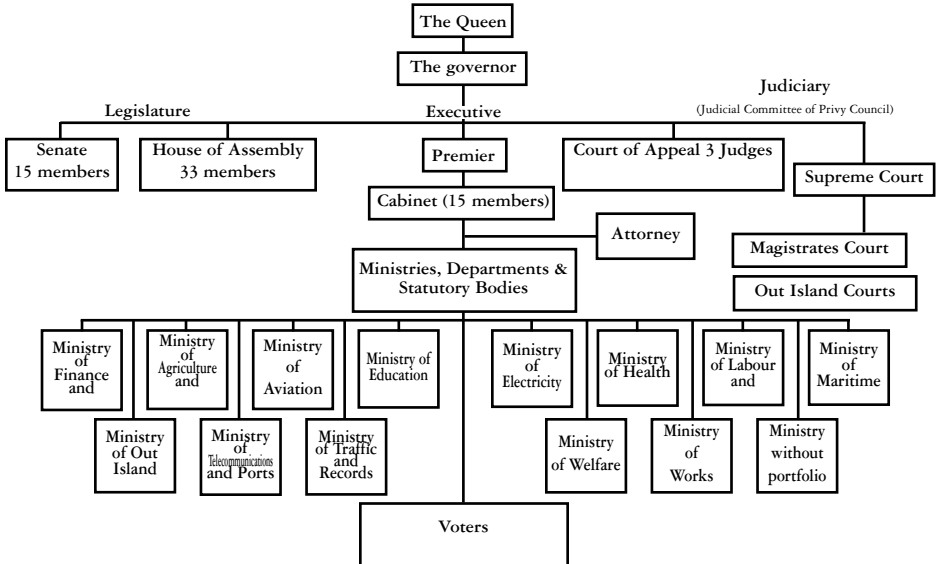


Chart Showing Organization of Government of The Bahamas after 1964



natives from all areas of The Bahama Islands participated in the B. F. of L.'s first official Labour Day Holiday parade. We thought we should dramatize our determination to gain equal rights to all the opportunities then enjoyed only by white folks.

Again, by 1962, one noticed a sharp decline in the number of land title deeds that contained covenants restricting ownership of residences in choice neighbourhoods, such as The Grove in the Western District, "for whites only." And, at last, black children were being accepted as students at Queen's College, the institution formerly reserved for the training of white leaders. The walls of Jericho had indeed started to crumble.

By the time Constitution Day - January 7, 1964 - arrived, I had left the ranks of the P.L.P. and reverted to my former role as the lone, Labour parliamentarian. This posture was a ruse that made me less vulnerable to the criminal charge of calling political strikes. It also paved the way for genuine employer-employee dialogue. Of course, the relations between the B. F. of L. and the P.L.P. after 1964 remained reasonably cordial. All things considered, each branch of the progressive movement needed the other like fish needed water.

The 1964 Constitution was ushered in by the white minority Government amid great pomp and circumstance. The budding nation took a two-day holiday to mark the historic event. My wife and I did not attend the official ceremonies at Clifford Park on January seventh. Our invitations were posted two days too late.

But this pique by the U. B. P. minority Government did not hurt too much; I sought consolation in my Bible study courses from many sources. I had become convinced that the theme of the Bible was nation building. So during the weeks and months before and after Constitution Day, I raced through the pages of this good Book in search of a plan as to how one man with God can overthrow the status quo and replace it with a truly representative government.

Soon I came to respect the Bible not merely as a book but as a library of sixty-six books with a single unifying theme written by a variety of human beings who themselves were inspired by a single author: the Holy Spirit. This was one of my greatest discoveries ever.

And so I re-read the historical books (Genesis to Deuteronomy) and heard anew the call of Moses to lead the children of Israel out of the bondage of

Egypt. In the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, I watched the varied fortunes of the new nation, Israel, through the seven centuries of its life until it was reborn under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah. Then I marveled at the beauty of Hebrew poetry and drank from the fountain of wisdom contained in Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Songs of Solomon. By the time I met the major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) my vision of life broadened and I took a giant step forward.

But it was not until I started my journey through the New Testament that I met the most unforgettable character of them all --The Man from Galilee. I had studied the four Gospels in school under many teachers. None of them, however, had ever told me that within its pages was a plan for successful living. In those days I memorized large portions of the Sermon on the Mount but with so many things happening to me, I began to drink more deeply from those eternal springs.

The words from Matthew 5:41, "And whosoever shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two" meant nothing to me when I was a boy except giving more and getting less in return. Now, however, I realize that if I had doubled the school load assigned to me by my teacher, then I might have finished my education in half the time.

Once Booker T. Washington, a former slave, sought admission into Hampton Institute (Virginia) to prepare himself for the future leadership of his people. On presenting himself to the principal of the school, a Mrs. Mackie, he was given a broom and ordered to sweep a large auditorium. To the ordinary youngster this would have been an insult, but to Booker T. Washington it was a challenge. He took the broom and swept the room twice and dusted it thrice. He went the second mile.

When the teacher returned she was so pleased with his performance she gave him a place in her class. Booker T. Washington went on to become one of America's leading educators of all times. Today Tuskegee Institute stands as a lasting monument to his perseverance and insight. A similar story can be told of the late great Mary McLeod Bethune, another Negro slave and graduate of Moody Bible Institute. She became the founder of Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona Beach, Florida. She and other great persons were prepared to go "the second mile."

But the big question is, "Why couldn't I understand this before now?" Well, I'll put it this way: I had to suffer before growing wise. Suffering purified my

motives and by this suffering I came ultimately to wisdom. This was not only the whole theme of the Greek tragic drama but also the story of all the great Biblical heroes.

While my spirit yet soared as if borne aloft by these new insights into eternal truths, my eyes fell on Matthew 17:20, "For verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, 'Remove thyself hence to yonder place,' and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you."

But what does the word "mountain" symbolize?

What does "mountain" mean in this context?

I reached for Unger's Bible Dictionary. On page 765 I discovered that "mountain" was used not only as a symbol of strength and stability but also as a metaphor for "kingdom" or "government." Thus in Psalm 30:7 when David says, "Lord, by Thy favor Thou has made my mountain strong," he meant to express the stability of his kingdom. In the same way in Isaiah 2:2 as well as in Daniel 2:35 the kingdom or government of the Messiah is figuratively referred to as a mountain (big Kingdom) which shall be exalted above all the hills (little kingdoms). Then again in Jeremiah 51:25 and in Zachariah 4:7 the Chaldean monarchy is likened to a mountain which shall soon be reduced to a plain (dust). Furthermore, mountains are described in Psalm 72:3 as persons in authority.

While walking down Market Street to my offices in the House of Labour on Thursday morning, September 11, 1963, I pondered the full implication of Matthew 17:20. Its message was clear and unmistakable: "if I had the faith as a grain of mustard seed, I could overthrow the Government." Man! what a mind-blowing revelation. The Holy Spirit is a source of power and strength! He went on to assure me that "nothing shall be impossible to me." This was the kind of conviction I had been looking for all my life.

On reaching the House of Labour, I met a contingent of employees from the Princess Margaret Hospital waiting for me. Among them were Thomas Williams alias Big Ben, Isaac Baillou alias Half Pint, and Dudley Lunn alias Caruso. They spoke on behalf of the street sweepers, garbage collectors, chauffeurs, laundry women, maids and cooks. They demanded from Government the following:

- (i) An increase in salary from two shillings to three shillings per hour;

- (ii) Uniforms for all employees;
- (iii) Raincoats and a set of gloves for garbage collectors; and
- (iv) Soap and water to wash themselves after work.

The Bahamas Federation of Labour had always contended that Government's attitude towards street sweepers, garbage collectors and drivers of dump trucks was antediluvian. Government designated them as "scavengers" - organisms that fed on dead and rotten flesh and refuse - and treated them accordingly. But the Union called them public health employees and asserted that as such they were equal in dignity and rights to any other essential workers.

In those days Government needed a systematic approach to the problem of ensuring that employees were paid in a logical and equitable manner for the work they performed. If the problem of wage fixing was not addressed equitably and fairly, it would eventually undermine the morale of the staff.

In spite of these repeated warnings, Government still lacked a salaries policy or plan. Salaries paid in various departments were done in a haphazard manner. They bore little or no relationship to competitive rates for different jobs and there were disjointed scales based on age, sex, social status and favoritism rather than on merit or training. The Union wanted to know why a street sweeper, garbage collector or driver of a large dump truck made only one-half of the salary of a junior secretary? This was wrong and we sought to correct it. We threatened to strike.

Government clenched its fists. Employers called me names -profane and indecent. They said I was ambitious. This was true; I was ambitious for the emancipation of the poor.

The B. F. of L. gave Government an ultimatum. The countdown had scarcely started when both newspapers (the *Nassau Guardian* and the *Nassau Daily Tribune*) asked, "Who does Randol Fawkes think he is? How and by what authority does he dare give the Government of The Bahamas an ultimatum?"

On September 12, 1962, Sir Etienne Dupuch advised Government, "Let's fight Fawkes, Now!"

"When will this strike be called?" the Establishment inquired.

"That, my friends, is a military secret," said I.

The latter reply vexed them all the more. The thought of one man holding The Bahamas up for ransom was revolting to them. On Tuesday, September 17, 1963, the official *Nassau Guardian (1844) Limited* editorialized as follows:

LUST FOR POWER

The Colony has enjoyed excellent management-labour relations for a considerable period. The last major strike in 1958 taught many workers a bitter lesson and brought no material benefits to anyone.

But last week members of the Transport, Agricultural Distributive and Allied Workers Union of Mr. R. Fawkes' Bahamas Federation of Labour voted to strike against the Health Department. Although the Acting Chief Industrial Officer has submitted a report to the Governor in which he is believed to have questioned the validity of the strike vote, it appears likely that the workers concerned will come out whenever Mr. Fawkes beckons.

The most sympathetic consideration to the Union's requests has been given by the Health Board. Indeed, so far as it lies within their power to do so, the Board has acceded to the workers' demands.

On the question of wage increases the Board is powerless to act beyond passing on its recommendations to the Governor-in-Council. Mr. Fawkes, a lawyer and a member of the House of Assembly, is fully aware that the Board itself cannot grant increases in pay; this is a matter which can only be dealt with finally by the Legislature.

Since this fact is well known to Mr. Fawkes, the conclusion is inevitable that he has either deliberately misled union members into believing that the Board could grant the wage increases if it wanted to, or he is merely determined to bring about a strike as a means of satisfying his unlimited appetite for personal power.

There are no other alternatives. There have been of course some pious talks which seek to convey the impression that Mr. Fawkes is concerned with the health of the public. But under the circumstances, that is just so much poppycock, for no one who is genuinely concerned with the public's health would contemplate calling garbage collectors, street sweepers, and laundry workers etc. out on strike over an issue which cannot possibly be settled until the Legislature is reconvened at the end of the next month.

The proper course for Mr. Fawkes to follow - and he knows it - would be to assure himself that the Union's demand for higher pay has been passed on by the Board to the Governor-in-Council and then to await the Council's decision when the House re-opens. If that decision does not seem to him to be forthcoming within a reasonable time, there is

other action open to him in Parliament as a member of the Assembly.

While we seriously doubt that the Governor-in-Council will regard a demand for almost double pay as a reasonable proposal, the point is that the request has not yet been rejected. What legitimate basis, therefore, can there possibly be for bringing on a strike? Whether or not the workers have a reasonable grievance against their present pay is not the immediate question; the fact that they must understand (and may not have been told) is that the authority which must deal with their request initially has not yet been given an opportunity to take action on it one way or another.

We are obliged to conclude that all Mr. Fawkes seeks to achieve is a demonstration of his personal power and the pay demands are simply being used to create an opportunity for him to try out his wings again. Members of the Union who have voted to strike at his order might do well to talk first to some of the hotel workers who heeded Mr. Fawkes' strike call in 1958.

It seems to us that the projected strike is shaping up as a power struggle between Randol Fawkes and the Government of the Colony. Perhaps it is time that the test was made, for if it happens that Mr. Fawkes emerges as an individual who is more powerful than The Bahamas then this would no longer be a decent place in which to work and live, and we might as well find that out now.

On September 18, Sir Etienne Dupuch shrieked: "*Fawkes is a menace to the working people of this Colony. Strike him down now!*"

On September 29, he was at it again: "*Fawkes is demanding twenty pounds (approximately \$57) per week for common labour! Where is the money coming from?*"

On September 30th: "*Let's fight now. Any compromise with Mr. Fawkes at this time means that he will be back in three months time for something else. Let's fight this dangerous bully now!*"

Since Government refused to take our demands seriously, the B. F. of L's Transport and General Workers Union called a meeting of all public health employees and took a strike vote. Government therefore dispatched Mr. J. V. Brown of the Ministry of Labour to supervise the taking of a second strike vote. This time the vote was unanimous. As the axe was supposed to fall on October 1, the following morning, we gave last minute instructions to the officers, shop stewards and members for the conduct of the strike.

This done, the Union went into a prayer session. Our gentleman Chaplain, the Reverend Henry Wright, nearing seventy, said a short prayer. He seemed



The Labour leader (author) speaks to his brothers.

to be weighed down by the thought of the poor having to fight yet another round against the high and mighty of the minority Government.

Next on the prayer list was Sister Florie Smith. Whereas Brother Henry Wright was tall, weak and weary, Sister Smith, aged thirty-five, was a short, fat, sturdy, buxom, domestic servant whose booming voice had been heard far and wide during the General Strike and the Sedition Case. In those days she extemporaneously composed her own hymns to garner more souls for the mighty army of Labour.

That night, after Mr. J. V. Brown, the Labour Officer, had left the meeting, Sister Florie took the microphone and started singing:

*O God our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come;
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.*

Then Sister Smith took off on the theme of Israel's exodus from the land of

Egypt, drawing vivid parallels between us and the Hebrew children of yesteryear. When Sister Smith started to pray for the Union and for me personally, the whole House of Labour caught fire. There were moans and groans in response to her every sentence as she established contact and led us close to the Pearly Gates: “May the power of God pilot this Union. May the wisdom of God instruct this Union. May the eye of God watch over us and the right hand of God defend us. And as for Brother Fawkes, O Lord, You go with him into the battle tomorrow morning. Christ, be with him. Christ, be in front of him. Christ, be in the back of him. Christ, be all around him. And Lord, O, Lord when you give him the victory, we will give you the thanks and glorify Your Name.”

Now I was beginning to understand what mountain moving prayer was all about. It took another five to ten minutes for emotions to calm and return to earth. When we opened our eyes, however, Sister Edith Miller was standing over me. “Brother Fawkes,” she said with a heart full of love, there are two policemen downstairs. They say they have come to see you.”

“Tell the policemen, if they want me, they must come upstairs and get me,” were my instructions to her.

In a minute the two officers were present. They handed me a letter. Goose pimples formed all over me as I opened the envelope and commenced reading. The Union members waited with bated breath. After I had completed my reading my heart became full. I struggled against my self to stay calm, cool and collected. Then with a heart full of emotion, I announced, “My Brothers and Sisters, the Mountain has bowed to your commands. Government has granted everything we asked for: the increase in wages, the uniforms, the rain-coats and an adequate supply of soap and water.”

The meeting became ecstatic with joy. We sang and danced all night long. Our brothers jumped like rams and our sisters skipped like lambs.

*“GLORY, GLORY HALLELUJAH,
GLORY, GLORY HALLELUJAH,
GLORY, GLORY HALLELUJAH.
HIS TRUTH IS MARCHING ON!”*

Gentle Reader, you too can bend the Mountain to your will if only you will keep the faith and work at it.



CHAPTER XIII

* THE DAY THE MACE FLEW OUT THE WINDOW *

On Thursday, April 16, 1965 about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the House of Assembly had resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Draft Order providing for the new constituency boundaries under Section 63 of the 1964 Constitution. In the chair was Dr. Raymond W. Sawyer, the Deputy Speaker; on the floor Brother Milo Boughton Butler, the member for the Western District.

"Mr. Chairman," shouted Milo Butler, "this Constituency Commission has done a wicked thing in cutting up New Providence and the Out Islands in a damnable way in order to give themselves-- the minority Government--a distinct advantage in the next General Elections." Milo developed this thought into a theme without end.

As the last grain of sand filtered through the quarter hour glass, the Chairman, Dr. Sawyer, turned in the direction of Brother Butler and said, "I am very sorry but the member's time has run out."

"It's very kind of you to remind me," replied Brother Butler, "but I intend to talk on. I ain't going to let any grain of sand stop me from talking. Don't throw sand in my mouth. I ain't dead yet."

The Deputy Speaker, who was acting as Chairman while the Committee of the whole House was in session, realized that he had reached an impasse and suspended the proceedings and reported this incident to the Speaker, the Honourable Robert (Bobby) Symonette.

The Speaker, having been informed, ascended the stairway to his elevated bench. On his observing Milo Boughton Butler still standing he said, "Will the Member for the West kindly address his chair."

The Speaker was really asking the member to sit down but Brother Butler misunderstood the finesse of parliamentary language. "I am not addressing my chair. I am addressing this House," he replied, while at the same time banging his powerful right fist on the table.

"Will you please sit down," pleaded the Speaker.

"I will not," countered Brother Butler.

Therefore the Speaker named Brother Butler under Rule 37 for wilfully disregarding the rules of the House. The Premier, Sir Roland T. Symonette, quickly came to the rescue of his son (the Speaker). “Mr. Speaker,” he said, “I move that the Member for the West (Milo) be suspended for the remainder of this meeting.”

This motion was duly seconded by the Honourable Geoffrey A. D. Johnston and then passed.

The Speaker then turned to Milo and said, “Will the Member please withdraw.”

Milo, becoming impatient by the minute, replied, “I will not withdraw, by grabs!” he continued, “I am getting tired of this darn foolishness!”

The Speaker suspended proceedings for a short time. During this interval the Sergeant-at-Arms, William Malone, bearing the majestic mace, marched toward Milo, “Mr. Butler, will you please leave this House of Assembly.”

“I refuse to leave,” came the thunderous reply, his right fist pounding on the table and this time scattering all the papers on it. “If I leave Mr. Speaker, you are going to have to take me out,” Milo added as an afterthought.

Upon this last refusal, two police-sergeants approached Milo. They looked at his large physique and tried to lift him out of the House but were forced to conclude that this giant of a man was just too much for them to handle.



Too Heavy - Two officers try in vain to carry Milo Butler out of the House of Assembly. Two more were needed to “evict” the determined parliamentarian.

Deputy Superintendent of Police, Salathiel Thompson on observing the quandary of his officers, dispatched two more policemen to the scene of action.

There was nothing small about Milo. In those days he weighed close to five hundred pounds. He had big limbs, a big body, a big face, a big mouth and a big heart - all of which he placed at the service of his people.

In the next few minutes there were four policemen on the traditionally green-carpeted House of Democracy. They approached Milo gingerly. Suddenly, two dashed under the table and each one grabbed a leg while, at the same time, each of the other two officers seized an arm of Milo. Slowly they disentangled his legs from under the table and succeeded in lifting him out of the chair and carrying him bodily in the direction of the stairway. On his way down Milo, in formal morning suit with tails, shouted, "If you tear my clothes or my skin somebody is going to have to pay for it."

With Milo out of the way, the Speaker reconvened the meeting. But as soon as it was called to order, another of Her Majesty's loyal Opposition, Brother A. D. Hanna was on his feet debating the gerrymandering of the Boundaries Commission. He too exhausted his fifteen-minute time bar. He too, refused to



Talked too much - A.D. Hanna is carried out of Parliament for exceeding his 15 minute allotment of time.

stop talking. So the Speaker named him and summoned two policemen to carry him out.

Brother Hanna was only a flea weight. One of Milo's thighs weighed more than the whole of Hanna; yet, when only two policemen came to lift him out of the ancient and honourable House he became indignant. "Stop!" he shouted. "How dare you give Milo four policemen, and me only two? I demand equal rights, Mr. Speaker, equal rights."

His objection was well taken. Two additional policemen came forth and together the four carried this featherweight midget down the stairs and threw him out of the front door to the open-mouthed amazement of the spectators.

After this second expulsion the Speaker was tired; the government members, bewildered; and the policemen, weary. So, one of the second oldest parliaments in the western hemisphere adjourned to allow tempers to cool.

But the recent events in the House did not discourage our Brothers and Sisters. The P.L.P. and the B.F. of L. had an appointment with destiny and we intended to keep it. The Bahamian masses were no longer content with leaders who used them only as pawns in their games of chess. They wanted to possess the Promised Land now; and any leader who had first put his hand to the plough and later turned back because of the storms and vicissitudes of life was not fit for the kingdom.

It was about this time that Henry Milton Taylor and Cyril St. John Stevenson severed ties with the Progressive Liberal Party, the organization they had founded in 1953.

H. M.'s blunder was fraternizing with the U.B.P.'s Minister of Tourism, Stafford L. Sands during his promotional tours in London, England.

The remark at private and public meetings that relegated Stevenson to the political bone yard was, "Black people will never follow a black man. They must always have a white or a mulatto to lead them." Of course the parliamentary leadership of the P.L.P. and the B.F. of L. gave the lie to Stevenson's statement. Thereafter, the Committee for Positive Action made it uncomfortable for Stevenson to remain in the Party. So he selected then to become an Independent. With Taylor and Stevenson gone, the P.L.P. became, to all intents and purposes, the party of the black people. As for me? I liked the P.L.P., but I loved LABOUR more because LABOUR means all who work without distinction as to race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed

or sex.

The next session of the House of Assembly on Tuesday, April 27, was a reply to the April 16th meeting. In the Speaker's elevated chair was the Honourable Robert H. Symonette. On the Speaker's right hand side was his father, the Premier, Sir Roland T. Symonette and his U.B.P. Mountain of Power. On the Speaker's left was the Leader of the Opposition, Brother Lynden O. Pindling and members of the P.L.P. Further down on the left hand side of the Speaker was I, the seed faith of Labour struggling at times against the Mountain and the little hills but in search for more bread, peace and freedom for the poor and oppressed.

Milo Boughton Butler was a bad man in the best sense of the word and the other P.L.P.'s were no better or worse. They opened the windows in the debating Chamber when the room was adequately air-conditioned; they stamped their feet and beat on the table; they objected to and opposed anything the U.B.P. proposed; they ranted and raved until in one defiant gesture against the draft Constituency Order, Brother Pindling arose from his chair. While speaking the Queen's English, pure and undefiled, he lifted the ancient mace from the bracket on the Speaker's desk. "This mace," he said, "is the symbol of authority, and the authority for the Islands belongs to the people, and the people are outside of this House and so this mace belongs outside too."

So said, Brother Pindling flung the mace through the window which had



Before - It's a bird, no it's a plane, no it's the mace of the Honourable House of Assembly

been previously opened. At the same time Milo Boughton Butler snatched the two quarter-hour glasses off the Speaker's desk and flung them out of the opened window also. Then all of the P.L.P.'s stormed out of the House. When they made their grand entrance to Bay Street they were granted a heroes' welcome by a crowd of their followers who yearned to breathe free.

The Speaker, the Honourable Robert (Bobby) Symonette, strove mightily to maintain

order and would have continued the proceedings had I not stopped him with the remark, "But Mr. Speaker, the mace, the symbol of your authority, is not with you. Surely we shall not continue our proceedings without it?"

This brought a halt for an hour or so. Later two police constables returned to the House with a broken head and globe of the mace and replaced same on the Speaker's desk. The U.B.P.'s mountain of white power laboured long and hard and finally passed the Draft Constituency Order into law notwithstanding the official Opposition's absence.



After the fall - the remains of the original mace.

But the people's demonstration against the minority Government had not yet run its course. Outside the House of Assembly, placard carrying men and women defied the arms and armour of the Royal Bahamas Police Force. Magistrate John Bailey read the Riot Act and in the name of the Queen, called upon all and sundry "to disperse peacefully and to depart to their habitations and their lawful businesses upon the pains contained in the Penal Code for the prevention of tumultuous assembly."

Peace was restored after the arrest of thirteen persons.

* * *

CHAPTER XIV

* THE HOUSE OF LABOUR *

At 7:55 p.m. we were all at the House of Labour awaiting the arrival of the last of our guests. Again it was June 3, 1965, the eve of Labour Day.



The author and his wife greet His Excellency, The Governor, Sir Ralph Grey on the occasion of the dedication of the House of Labour.

In accordance with protocol, His Excellency, The Governor Sir Ralph Grey arrived five minutes ahead of The Premier, Sir Roland T. Symonette. Other distinguished guests included the Minister of Labour, the Honourable Peter Graham; Adolphe Thompson, a lecturer in Industrial Relations at the University of the West Indies; and Brother Milo Boughton Butler, the P.L.P.'s representative for the Western District of New Providence.

The invocation was said by the Most Reverend Paul Leonard Hargarty, O.S.B., Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese in The Bahamas, after which I read a few of the fraternal greetings from other local and foreign unions.

After the Governor had delivered his traditional Labour Day message and officially declared the House of Labour open, Brother Sam Stubbs, our ubiquitous troubadour, appealed to the hearts of all mankind:

*If each little child could have fresh milk each day,
If each working man had a good job with pay;
If each little soul had a good place to stay,
It could be a wonderful world.*

CHORUS

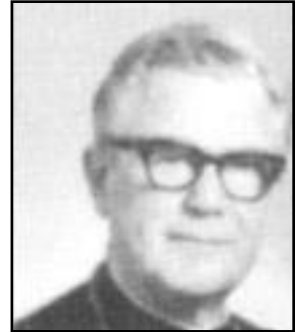
*If there were no poor and the rich were content,
If strangers were welcomed where'er they went;
If each of us knew what true brotherhood meant
It could be a wonderful world.*



*Rt. Rev. Bernard Markham
...prayer of dedication*



*Gwen McDeigan
...pathos and warmth*



*Bishop Leonard Hargarty
...gave the invocation*

The prayer of dedication was offered by the Rt. Reverend Bernard Markham, Episcopal Bishop of Nassau in The Bahamas and of The Turks and Caicos Islands.

Next Reverend R. E. Cooper Sr., Pastor of Mission Baptist Church, led the congregation in a responsive litany.

LEADER: We, workers in the vineyard of Our Father, have built this house to the Glory of God and to the fellowship of workers and for the enrichment of the common life.

RESPONSE: We thank Thee O Lord.

LEADER: We dedicate this House of Labour with joy and consecrate it to the fellowship of Beauty, Bread, Freedom and Justice for all mankind.

RESPONSE: For this dedication we thank Thee, O Lord.

LEADER: May its Beauty be revealed in the unity of workers everywhere.

RESPONSE: We beseech Thee, O Lord, to unite us.

LEADER: May its dedication to Bread be reflected in our efforts to create a world in which there is enough for everybody's needs but not enough for everybody's greed.

RESPONSE: Hear us, O Lord, in our plea for economic justice.

LEADER: May the House of Labour be a shrine for Freedom and Justice for all and a place where fetters of prejudice fall from our hearts.



The House of Labour.

RESPONSE: Hear us, O Lord, in our plea for Freedom and Justice and a release from prejudice.

LEADER: Let Truth reign supreme in the House of Labour and be the basis for all life within our country.

RESPONSE: Help us O Lord, to strive for Truth.

LEADER: Let this House of Labour be a place whose influence goes beyond our country's walls reaching far into the world.

RESPONSE: Thank Thee, O Lord, for the establishment of Righteousness based on Justice in our homeland as well as beyond our country's walls.

LEADER: Amen.

RESPONSE: Amen.

As our brothers and sisters and the distinguished guests made their final response, Hilda Barrett took her position before the piano and another lady in her early 30's, Mrs. Gwendolyn McDeigan, stood beside her.

Few in the field of music have so influenced their era and succeeding generations as has Sister Hilda Barrett. Trained in the grand tradition of piano playing, she became early in life, the organist of St. John's Particular Church of Baptists and the accompanist for a wide variety of civic and cultural organizations.

There was a general rustle of expectation over the audience as Mrs. Gwen McDeigan took her first breath to articulate the first phase of the music. She was a dramatic soprano who, over the years had built up an impressive reputation in the ministry of music. Although mainly interested in opera and the classics, this daughter of a stone-mason had sung many popular ballads depending on the audience whom she had always striven to please. As Sister McDeigan sang BLESS THIS HOUSE she brought to the House of Labour the same sparkle and warmth that was heard in some of her more ambitious works:

*Bless this House, O Lord, we pray;
Make it safe by night and day.
Bless these walls so firm and stout,
Keeping want and trouble out.*

The House of Labour was erected in the darkest days of the free trade union movement. It took us seven long, hard years to build the temple. There were

no big shots to help us. When it was finished, the land and premises belonged to the workers-debt free.

It has been truly said that one can count the number of seeds in an apple but not the number of apples in a seed. Little did we imagine that ten years after we had planted the first seed of freedom in the minds of the workers at our 1955 founding congress that there would be unions in almost every field of endeavour: in the Hotel and Catering, Building and Construction, Transport and General, Teaching, the co-operative movements, insurance companies and even a Workers' Bank. For all these they can thank the pioneering spirit for everything we thought, said or did.



A gathering in the 1960's at the House of Labour.

In the years ahead future generations of fathers and mothers will survey the changes in the social and economic landscape of The Bahama Islands and tell their children of the heroic struggles which made it all possible.

“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!”

* * *

CHAPTER XV

* THE INDEPENDENCE ISSUE *

If in the future it should become the habit to write great epics on national accomplishments, Bahamian poets will have at their disposal a theme which towers over all else: the deliberate use of faith by a subject people to effect constitutional change without bloodshed.

Perhaps it is to be regretted that no poet has yet sung of the exploits of that little band of six prophets who entered the House of Assembly in 1956 and summoned British Colonialism before the judgement seat of reason and, ten years later, turned it out of office. If some poet were to write such a work, foreigners might not be so quick to claim that Bahamians have no national pride and Bahamians might lose some of their fear that the foreigners might be right.

Although The Bahamas had made great political strides since the "Magnificent Six" entered the arena, this change was not reflected in the composition of the House. The minority still governed the majority and used its voting strength with deadly effect. Nevertheless, we kept the great issues before the masses in the hope that in the next General Election the people would exercise their franchise wisely.

Like a little boy who could not resist the temptation to poke his stick into a wasps' nest, on September 10th, 1966, I rose to address the Assembly on an idea whose time had come, or so I thought. "Mr. Speaker," I began, "I move for the appointment of a Select Committee to consider the advisability of our inviting the Government of The United Kingdom to convene a Constitutional Conference to establish guidelines for the Independence of The Bahama Islands." Earlier in the year, I had written the United Nations asking for an audience on this same subject matter but up to that time, I had received no reply. So I did the next best thing.

"Mr. Speaker," I continued, "all I ask is that we prepare our people for that which is inevitable."

"Four years ago, Mr. Speaker, I heard that a new nation was aborning in the southern Caribbean. So I went down there to watch its birth."

"On August 6, 1962, I was at the National Stadium in Kingston, Jamaica. At 11:45 p.m. all the glaring electric lights began to fade into the darkness.



Sir William Alexander Bustamante addresses Parliament on the occasion of Jamaica's Independence (1962).

In the next five minutes the countdown started: 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, -and then it was pitch black. Suddenly the flicker of a light and the sound of a gunshot pierced the darkness and broke the silence as the spotlight followed the fleeting feet of two young athletes as they raced in a one hundred yard dash to the Leader of the nation. The taller of the two youths out front with a package tucked securely under his arm and the younger in hot pursuit behind him.

“In a minute they were at the bottom of the flag pole where the Prime Minister, Sir William Alexander Bustamante, and Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret stood. There was a rustling of paper, the untying and tying



Jamaica's Prime Minister, Sir William Alexander Bustamante greets Commonwealth visitors on the occasion of Jamaica's Independence.

of knots, the unfolding and unfurling of the new flag of the New Jamaica: The Black, The Green and The Gold.

“For the last time all eyes gazed on the British red, white and blue Union Jack as their national symbol. As it made its way slowly down the flag pole there was a tinge of nostalgia in the breast of the old but a feeling of exultation among the young. When the Union Jack reached half way down the pole, Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret tugged on the old man’s coat and pleaded urgently, ‘Mr. Bustamante! Mr. Bustamante! Do you want to change your mind.’

“Bernard Cooper was the official representative of the *Nassau Herald*. I teamed up as his assistant reporter and as such came close to the two who played pivotal roles in this unfolding drama. I wanted to observe and to hear

his response to the Princess' dry humour. And then it came: Gazing far into the future the Prime Minister, Sir Alexander Bustamante, replied, 'Your Royal Highness, If I were to change my mind the very stones would cry out against me.'

"Mr. Speaker, if we were to allow our people to go into Independence without preparing them to cope with future responsibilities of state, history will not be kind to us."

I then quoted the following:

*This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall
Or as a moat defensive to a house.
Against the envy of less happier lands.
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.*

"That, Mr. Speaker, is Shakespeare telling us how an Englishman feels about his country. An African - Caribbean feels the same way about his homeland - be it Bahamas or Mother Africa. Listen to Claude McKay, an African-Caribbean Poet, sing of the glories of Mother Africa:

*The sun sought thy dim bed and brought forth light,
The sciences were sucklings at thy breast;
When all the world was young in pregnant night
Your sons toiled at their monumental best.
Thou ancient treasure land, thou modern prize,
New peoples marvel at thy pyramids!
The years roll on, thy sphinx of riddle eyes,
Watches the mad world with immobile lids.*

"According to these great metropolitan nations, the reasons – or more correctly the rationalizations for Colonialism were four in number:

"THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY. This, of course, was the basis of the missionary movement. Yet these so-called Christians were unmoved by the cruelties of the slave trade, the kidnapping of the bodies by night, the voyage in filthy slavers across the stygian Atlantic to the Hades of plantation on other

islands. In the doing of these things, Christians suffered no qualms of conscience. While these missionaries implored the colonial people to lay up treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, the traders and missionaries and administrators acquired their minerals and their lands.

“THE SECOND REASON FOR COLONIALISM was the greed for an Empire across the seas. Some call this motivation - national pride - that which inspires men not only to guard their own country’s shores against all intruders but that which drives men to go out and bring others under the flag - even by force, if necessary.

“Mr. Speaker, after Germany, France, Spain, Holland, Belgium and Great Britain had finished their favourite sport of war they used the natives of Africa as coins of the realms.

“THE THIRD REASON FOR COLONIALISM: The necessity - both commercial and military and the forming of alliances for these purposes. Here the hapless and weeping natives became veritable pawns in the metropolitan games of chess.

“THE FOURTH REASON FOR COLONIALISM was the good of the conquered people. This idea that Colonialism or slavery was for the good of the conquered people can be traced as far back as the days of Aristotle. He advanced that slavery was necessary for such men as were born incapable of self-government.

“J. Stuart Mills, a modern philosopher, thought Colonialism was justified only if it provided for the improvement of the Colonials and eventually made them capable of governing themselves. ‘Colonialism,’ says Mills, ‘is justified only as a temporary condition until the Colonials are fit for liberty.’

“Once a European power acquired a colony by fair or foul means, independence would be granted to that colony only under pressure. We can yet hear the last English Imperialist, Sir Winston Churchill, growling in his grave that he did not become the Prime Minister to witness the disintegration of Her Majesty’s Empire but in 1939 when the Nazi tyranny loomed large over the world, this same Churchill said, ‘it was better to perish than to live as a slave.’ Although Rome was interested in spreading the Pax Romana throughout the civilized world, she never believed in granting independence to a colony. Two centuries ago the American Colonies had to wrest independence from the grasp of Britain, but in 1946 America granted the Philippines independence ungrudgingly because they were ready for liberty.

“Education and participation in government are the two basic essentials for the preparation of Colonial people for independence. But when Belgium freed the Congo after more than one hundred years of foreign rule, there were only ten college graduates in a population of thirteen million. When Guinea in Africa voted to become independent of the New French Commonwealth of Nations, France immediately withdrew all of its experts, its projects and its funds from the country, Mr. Speaker.”

One could have heard a pin drop in the House that morning. I tried the emotional impact, the historical approach, then the inductive and deductive methods; but all my words seemed to be dashing themselves against a granite mountain without the slightest effect.

Brother Spurgeon Bethel, however, seconded my motion for a Select Committee.

The debate on independence produced several surprises. One parliamentarian, who had previously been a pillar in the progressive movement, contributed nothing. Of the two formerly independent members who joined the U.B.P. in the latter part of the 1963, one Alvin R. Braynen rose to heights of statesmanship and wisdom in support of the motion while the other, Eugene A. P. Dupuch, the expert on Constitutional Law, remained silent. Some like Milo B. Butler and A. D. Hanna saw every Colonial administrator as just another Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd of South Africa. Surprisingly, Orville A. Turnquest and Paul L. Adderley were not at all opposed to our seeking independence with all deliberate speed.

Brother L. O. Pindling, the Leader of Her Majesty’s Official Opposition, kept his silence. Later, however, he was to light up the political firmament like a meteor.

Against all of this, the Premier, the Honourable Sir Roland Symonette, tabled the following paper on behalf of his mountain of white power. He read, “I wish to make the following communication to the House in view of the public interest that has been aroused on the question of a constitutional conference on independence. This is a statement that I would have given to the House on Thursday, August 25 if the motion on the agenda for the appointment of a select committee on the subject had been proceeded with on that day.

“As a result of the 1963 Constitutional Conference, the Bahama Islands now enjoy a constitution which gives the people through their representatives, virtually full control of their internal government affairs.

“It has been suggested that because some other countries - perhaps less able to accept full autonomy - have become or are becoming independent, The Bahamas should do the same. The Government regards this attitude as misconceived. Independence could be requested and would no doubt be granted and this Government would be glad to manage the external affairs of the country, but facts must be looked squarely in the face.

“Complete independence would impose on our country the financial burden of responsibility for security, defence and external affairs. This burden is at present largely borne by Her Majesty’s Government, a small cost within the framework of Britain’s defence and diplomatic commitments; but it would be extremely expensive both in money and manpower, for The Bahamas Government to take on the task of establishing embassies and high commissions abroad, and of raising and equipping its own armed forces.

“Considerable Government funds would have to be diverted for these purposes which, in the view of this Government, would be much better spent on the progress and development of The Bahama Islands for the good of all the inhabitants.

“For these reasons the Government cannot support proposals for a constitutional conference at the present time.”

Halfway down the Premier’s communication to the House, I began to hope that Cyril St. John Stevenson, who had not yet spoken, would save the motion from ignominious defeat. This, however, was a vain hope. As Sir Roland sounded his last syllable, Brother Cyril Stevenson rose from his seat and looking daggers at me said, “Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt in my mind what the member moving this motion wishes to achieve - publicity, Mr. Speaker, publicity!” He paused for a moment.

Suddenly, in a storm of anger that clutched him by the throat and eyeballs, he lashed out, “Mr. Speaker, I want to go down on the record as being one hundred percent opposed to the establishment of independence for The Bahamas.”

The parliamentary members of the Progressive Liberal Party whom Mr. Stevenson had led for the past thirteen years looked at each other in amazement. “Could this be the same man?” they seemed to be asking themselves and each other. And then Stevenson asked the question, “And why am I opposed?”

Venting his spleen he answered: “Because, I think it would spell economic

disaster for this country to embark on such a course at the present time. There can be no doubt that the whole stability of this country is because of the fact that Britain's national flag -The Union Jack flies over these Islands."

The old guard, United Bahamian Party, gave him praise. As Mr. Stevenson sat, I stood, and replied, "Mr. Speaker, the Member for Andros has just shown that he has no valid claim to wisdom. The past thirteen years have singled him out as a Master of Deceit and I feel sure that the people will reply to him more fully on the next Election Day.

"Mr. Speaker, the member for Andros reminds me of today's cover story in TIME MAGAZINE, which portrays a native South African slave stooping down to pick up an article from the ground. On Prime Minister Verwoerd noticing the native in this compromising position, he took his right foot and kicked him. The slave after recovering from the effects of the assault, looked up and said smilingly, "Bossman, you make good football player. Keep on kicking!"

With Brother Cyril Stevenson's help, the Mountain of White Power almost crushed the Magnificent Six.

We lost the motion for a Select Committee on Independence. Its seed, however, was planted firmly in the fertile minds of the masses. At some later time, in some other clime, it would germinate again and bear fruit.

* * *

CHAPTER XVI

* FAMILY LIFE *

One hundred and fifty friends and neighbours squeezed into the living room and dining sections of a split-level home and overflowed into the foyer and family room below. Some sat in chairs provided for the occasion; others, on the green carpet; and some again occupied the most expensive mezzanine located on the stairway leading to a vestibule on the second floor. The place was our home on J. F. K. Drive in New Providence; the occasion: a soiree sponsored by the Bahamas Music Society.



The Fawkes family at home. Standing from left to right are Rosalie; the author, Mr. Randol Fawkes and Douglas. Sitting from left to right are David, Mrs. Jacqueline Fawkes and Francis at the Steinway.

Promptly at 8 o'clock on that November 1970 evening (forgive the advance in date), the lights were gradually dimmed. The curtain separating the dining and living rooms was drawn aside revealing two interlocked Steinways silhouetted against the background of the palm trees and floral arrangements put in

place by my wife, Jacqueline.

The audience (among whom were Lady Freda Roberts, organist at Trinity Methodist Church; Dr. and Mrs. Cleveland Eneas, dentist/violinist and his wife, pianist/headmistress; Mr. George Moxey, music master and man of letters and his wife) became expectant.

Our guests burst into applause as our seventeen-year-old daughter, Rosalie, and her eldest brother, Francis, made their grand entrances from opposite sides of the hall. Both pianists bowed in acknowledgement, and took their respective seats before the two queens of musical instruments.

With an artistic flair, Rosalie raised her left hand above the lower register of the keyboard; her fingers extended an octave apart. With a rapid tremolo her piano emitted a sound of timpani roll kettledrums that swiftly ran the gamut from a pianissimo to a mezzo forte and then to a fortissimo until the mighty crescendo was climaxed by Francis who, with arm, shoulder and body weight, brought down strong fingers of both hands to strike the powerful A Minor Chord in the treble clef. He descended in minor chords and then ascended in arpeggio fashion to respond to Rosalie's opening statement. The stage was set for the beautiful and rippling melodies of the First Movement of Greig's Piano Concerto in A Minor.

For the next twelve minutes strong and sudden accents of all kinds and vivid contrasts of light and shadows were the outstanding features of the artists' interpretation of Greig's most popular work. As the music bounced off the high walls and ceilings and filled the entire home, Jackie came closer, caught my hand in hers and through a vicarious experience we were transported into another world of creation and exultation. For the audience and us, music became the only art from heaven given to man by God; the only gift that man takes back with him from earth to heaven.

This idyllic picture was a far cry from the struggling young lawyer and his wife of the early 1950's and 1960's. Since those days, we have, with the help of God, changed the course of the history of our country; have been the toast of the labouring masses; have dined with royalty and the well to do, but nothing, no, nothing could surpass the joy we experienced on that November evening in our own home. Even to this day Jackie and I recall that moment of time, and relive it again and again.

Music was the charm of our family. At age seven, Rosalie commenced piano studies with Mrs. Gloria Barrett. She began with John Thompson's Piano Course Grade One. Mrs. Barrett was an excellent teacher but after one year Rosalie approached her mother and me, "I am giving up my music lessons."

"Why Rosalie?" inquired a concerned mother.

“After, one year I am still in Book One,” she lamented.

Now this was a very serious problem for her, and for us too.

Rosalie had indeed studied John Thompson’s Piano Course Grade One for so long that I had no doubt that she knew more about this Grade One than John Thompson himself. Genius was so often the case of an ordinary child with ambitious parents. We entertained thoughts of Rosalie becoming a church or school pianist, but now it seemed that all our dreams for her were about to be shattered.

We therefore convened a meeting to discuss ways and means of getting Rosalie out of Book One. We toiled all night long but the solution evaded us.

The following afternoon Rosalie, with a heavy heart, went again to the Aurora Lodge Hall for music lessons. At 6:30 that evening we heard familiar footsteps of someone approaching. Then the front door swung wide open and there stood a jubilant Rosalie waving in her right hand John Thompson’s Piano Course Grade Two. Gleefully she shouted to us, “I made it.”

“How did you do it,” inquired her mother.

“Do tell us!” I implored her.”

“Well le’ me tell ya,” she responded excitedly. “I came upon a plan this morning.” After catching another breath, she continued, “I decided that I would leave Book One at home and take with me music book number two.”

Rosalie became more excited by the minute. “This evening I was the last student for music lessons. All others had left. Then Mrs. Barrett called me to the piano.”

My wife and I tried hard to fathom that little mind as it unfolded, step-by-step, the strategy. Mimicking Mrs. Barrett she said crisply, “Come along Rosalie! You’re next. Bring your book!”

“I pretended to search everywhere in the hall for Book One well knowing that I would never find it. I looked here and there,” said Rosalie dramatizing every episode in the search for the lost music book that she knew wasn’t there. “Finally, I mustered up enough courage to admit to my teacher, Mrs. Barrett, that I had left Book One at home.”

“‘What? You left Book One at home?’ inquired an incredulous Mrs. Barrett.

“I started to quake in my boots.”

“Then what is that you have under your right arm, Rosalie?”

“This? Oh this? This is John Thompson’s Piano Course Grade Two. I replied looking up in my teacher’s face pleadingly and, at the same time, handing to her the Grade Two.”

Today Rosalie is a teacher of English Literature and Pianist/Conductor at Queen’s College.

As a teenage saxophonist, I performed in churches and theatres with such great pianists as Bert Cambridge and Percival Hanna Sr. and Lois Smith-Cancino. In the Western Senior School, I became the leader of the School’s Harmonica Band.

After marriage, my wife became the first piano student of Maestro E. Clement Bethel. She was mastering the great classical works. But when our son, Francis, showed a talent for piano playing she surrendered her position with the Maestro to him.

Since his twelfth birthday, Francis had been a persistent winner of the Bahamas Music Festival’s grand prize. On one occasion, in a battle between the sexes, he lost his floating trophy to his sister, Rosalie. On that occasion I was called upon to act as judge and jury until the dispute was settled.

Because of his masterful technique, Francis spent a year in the Jamaica School of Music where he studied under Kaestner Robinson. In 1972 Francis placed first in the Jamaica’s Open Pianoforte Competition. Later Francis attended London’s Royal Academy of Music where, after four years of study, he was awarded the coveted Professional Certificate in Performance. Today Francis is a Cultural Officer at the Ministry of Education and Culture.

My wife and I were so blissfully happy after our June 1951 marriage that our first two children were respectively named for us. To avoid the confusion of duplicity, they used our second names. In them we were reborn. We did not need anybody or any thing. We thought that our happiness was complete. But when the chill winds of adversity began to blow heavily on our castle of dreams, we were compelled to seek new answers to the riddle of life, a more practical faith and a new relationship with God. Hence, the names of our two younger children -Douglas CHRISTOPHER and DAVID Leonard Edward – reflected our new point of emphasis at the dates of their births.



The Faukes family in 1958

But the mere giving of Christian names to children does not of itself guarantee that their lives will be free of problems. Human nature is such that one cannot truly appreciate great blessings or prosperity without experiencing some prior misfortune or humiliation to keep one from being exulted beyond control. “The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold” (Proverbs 27:21). Silver can be melted and refined in a pot, but gold must be put right into the fire before it can be melted and refined. As it is with various grades of metal so is it with human beings.

When our second son, Douglas CHRISTOPHER, turned fifteen he expressed a tremendous dislike of school. One Monday morning in February, 1971 he said to me, “Dad, school is a drag. I think I am going to find myself a job and make some money. I can support myself.”

“But Doug,” I replied, “your timing is wrong. With a little more education and training you can go into the professions or take up a trade.”

“Dad,” he rebutted, “I can make it now. At the supermarkets the delivery boys make twenty dollars per week. In addition to this basic salary, they make ten to fifteen dollars per day in tips.” Seeking to assure me that I was hearing right he added contemptuously, “School? I have had enough. I want out!”

Feeling the need for firmness I replied, “No Doug, finish your schooling first, and then you can demand a better job with better pay. You must go to school first.”

But Doug had other plans. Ever since he had attended Camp Minnowbrook in New York he had become more aggressive. He wanted to discuss all the major issues concerning his life. He wanted to participate in the decision making process. It was obvious to me that he thought that my last command was “undemocratic.” As he walked away he complained, “There’s too much tension in this house. I don’t like all this dictatorship.”

Little did I think that at that time Douglas was already employed by the Cable Beach Supermarket and was indeed making his own money.

Early the following morning, Jackie left for Philadelphia with Francis where he was to audition for one of the American Music Schools. As soon as they were out of sight, Douglas jumped on his bicycle and headed in the direction of Queen’s College.

During his mother’s absence from the home, the generation gap between

Douglas and me widened until one day Doug did not return from school. After 6:00 p.m. with no word of or from Doug, Rosalie, David and I became concerned. By 10 o'clock we were really worried and bewildered.

“Man, what will Jackie say if she were to return from Philadelphia and find Douglas missing? Suppose someone has kidnapped him? Maybe I should have consented to his leaving school?” These were some of the thoughts that raced through my mind. By 11 o'clock Rosalie and David had fallen asleep but I sat in the family room with my eyes glued on the front door. Every time I heard the horn of a car, I opened the door; with every whistle of the breeze in the trees I peered into the darkness.

Suddenly, I became almost ashamed of myself. I had forgotten the most important lesson I had learned in the New Testament Baptist Church: “Why worry when you can pray?”

Didn't the Lord protect me during my exile in America? Did He not watch over me in the Suspension Case? The Sedition Case? This case? That case and the other case? Was it not He who delivered me out of prison and placed me on the mountaintop of praise? Indeed it was He.

“Lord,” I prayed, “please help me find our son, Douglas. For Jesus' sake. Amen.” This was concentrative prayer. Everything I was, am, or ever hoped to be was burned into that prayer. Leave world acclaim alone. We want Douglas back. I retired.

Ten minutes later Rosalie rushed into my bedroom; “Daddy, there is a man knocking at the front door.”

I looked at my watch. It was 2:30 a.m.

I rushed downstairs and shouted, “Who is it?”

“This is Donald ‘Nine’ Rolle,” responded a gruff voice.

I opened the door and there stood Donald Rolle alias ‘Nine’, the noted Bahamian golfer. “Mr. Fawkes, I went to the Shell Gas Station opposite Saunders Beach for some petrol. There I met a little boy inflating his bicycle tyre that had gone flat. On questioning him, I learned that he was your son. So I decided to bring him home.” My heart was full of gratitude as he continued, “I am sure you would have done the same for me if it were my son who was lost.”

While 'Nine' Rolle yet spoke, the back door of his car opened and out stepped a sleepy Douglas carrying his bicycle.

Recently I asked Douglas whether we handled the situation correctly. With a smile he replied, "No, Dad. I got home that morning at about 3 o'clock. I thought that, at least, you could have allowed me to take a day off. But you took me to school the same morning at 7:30 o'clock. Man didn't I have a hard day's night."

Today Douglas holds a Bachelor's degree in biology but the most important degree he ever earned was his decision to follow Christ. On one of my visits to Wheaton College, I asked him how he spent his spare time. He replied, "I have a Christian ministry in down-town Chicago's Skid Row."

I was content that he had a matured social conscience. No father can ask for more; no parent should be satisfied with less.

Our children's interest in music was encouraged by a continual exposure to



David performs as a fiddler in the Queen's College production of "Oklahoma" (1976).

Music Master recordings. Concerts and music festivals were family affairs. Despite all of this, however, Douglas was no musician. To him the smell of gasoline was like perfume; the sound of a motor, like a sonata. Today he is a teacher in one of the Out Islands where his mother and I hope he will become a role model for others.

At the time of writing the first edition of this autobiography David was pursuing a liberal arts degree at Wheaton in preparation for a career in Law. But he took some courses in accountancy and liked them so much he soon transferred to University of Northern Illinois to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting with a view towards becoming a Certified Public Accountant.

At a student orientation at the University of Northern Illinois when asked by Professor and students where did he receive his basic training in accountancy he replied, "At Wheaton College."

"And what did they teach you about accountancy at Wheaton College," inquired the Professor.

"At Wheaton College," came David's reply, "my professor taught me that true accountancy means 'accountability to God and country.'"

My wife, Jackie, and I believed that good reading matter was as essential to the development of our children's characters as was good food for the nourishment of their bodies. The best "soul food" was the Bible. It has always been



Douglas Christopher ...once lost, now found.



Total integration. Rosalie with two dolls.



Francis plays for Mr. Wifold Maiczynski, distinguished concert pianist during his visit to Freeport. At left Francis' father, the author, looks on (1967).

the kingpin of our library.

I have packed a lot of skylarking into one lifetime, but when I proposed to Jackie, this was no trifle. I knew right from the start that I was getting a gem - spiritually and morally. Her keen sense of responsibility even early in life earned her the appointment as the first head girl of St. John's College. She subsequently became the keeper of my conscience.

Being the eldest daughter among the ten of her parents' children, Jackie was her mother's right and left hands in the rearing of her eight younger sisters and brothers. She was to show this same love and caring concern for her own family. No matter how great our gains in this materialistic world, she always felt that it would count for naught if one of our children were anything less than a contributing member of the civil society.

There are conflicts in every marriage and ours was no exception. But we found ways of resolving them that brought us closer together. In 1962 we had to decide whether to remain in our small five-room house on Ginton Square or to build a larger residence for our six-member family. An affirmative decision found us borrowing Twelve Thousand Pounds (approximately \$US38,000:00) at compound interest from the Bahamas Savings and Loan

Association.

We had to accept this bank's offer because in those days the maximum leader of the trade union movement was not considered a good financial risk. Then again, there were restrictive covenants in the conveyances and rank discrimination in the selection of subdivisions.

We borrowed the money. It took us one year to select a site and another year to plan the type of house we wanted. Jackie read all the Better Homes and Gardens magazines and finally submitted her specifications to Arnold Cambridge, the architect. When he lost the plans she produced another sketch and submitted same to Gene Vanderpool.

Our admiration and respect for each other grew warmer with the planning and construction of our new house. In fact, Jackie became so proficient in the



In 1965, we moved into our new home on J.F.Kennedy Drive.

reading of blueprints that many of our friends sought her advice on their building requirements.

In 1965, we moved into our new home on John F. Kennedy Drive. It had

character and met all our needs: residence, study, relaxation and entertainment. My trips abroad decreased dramatically and the grades of our children improved.

But however laudable the foregoing may appear, Jackie's finest hours will always be those times in her husband's turbulent career when he literally walked in the valley of the shadow of imprisonment and was treated as a social and professional pariah. Women of lesser courage and faith would have reacted differently, but she surmounted every crisis without resorting to the excuses those hardships could easily have provided. He must be an unreasonable creature indeed who, having Jackie for his wife and The Bahamas for his native land is not entirely satisfied.

Of course, Gentle Reader, this chapter must end somewhere and somehow.



At the opening of the new show room, Mrs. Wallis Lockhart presents a bouquet of flowers to Mrs. Jacqueline Fawkes, the wife of the Minister of Labour and Commerce.

But, as you can see, I am loath to quit without thanking God again for send-

ing into my life a person who was willing to share my adventure of living.

Over forty years ago we exchanged poems. She gave to me Kipling's "IF" and I rewarded her with: If (For Girls)

By
Elizabeth Lincoln Otis

*If you can dress to make yourself attractive,
Yet not make puffs and curls your chief delight;
If you can swim and row, be strong and active,
But of the gentler graces lose not sight;
If you can dance without a craze for dancing,
Play without giving play too strong a hold,
Enjoy the love of friends without romancing,
Care for the Weak, the Friendless and the Old.*

II

*If you can master French and Greek and Latin,
And yet not acquire the priggish view;
If you can feel the touch of silk and satin,
Without despising calico and jean;
If you can ply a saw and use a hammer
And do a man's work when need occurs;
Can sing when asked without excuse or stammer;
and rise above unfriendly snubs and slurs.*

III

*If you can make good bread as well as fudges,
Can sew with skill and have an eye for dust;
If you can be a friend and hold no grudges,
A girl whom all will love because they must.*

IV

*If sometime you should meet and love another,
And make a home with peace and love enshrined;
And you its Soul and loyal Mother,
You'll work out pretty nearly to my mind
The plan that's been developed through the ages,
And win the best that life can hold in store
You'll be a girl a Model for the sages,*

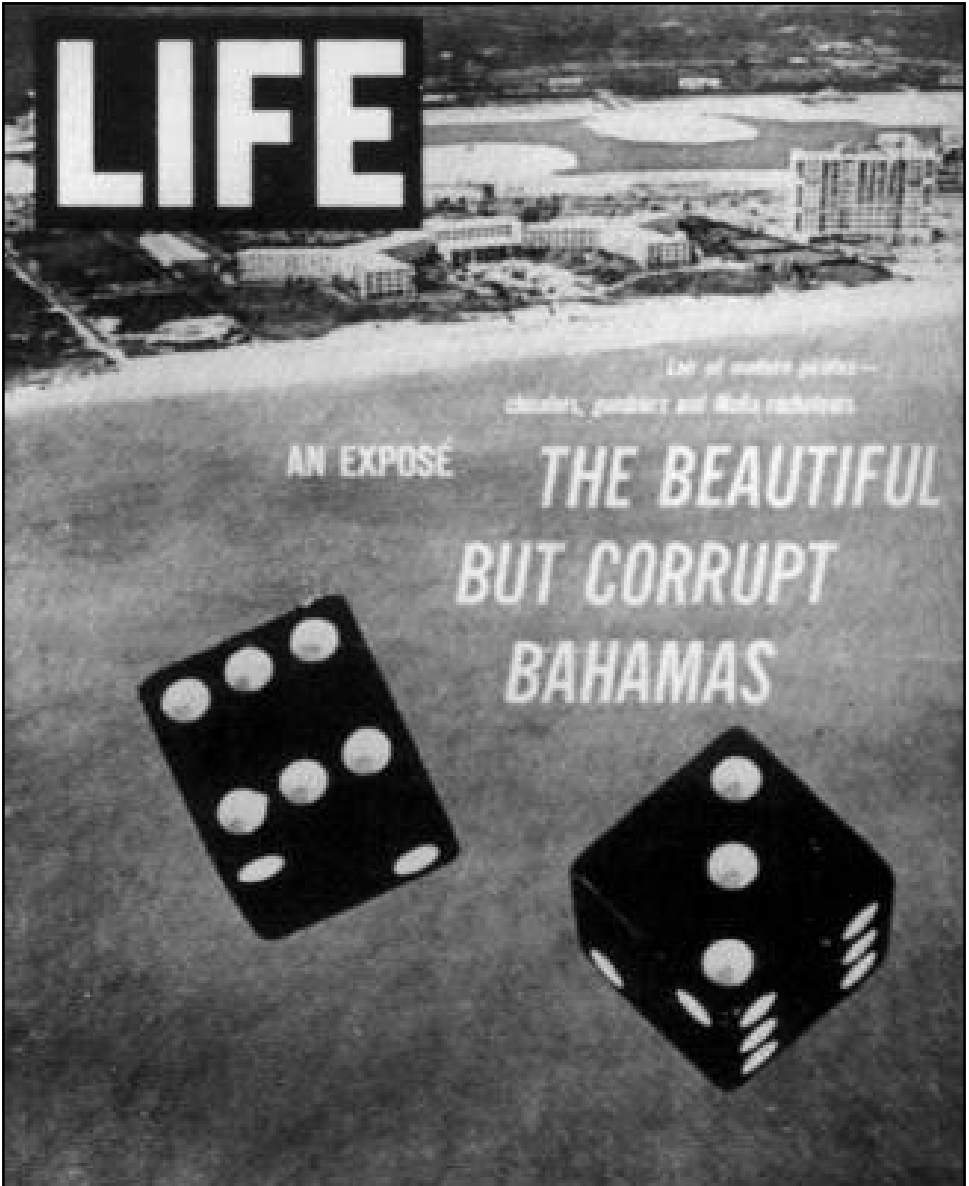
A WOMAN THE WORLD WILL BOW BEFORE.

* * *

CHAPTER XVII

* THE SPLIT *

Ever since Stafford Lofthouse Sands had burst into notoriety as a corporation lawyer in 1963, Bahamians have tried to fathom the character and motivation



Cover photograph for Life Magazine which was scheduled for publication but was withdrawn upon the request of local politicians.

of the man who soared to the summit of power and then, like a disappointed diver, had his fall. Few can boast of having done more to develop The Bahamas as a tourist Mecca and a financial center of the western world; and fewer politicians still, have been so blind in ignoring the legitimate aspirations of the masses for a voice in the government of their own affairs in the Out Islands and centrally in Nassau, the capital.

Sands was a materialist who worshipped worldly possessions as if they were the sum mum bonum of life. In all his strivings he grabbed at the good things - big fees, big mansions, expensive paperweights - and spurned the best things - Christian faith and love. Once at a banquet sponsored by Sands' City Meat Market, an employee suggested that they say grace before dinner. Sands exploded, "Grace? To whom? And for what? My money is paying for this and don't you ever forget it."

Stafford Sands was twenty-four when he first entered the House of Assembly on January 29, 1937. Two years later he became the legal advisor to the House - a post he held until 1953. During his tenure of office it was common practice for Sands to be the legal adviser for both The Bahamas Government and his clients who sought its favours.

In 1937 it was illegal under the Penal Code to operate a lottery or to keep a gaming house on however small a scale. In spite of this illegality, Mr. Louis Wasey and the Bahamian Club operated small casinos in Cat Cay and in Nassau. In order to legalize these two operations, Sands drafted the now famous amendment to Section 257 (10) of the Penal Code that authorized the Governor-in-Council to issue licences to those two casinos and any other persons they thought fit and proper.

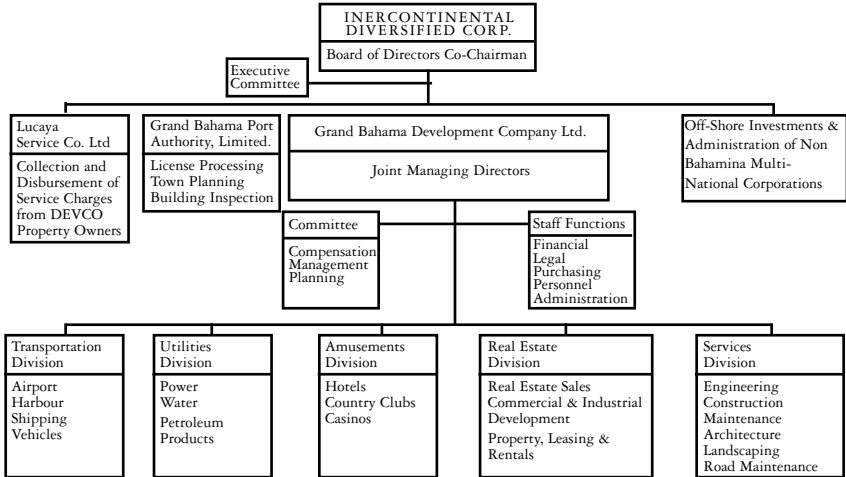
On November 14, 1945, the Honourable Stafford Lofthouse Sands, at the age of thirty-two, accepted appointments to be on the Governor's Executive Council and to be Leader of Government Business in the House of Assembly. Three months after these appointments, he applied for a complete monopoly on casino gambling on behalf of a syndicate of which he and C. Trevor Kelly were members. Upon the Governor's Council's rejection of his application, Sands resigned from the Governor's Executive Council and as Leader of the House.

On February 28, 1959, Sands again applied for another casino licence - this time on behalf of the Earls of Dudley and Sefton and Viscount Camrose. His application was again refused.

Harping on the same string, on March 20, 1963, Sands applied to the Government on behalf of his client, the Bahamas Amusements Limited, to operate casinos in hotels in Grand Bahama. This licence was granted on April 1, 1963 and was to remain in force for a period of ten years.

From the continued refusals of Sands' applications made before 1963, one may conclude that the general attitude of the Bahamas Government up to that point was to discourage gambling. How then did Stafford Sands succeed in obtaining this licence for the Grand Bahama Amusements Limited?

The answer could be found in one of the coolest, shrewdest and most calculating of Sands' clients: Wallace Groves. He offered a variety of advantages to the people's elected representatives in exchange for information. Thus within a few days after April 1, 1963, three of the six unofficial members of the Governor's Executive Council and two of the United Bahamian Party's members of the House of Assembly entered into agreements with Grand Bahama Development Corporation, the company which financed the casino operation. The agreement provided for the regular payment of monies to the members for "consultant services." For his representation of the gambling interest, Stafford L. Sands, the elected representative for the City of Nassau, received a



The Octopus: Groves' Group of local and off-shore companies...extended its tentacles into every facet of life until it became bigger than Government. "We mould our corporations today, but tomorrow, they will mould us - our habits, our customs and our life-styles."

fee in excess of one half a million dollars.

To complete the picture, a fifth member of the Executive Council, the Honourable Etienne Dupuch, Q.C., and Senior Partner in the Law Firm of



*Hon. Eugene A.P. Dupuch
...received \$10,000*



*Sir Stafford Sands...
over half million.*



*Premier R.T. Symonette... con-
sultancy agreement*

Messrs. Dupuch and Turnquest, received, as early as 1962, a sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000:00) from the Grand Bahama Port Authority, the company in which Wallace Groves played the dominant role during its promotion of gambling in The Bahamas.

The king of the feudal empire in Freeport, Wallace Groves, maintained hot lines of communications with all members of the Governor's Executive Council. Despite their oaths of secrecy, Groves knew of the casino decision shortly after the fact. As early as March 28, 1963 he wrote to Lou Chesler, a flamboyant investor gambler in Freeport's development project, as follows:

28th March, 1962

Dear Lou,

Stafford called me this a.m. The news is, of course, grand and definite. Vote 5--3. I do not know full details but gather R.T.S. voted, "No."

Stafford is really concerned over leaks, rumours, etc., and says that the matter can still be defeated. It will take two weeks more or less for the certificate of exemption to be signed and in addition, he has promised no publicity until after his return from England. Stafford blames S. Kelly and us (he thinks you). Please, Please, be careful.

Elis of Freeport News (and one other) says you placed at Caravel Bar a 50 to 1 bet that there would be gambling in Freeport before the end of the year and that Frank Stream told all over that Wednesday was D. Day and that you did. We are being flooded with requests for information. Too bad.

I am now most concerned over money and think a meeting must be held on that soon. My best.

Sincerely,

WALLACE

The reference "R.T.S." is, of course, to Sir Roland Theodore Symonette, the Leader of Government. This letter exposed for the first time a division in the ranks of the U.B.P. It also showed that Stafford (now Sir Stafford) Sands could make a respectable bid for the leadership of the white minority Mountain of Power if he cared to. Be this as it might, all dissident factions quickly mended their bridges in order to present a united front at the May, 1963 Constitutional Conference in London.

On the coming into force of the new Constitution on January 7, 1964 there was substituted for the Governor's Executive Council a Cabinet consisting of the Premier Sir Roland T. Symonette and fourteen other Ministers. The white minority Government enjoyed this new dispensation. It gave them "status" and greater power in the administration of the Colony's affairs, particularly in matters of casino gambling. Here one can hardly resist the temptation of quoting Lord Acton's severe doom: "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."



*Sir Etienne Dupuch
...consultancy agreement*

His Excellency, Sir Robert Stapleton left the Colony at the end of his term of office in April, 1964. His Excellency, Sir Ralph Grey, succeeded him as Governor and Commander in Chief. With effect from November 5th, 1965, Her Majesty, The Queen in Council, ordered that the Governor of The Bahamas be also the Governor of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The Queen also conferred the honours of Knights Bachelors upon Senator, the Honourable Etienne Dupuch, Editor, the *Nassau Tribune*, and the Honourable Asa H. Pritchard, former Speaker of the House of Assembly.

The years 1964 and 1965 witnessed the construction of new cabinet offices, extensive renovations to the Supreme Court and the completion of the Queen Elizabeth's Sports Centre at Oakes Field. Work was also begun on four new secondary schools in New Providence.

In March, 1964, Mrs. Shirley Oakes Butler, daughter of the late Sir Harry Oakes, submitted to the cabinet a proposal to purchase the Bahamian Club Casino by a company that would be prepared to donate fifty percent of its profits to the Bahamian community. Later there were two more casino applications: one by the law firm of Messrs. Higgs and Johnson on behalf of Huntington Hartford's hotel complex on Paradise Island; and another submitted by Attorney

Peter D. Graham on behalf of the Floridian Hotelier, Ben Novack. Both were refused, ostensibly because they retained the wrong lawyer. But when Sir Stafford Lofthouse Sands applied on behalf of the Paradise Island Enterprises for a gambling casino licence, it was granted almost immediately.

The above transactions highlighted one significant fact: although Sir Roland T. Symonette was Premier, the strong man of the U.B.P. was Sir Stafford Lofthouse Sands. He was the de facto leader of the Colony. As Minister of Finance and Tourism under the new Constitution, he became the personification of Rothchild's famous maxim: "Let me issue and control the finances of the nation and I care not who makes its laws."

By 1965 -1966 similar progress - so called - was recorded. Upon the completion of the Lucayan Beach Hotel, the roulette wheels of the chandeliered Monte Carlo Room spun their reds and blacks. Slot machines whirled; aces and kings leapt out of their decks and showed their faces as seven-eleven became the order of the day and night. As the Commissioner of Police, Nigel Morris, discreetly turned his face in the opposite direction, gamblers and gangsters in seven league boots raced across the seven hundred islands under cover of darkness taking bags of money out of the Colony for deposit into the banks of Florida and elsewhere. In short, while the people slept their beautiful Bahamas was being raped. "Shame!"

By now one would have thought that the U.B.P. minority Government would have been content, but they were not. They had tasted the wine of casino gambling and wanted more, in spite of all the vices that went along with it: crime, prostitution, dope peddling, money-laundering etc. "Those who do not learn the lessons of history are condemned to repeat it."

On September 9, 1728 Woodes Rodgers, the first Royal Governor, having expelled the pirates, summoned the first General Assembly. He adopted and had emblazoned on the Coat of Arms: PIRATIS EXPULSIS, RESTITUTA COMMERCIA (Piracy expelled, Commerce restored). But the four years following the launching of the new 1964 Constitution gave that monogram a mocking sound; perhaps, the reverse, COMMERCE EXPLODED, PIRACY RESTORED, might have been closer to the truth.

Sir Stafford Lofthouse Sands believed that every man had his price. During his election campaigns, he won many a black Bahamian vote while wining and dining them on his yacht - The Enchantress. The more sophisticated, he entertained at his mansion on East Bay Street, prophetically named: Waterloo.

Sir Stafford L. Sands was the Minister of Finance who directed the conversion of Bahamian money from Pounds, Shillings and Pence to the decimal currency. On the inauguration of D-Day (Dollar Day) in May, 1966, Sir Stafford entered the House of Assembly loaded with sets of the new currency and preceded to distribute same to members of government and opposition. He then turned to me, "Mr. Fawkes, my Government has asked me to present to you



FINANCE MINISTRY
NASSAU, BAHAMAS

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

NO _____
IN REPLYING PLEASE
QUOTE THIS NUMBER

24th May, 1966

Mr. Randol F. Fawkes, M.H.A.
Nassau
Bahamas

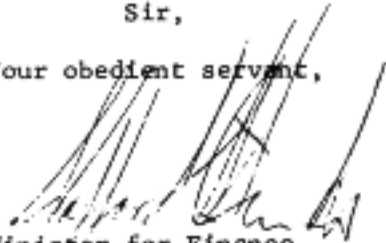
Sir:

To mark the introduction of decimal currency on the 25th May, 1966, it gives me great pleasure, in accordance with instructions by my Government, to present you with this set of the new coinage of the Bahama Islands.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,


Minister for Finance

this new set of coinage along with this letter."

I accepted the letter but refused the currency. "Mr. Sands," I replied, "I do not wish to soil my ideals or my hands by accepting these pieces of silver from the Government I intend to overthrow. In my opinion, it is improper even to think of making the offer."

With those words I brushed the coins off my desk. They fell on the green carpet of the debating chamber of the House as Sir Stafford turned and walked away. That was the first and last conversation I have ever had with the man who had an air of bristling unapproachability towards the black opposition.

When the news of the extension of casino gambling hit the streets, the peo-

**EXCERPT from
THE BAHAMAS CHRISTIAN COUNCIL'S
BROADSIDE AGAINST CASINO GAMBLING (MAY, 1963)**

We do not agree that, because people are bound to gamble anyway, we ought to legalize casinos and thus produce needed revenue. Nevada, which tries to do that, has the poorest system; the poorest hospital system, the poorest library system, the poorest everything in the U.S.A., except it does not have the poorest police system - for the police departments in Reno and Las Vegas are larger than they are in much larger cities in the U.S.A. Details of the Nevada experience are provided in several recent accounts of legalized gambling operations there. One, "The Green Felt Jungle" by Ed Reid and Ovid Demaris (Trident Press, 1963), recites the following statistics:-

- * Nevada has the highest crime rate in the United States.
- * Reno and Las Vegas have police forces three times that of other communities their size.
- * Las Vegas' suicide rate is the highest in the world i.e. 30.1 percent 100,000 as opposed to a national average of 1.9.
- * Prostitution in Las Vegas is second only to gambling in income.
- * Nevada's juvenile delinquency rate is twice the national average.

ple under the righteous leadership of the Bahamas Christian Council were galvanized into action. Although at times, the Bahamian masses might have backslid, yet there was always a minority of priests to remind them that they should obey the Ten Commandments. The members of the clergy therefore assumed full responsibility for the spiritual and moral leadership of the Colony.

As in days of old these modern prophets - Pastors Charles Smith and Philip Blackburn, the Baptist chairman and the Methodist secretary respectively of the Bahamas Christian Council - summoned a meeting at Addington House,



*Bishop Leonard Hargarty
...against casino gambling*



*Rev. Charles Smith
...broadcasted against gambling*

the Anglican Headquarters and issued a broadside against casino gambling. Bishop Leonard Hargarty of the Roman Catholic Diocese made an equally strong supporting statement. Like a mighty, rushing wind these condemnations caught fire from church to church until they finally exploded into a prayer-filled, mass anti-gambling demonstration at the Western Esplanade.

Premier Sir Roland Symonette, a member of Ebenezer Methodist Church openly supported the demonstration against casino gambling; Sir Stafford Sands, the Minister of Finance, did not. The views of the two leading knights of the minority Government were diametrically opposed to each other as each parliamentary member of the U.B.P. chose on that day whom he would follow.



*Speaker R.H. Symonette
...received \$10,000*

**A PAGE FROM THE OFFICIAL REPORT OF
THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON CASINO
GAMBLING (1967)**

The Recipients of Financial Benefits from the Freeport Casino Interests.

94. Reference has already been made in this Report to a number of consultancy agreements entered into by certain Members of the Executive Council and of the House of Assembly with the Development Company within a few days of the grant of the certificate of exemption on 1st April, 1963. In order to assess the significance of those agreements to our Inquiry, it is necessary to examine in some detail the personalities of the individuals concerned, the nature of the agreements made, the circumstance surrounding their making, and their implementation.

The following persons entered into such agreements.

Sir Roland Symonette, M.H.A. – Leader of the Government and Member of the Executive Council.

Sir Stafford Sands, M.H.A. – Member of the Executive Council, Member and former Chairman of the Health Board.

R. H. Symonette, M.H.A. – Speaker of the House of Assembly, Member of the Advisory Committee to the Development Board.

F. W. Brown, M.H.A. – Harbour Pilot.

95. In addition to the consultancy agreements, there are certain other transactions which may be considered conveniently in this section of the report. These, by reason of their timing, the parties involved and the obligations undertaken, may have something in common with the above agreements:-

- (a) A shipping contract commenced on 1st April, 1963, between the Port Authority and Greenacres Ltd., a shipping company substantially owned by C. Trevor Kelly, M.H.A., and Member of the Executive Council, and executed by Mr. Groves on 1st April and by Mr. Kelly on 10th June.
- (b) The payment by the Development Company of political contributions at the rate of \$10,000 per month to Sir Stafford Sands for the United Bahamian Party, commencing in April, 1963.
- (c) The payment by the Port Authority on 10th January, 1962, of \$20,000 to the Tribune, \$10,000 to Mr. Eugene Dupuch and \$10,000 to Mr. R. H. Symonette.
- (d) An informal consultancy agreement entered into in January, 1964, between the Development Company and Sir Etienne Dupuch, Editor of the Tribune.

Here the dramatic plot thickened as the labouring masses did what they do best: they prayed to Almighty God. The Honourable Robert (Bobby) H. Symonette, the Speaker of the House, and son of the Premier, summoned his clique and identified with Sir Stafford, the Minister of Finance. The Honourable Donald d'Albenas and his group marshalled their forces and sided with Sir Roland, Premier.

Hallelujah! The U.B.P. Mountain of Corruption was split right down the middle and, truth to tell, the breach was never healed. "Great God Almighty! What is this I see?" The handwriting was on the wall but it was not given to the high and mighty to interpret it. Only the spirit-filled could read the message: "Thou art weighted in the balance and found wanting."

And then it happened. The United Nations Organizations dispatched the following telegram to me: "REFERENCE YOUR LETTER OF SEPTEMBER ONE STOP SPECIAL COMMITTEE PRESENTLY DISCUSSING BAHAMAS STOP SUGGEST YOU BE AVAILABLE IN NEW YORK TO MAKE STATEMENT ON SEPTEMBER TWELVE OR THIRTEEN NEXT WEEK. CHACKO FOR UNITED NATIONS."

At the same time another gentleman was invited to address that august body on Conflict of Interest and Corruption in The Bahamas Government. Who? None other, Gentle Reader, than Brother Lynden O. Pindling, the Leader of the P.L.P.'s Official Opposition.

* * *

CHAPTER XVIII

* THE MOUNTAIN MOVES *

“Further steps will be taken to assist my colonial territories to reach independence or some other status which they have freely chosen.”



Queen Elizabeth II with Prince Philip, seated on the dais in the Chamber of the House of Lords before making her speech at State Opening of Parliament (May, 1966).

These words, spoken from the British throne by Queen Elizabeth II on the opening of the British Parliament in May, 1966 had, set the stage for the decolonisation of millions of people around the world. India, after a long and bitter struggle, won her freedom in 1947; Ghana formerly Gold Coast (Africa) won hers in 1957. In the British West Indies, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago had been granted their independence since 1962, while the people of Guiana (now Guyana) and Barbados achieved independent status in 1966.

The violent 1942 Riot and the non-violent 1958 General Strike were concerned not only with bread and butter issues but also with constitutional reforms. Bahamians took a giant step forward in January, 1964 when the new written Constitution was launched complete with a Bill of Rights. But still there was no system of local government in the city of Nassau nor in the forgotten Out Island communities that would prepare Bahamians for future citizenship responsibilities.

It was in this context that I, in mid September, 1966 appealed to the United Nations Committee on Colonialism and read into the record Government's official stand on independence as stated on the floor of the House of Assembly by the Premier, the Honourable Sir Roland T. Symonette.

God was with me. The U.N.'s committee was composed mostly of former Colonials, many of whom I had met previously at trade union conferences. There was empathy right from the start and the rapport grew stronger by the minute.

I pointed out that although the Premier had stated that "The Bahamas could not take on the expense of establishing embassies and high commissions abroad," we were then maintaining very highly paid administrative offices in London, Miami, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Dallas, St. Louis, Washington and Bonn, Germany.

In an attempt to prove that Government's defence was tenuous, I stressed that in many of those tourist offices, Bahamian personnel was either nil or negligible.

"According to the United Kingdom," I continued, "we are not Americans. 'Bahamian' is not a legal term under the Constitution; yet no one can say, with any degree of truth, that we are British. As a people we are without history, without culture, and without national identity. We study British history, British civilization and even British weather; but about ourselves we have no past and, under Colonialism, no future." Following my appeal for a survey of

the economic and social conditions of The Bahamas there was a lively question and answer period during which the U. N. Committee was given a more definitive portrait of The Bahamas.

Next on the morning's agenda was Brother Lynden O. Pindling. In 1965 Pindling, who knew a good political issue when he saw one, appeared before the U. N. with a conflict of interest charge against the all-white minority Government. At that time he stated, "The ministers of The Bahamas Government today own large shares in nearly every major local enterprise and are allowed to award themselves government contracts. They do unlimited business with the government they control."

Since our first election to the House of Assembly in 1956, I was regarded as a "revolutionary in a hurry," while Brother Pindling was typed as the more cautious and conservative representative. Over the recent past, however, there had been a reversal of roles. When in September, 1966, Pindling faced the U. N. Committee on Colonialism, he had grown into a rebel with a cause. His most potent weapon was the Grand Bahama gambling casino and its potential dangers for mobster-infiltration. He charged that the birthrights of one hundred and fifty thousand Bahamians were being sold out to gangsters and casino gamblers by the United Bahamian Party.

When L. O., as Pindling is affectionately called, was finished, he walked over to me. We exchanged copies of our speeches and gave each other a warm handshake. No word passed between us. None was necessary. We needed no fictions to inspire our dreams. The bare facts were excitement enough.

L. O.'s charges of corruption against the old guard minority Government were heard around the world. This time the wind was blowing in the right direction. *The Wall Street Journal* carried an expose of the Bahamian situation in two articles in its October 5th and 9th issues. The *London Economist* and other members of the media followed suit.

When we returned to The Bahamas, the Progressive Liberal Party renewed its charges of bribery against the Commissioner of Police and of political corruption against Stafford L. Sands and his team of gangsters. The first salvo brought a strong denial from His Excellency, The Governor, Sir Ralph Grey; the second, a threat of legal proceedings by Sir Stafford Sands against all parties responsible for the alleged defamation of his character.

Soon there developed between the white U.B.P. and the black P.L.P. a veritable street battle in which each giant fought for his political life. Members of the

United Bahamian Party regarded themselves as the undisputed lords of the land and of everybody and everything on, under and above it. "After all," they reasoned, "we've been in power for over two hundred years. The sons and daughters of our former slaves dare not challenge our authority to govern." But Gentle Reader, in all their reckonings they did not take into consideration the power of the Baptist Church.



*The Rev. Dr. H. W. Brown
...A Modern Elijah*

Foremost among its advocates was the Reverend Dr. H. W. Brown. This modern Elijah, in his journeys throughout the Bahama Islands, used his considerable oratorical faculties to warn, to stimulate and to counsel the masses. The omnipotence of the one true God of salvation and the high spiritual destiny of the common people when pitted against the twin gods of gambling and prostitution were his most potent themes. "The U.B.P. was evil," he preached. "It will do well for the oppressed masses to realize this, and that 'within the seed

of every evil thing is an element of self destruction.' This is why Greece fell. This is why Rome fell. This is why Israel, when she disobeyed God, found herself a captive slave in the land of Babylon."

Almighty and everlasting God, inspire me as I relate what uncommon courage was exhibited by common men and women in the founding of our new Commonwealth of The Bahamas. Create in me a clean heart O God and put within me a new and right spirit so that I may see, hear and report the truth without fear or favour, malice or ill will so that whenever this story is read it will bring greater honour and glory to Thy name. Amen.

In this battle for the new nation I understood thoroughly the pivotal role that I was being called upon to play. So I used the strike weapon against the corrupt administration in the same fashion Moses used the plagues of insects to undermine Pharaoh's false sense of power.

On October 20th, 1966, the garbage collectors went on strike for higher wages and better working conditions.

On November 3rd, Sir Ralph Grey, The Governor, in a desperate attempt to save face in the eyes of the American public opinion, flew to Memphis, Tennessee, U. S. A. "Some of you in the audience," he told the Executive Club

at Holiday Inn, “might have read some unfavourable publicity linking The Bahamas’ casinos with organized crime in the United States. Most of this criticism is the result of sensational journalism - long on rumour and short on facts.”

On November 28th, 1966, Brothers Pindling and Milo Butler flew to London to convince the Colonial Office that there was in fact a link between The Bahamas’ casinos and the American gangsters and that the charges of corruption in The Bahamas Government were true.

On December 13th, 1966 a wildcat strike erupted on several building sites; Nassau Beach, Emerald Beach and Balmoral Beach Hotels were seriously affected. Even Paradise Island felt the vibrations. The workers wanted a one-dollar per hour minimum increase for common labour and two dollars per hour minimum increase for tradesmen.

On December 17th, 1966, the workmen on Kelly Island joined the strike.

On December 19th, His Excellency, The Governor, Sir Ralph Grey was summoned to England to give an account of his stewardship and to report “first hand” on charges of corruption in Government.

On December 20th, the strike started to spread. One hundred workers at the Bahamas Electricity Corporation decided that they too had a role to play in the unfolding drama.

On December 21st, 1966 the Government, anticipating more trouble called on the crew of the British gunboat, Zest, for help.

The whole purpose of these exercises of the P.L.P. and the B.F. of L. was firstly, to convince the Colonial Office in London that a Royal Commission of Inquiry should be appointed to investigate the integrity of the top men in the United Bahamian Party; and secondly, to pressure the local governmental authorities to hold a general election to correct a serious crisis of confidence in the present administration.

The thought of being investigated by London’s Colonial Office made the hairs of the Cabinet Members of the U. B. P. stand on end. In their fear, they decided to call a General Election to prove to the world that there was no foundation whatsoever to the charges of corruption. “It has worked in the past,” reasoned Sir Stafford, “it will work this time too. As surely as the night follows the day we shall rise victorious in the morning after the elections.”

Upon the return of His Excellency, The Governor, Sir Ralph Grey from England, the 1962 legislature was dissolved and January 10th, 1967 was the date fixed for the General Elections.

Sir Stafford was happy over the turn of events. From then on he started to view life through rose-tinted spectacles. Since the 1962 General Elections he had nursed the thought of becoming Premier himself but at that time his hands were too full of gambler's money. So he grudgingly acquiesced to the wishes of Sir Roland. "But come January 10th, 1967," he mused, "the Premiership will be mine." So he thought.

In preparation for the Election Day, Sir Stafford entertained Faustian delights. He took unto himself a brand new wife and promised her seven hundred islands and heaven too.

On the eve of election, I addressed the House of Labour:

"My Brothers and Sisters, in November, 1962 you leased one House of Assembly to a number of representatives. It was not a gift for life but a lease for five years. During that term those tenants were to be your servants, not your masters. They promised new roads, better schools, cheaper water, lower telephone and light bills, a better standard of living and social justice for all.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, my Brothers and Sisters, that tenancy has now come to an end and those very same representatives are now seeking and cringing before you for another term of five years.

"You, the people, are the landlords. You know quite well that those last tenants have forgotten the reason you rented to them your sacred dwelling place. They were to protect and advance your interest, but instead they have forgotten all about the trust and sought advantages for themselves.

"Your House was supposed to be a temple of justice, but your last tenants have turned it into a den of gamblers whose fingers are still dripping with the substance of their ill-gotten gains. They presented themselves as paragons of honesty but today they are weakening the moral fibre of the nation. They have done things which they ought not to have done and left undone things which they should have done."

At this point the audience groaned and sobbed to overflowing as they repeated with me that last expression.

"And now, my brothers and sisters, they plead for a renewal of the lease. For

what purpose? So they can tax you some more? Oppress you some more? And press you further into poverty?

“My Brothers and Sisters, you are now fighting not merely for better wages and conditions of work. The stakes are far higher than those bread and butter issues. This time the prize is the country itself. After the voting on January 10th, 1967 the whole Bahamas will belong to you and me.

“Over two thousand years ago, ‘The Son of Man said, If you have the faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, Move hence to yonder place and it shall move and nothing shall be impossible to you.’

“Do you believe this?” I asked.

My Brothers and Sisters gave vent to a thunderous response, “Yes, Brother Fawkes. Yes!”

“Then let us hurry and work hard for the lamp of liberty burns low.”

In the General Elections a total of 94 candidates ran for 38 parliamentary seats. The white United Bahamian Party sponsored 36 candidates; the black Progressive Liberal Party, 29; the National Democratic Party under the leadership of Paul L. Adderley fielded 13; Independents-12 and Labour- 4.

Ever since my first entrance into active politics in 1956, I had cherished the ambition of overthrowing the minority Government by constitutional means. “If only I could get a second Labour candidate elected to the House of Assembly,” I reasoned, “then we two Labour M.P.’s could form the nucleus of a legitimate Labour Party.”

In the 1962 General Elections, eight Labour candidates offered themselves to the people, but I was the only one elected. Now five years later, I was still a loner but still obsessed with Labour’s historic mission to oust the oligarchy and replace it with a democracy. But, alas, I was the least among the politicians; without money or powerful friends in the right places. “How, Lord? How can I win if I remain a one-man Labour Party?”

In my extremity I turned to the Bible for help and examples. All leaders - Moses, Gideon, Jeremiah - experienced feelings of inadequacy when called to perform a seemingly impossible task. Throughout the Bible we learn that God uses a man to carry out his plan and purposes. God called Moses to do a job. Moses started to make excuses but God assured him, “Certainly I shall be with thee.”

So it really did not matter whether Moses was adequate or not. When at Mount Sinai God revealed Himself to Moses as the great "I am," He was saying to Moses, "Whatever your needs, that's what I am." When Moses needed courage, God was his courage. When he needed strength, God was his strength. God was his All in All.

Gideon's response to God's call was similar: "Oh my Lord where with shall I save Israel? Behold my family is poor in Manassah and I am the least of my father's house."

But God replied, "Surely I will be with thee and thou shall smite the Midianites as one man."

The point, Gentle Reader, is that it does not matter if your family is poor or if you are the least in your Father's house, so long as you are walking with God and talking with Him. Gideon thought that he couldn't defeat the enemy with so few men just as I thought that I could not overthrow the United Bahamian Party if I remained a one-man Labour Party. But God had a plan for each one of us.

The election campaign was a holy war between the two major political parties; each bent on the total destruction of the other. Against the U. B. P.'s arsenal of aeroplanes, helicopters, trucks and boats, the House of Labour prayed together, marched together, went on strike together, sang together and went to the ballot boxes together. It was a moving call to the vast majority of Bahamians to be worthy of their great moment in history.

The Progressive Liberal Party had access to adequate funding from sources both local and foreign. As stated before, Labour had the support of the masses whom I had served unselfishly over the years. In the final analysis my elections seldom cost me more than about three cases of Coca Cola.

In the heat of the election campaign, I was encouraged by Reverend Eugene Butler, Pastor of St. Peter's Baptist Evangelistic Church and Father Arthur Chapman of St. Cecelia's Roman Catholic Mission to press on and to remember that with God nothing is impossible. In faith believing, I claimed this promise and focused my mind, heart and soul upon it.

So on the 10th January, 1967, as the returns started to come in sporadically, neither the white United Bahamian Party nor the black Progressive Liberal Party could believe the totals. In the 38 member House of Assembly, the U.B.P. and the P.L.P. each won 18 seats. While I, a black Christian Labourite, held a casting vote. In short, God gave me the power to grant majority rule to the people.

In the early morning of January 11th, 1967 my telephone rang, "Tell the mountain to move, Randol, and take over the Ministry of Labour for the good



*Father John Chapman ... "Tell mountain move;
take Labour Ministry."*

of the country," said a voice which I recognized to be that of Father Arthur Chapman of the Roman Catholic St. Cecelia's Church.

In the traditionally British Colony, the winning party usually furnishes the Speaker from the members of the elected Assembly, but in our case neither one of the two major parties could do this without dropping to 17. At once Braynen declared his independence and accepted the office of Speaker of the House, thus realizing his life-long ambition. But the U. B. P. and the P.L.P. still remained 18--18. This bald fact gave me a date with destiny that I was determined to keep for I saw the hand of the Master in it. "Bliss was it on that dawn to be alive but to be young was very heaven!"

The Bahamian society, black and white, became electrified with tension and excitement as the word went forth from the white old guard party, "Get Fawkes! By fair or foul means, get him!"

The Premier Sir Roland Symonette reasoned that if he could win my vote, Brother Lynden O. Pindling and our people's government would be stillborn. Paying court to me, the Premier propositioned me, "Mr. Fawkes," he said, "You are better than the rest. Come with us, the United Bahamian Party. Whatever it is you want we will meet it."

Thirteen years ago in 1954 - I was forced into exile in New York City. Four years later in 1958 - I was arrested and charged with Sedition. But on the 11th January, 1967, I could name my terms to the Premier of Her Majesty's Government. Jim Bishop, the syndicated American columnist, mused, "Would it be a million? A half a million and a ministry? It is incredible that in a lazy group of Islands where votes can be bought like seashells a man chose not to be rich. The Negro just said, 'No.'"

I received a deluge of messages from the free world. Premier Grantly Adams of

Barbados telegraphed: "Congratulations on your monumental decision."

The next day Sir Roland telephoned my office at the House of Labour. Brother Alfred Smith, a stonemason from Fox Hill, received the call. He handed the receiver to me. "Good morning Sir Roland. How are you?"

"Well, Mr. Fawkes, I feel like the prisoner who is awaiting the verdict of the jury."

Sir Roland's fears were well founded for I had decided to stay with my people and I told him that. Sir Roland was a Christian with a rare sense of humour. This was the total difference as you shall soon see, between him and the bombastic Sir Stafford Sands.

Later that night Brother Pindling visited my home on J. F. K. Drive. We agreed to a P.L.P. Labour Coalition Government. The titles of Ministers and Honourables were given to eleven of us. Brother Pindling promised me and the people, "Government with Integrity."

Tribune

Bahama Islands Leading Newspaper

Friday, January 13, 1967.

SYMONETTE, PINDLING WOO FAWKES – AND PLP GET THE NOD

LABOUR representative Randol Fawkes announced today that his party will support a Progressive Liberal Party government "if and when it is formed."

The decision, he said, was reached unanimously last night at a special meeting of the Labour party and members of all affiliate unions, of the Bahamas Federation of Labour, Wolff Road, was to decide what role the Labour party should play in the formation of the new government, Mr. Fawkes told The Tribune.

The Labour leader informed the packed auditorium that since the publication of the general election results, he had been asked by the Hon. Sir Roland Symonette, Leader of the United Bahamian Party, to assist the UBP in the formation of a new government.

A similar request, Mr. Fawkes said, was made to him by Mr. L. O. Pindling, Leader of the Progressive Liberal Party.

"After a full discussion of the issues, it was unanimously decided that the Labour party should support the government of the Progressive Liberal Party, and that both Mr. Pindling and Sir Roland should be informed accordingly," Mr. Fawkes said.

Mr. Fawkes, who was elected to the St. Barnabas constituency of New Providence, as the Labour Party's only member in the new House of Assembly,



THE FIRST BLACK GOVERNMENT - From left, Hon. A. D. Hanna, Minister of Education; Hon. Cecil Wallace-Whitfield, Minister of Works; Hon. Milo (now Sir Milo) B. Butler Sr., Minister of Health and Welfare; Hon. Clement T. Maynard, Minister without Portfolio in the Senate; Hon. Clarence A. Bain, Minister without Portfolio; Hon. Randol (now Sir Randol) F. Faukes, Minister of Labour and Commerce; Hon. L. O. (now Sir Lynden) Pindling, Premier; His Excellency, The Governor, Sir Ralph Grey; Hon. Jeffrey M. Thompson, Minister of Internal Affairs; Hon. Curtis McMillan, Minister of Communications; Hon. Warren Leaverty, Minister of Our Island Affairs and Hon. Carlton E. Francis, Minister of Finance.

BAY STREET BOYS COULDN'T BUY RANDOL FAWKES

The Miami Herald
Monday, February 6th, 1967
Jim Bishop: Reporter

Nassau, Bahamas-The election returns came in sporadically. Neither the whites nor the Negroes believed the totals. Pindling's P.L.P. which had 10 seats out of 38 in the Assembly, hoped to add a few more. The United Bahamian Party needed only twenty seats to maintain control. They weren't making it.

A silent horror fell over the mansions in the limestone hills. A revolution was in progress. No bullets bounced off the elegant façade of Governor Sir Ralph Grey's mansion. The work was being done with ballots. Ironically, this had been the weapon used by the Bay Street Boys to maintain power over the natives.

ONE BY ONE, the natives began to win seats. Dr. McMillan in Fort Charlotte; Maurice Moore in Grand Bahama East; Thompson in Eleuthera; Levarity in Bimini and West End; Pindling himself in South Andros. When all the returns had been counted, it was obvious that the P.L.P. had eighteen seats; U.B.P. had eighteen; A.R. Braynen, an independent, had one; Randol Fawkes and his Labour Party had one.

Nobody had a clear majority. The winning party always furnishes the Speaker of the House from the elected Assembly, and neither side could do it without dropping to seventeen votes. At once, a night battle began for Braynen's vote and, more important, Fawkes's!

Lynden Pindling offered Braynen the Speakership, and it was accepted. The Speaker has no vote, except when the House is tied. So the contending forces remained at 18-18. Fawkes was in his St. Barnabas district, listening to the plaudits of his adherents, when-so he says- the Premier himself paid a personal visit.

SIR ROLAND SYMONETTE is accustomed to having people come to him. He knew, and so did Fawkes, that the revolution now hinged on a solitary vote. If the Bay Street Boys could bring Randol Fawkes to their side, at any price, Pindling and his "colored" government was stillborn. "Name your terms," the Premier said. "Whatever it is, we will meet it."

Fawkes has a boyish grin that hides embarrassment. He poured it on. A few years earlier, he had been banished from the islands; had carried cakes of ice in Harlem to keep alive. Now he could name his “terms” to the Premier of Her Majesty’s Government. Would he ask a million? A half million and a ministry?

The Negro said he was sorry. He had decided to go along with Pindling. He had no terms; no price. It is incredible that, in a lazy group of islands where votes can be bought like seashells, a man chose not to be rich. The answer was, “No.”

This gave Lynden O. Pindling a speaker, and a 19-18 majority in the House. Sir Roland and his Government resigned. That night people danced in the streets. Black-tie diners in the Bahamian Club and Buena Vista sipped expensive soups absent-mindedly. The world had come to an end.



The author and his wife, Jacqueline at the opening of Parliament in February, 1967.

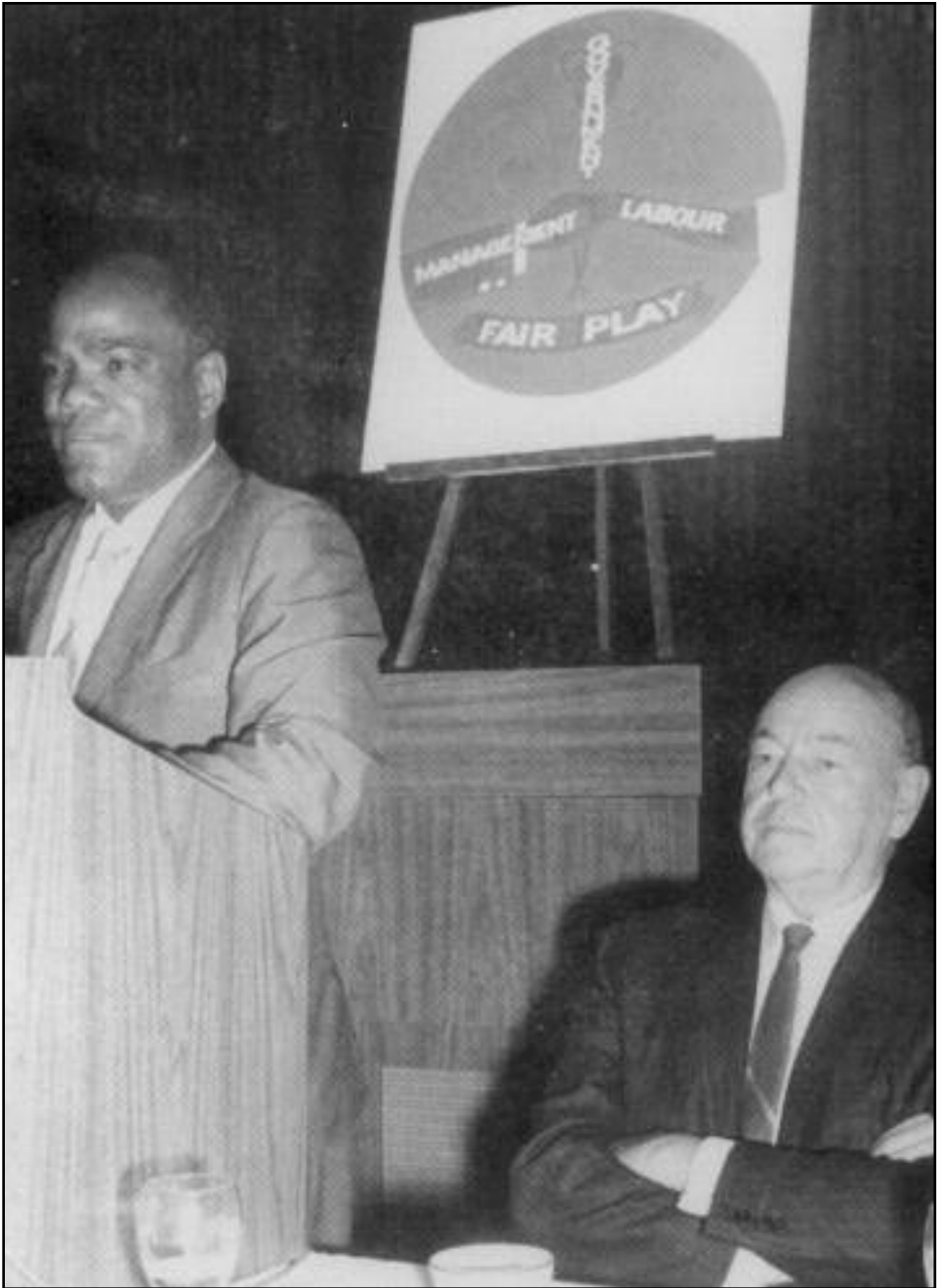


The Minister of Labour and Commerce (author) and his wife walk proudly to the opening of Parliament in February, 1967.

January 10th, 1967 might not have witnessed the greatest battle



Wives of cabinet ministers meet with Lady Grey after the swearing-in ceremony. They are Mrs. Randol Fawkes, Lady Grey, Mrs. L.O. Pindling, Mrs. Clement Maynard, Mrs. Arthur Hanna, and Mrs. C.V. Wallace-Whitfield.



"I have nothing to take from you but your fears and suspicions; nothing to ask of you except your faith and confidence in the future of The Bahamas, and nothing to declare except my Ministry's thanks and gratitude for an opportunity to serve you." The Minister of Labour and Commerce, Hon. Randol Fawkes launches the Industrial Relations Charter setting the P.L.P. Labour Coalition on a path of righteous governance based on justice. Mr. Wallace Groves, President of the Grand Bahama Port Authority listens intently.



*Trade Unionists and employees leaving for Freeport to launch the Industrial Relations Charter.
The new Labour Minister and his wife are in the center of the photograph.*

in the world but Bahamians, from that date, looked hopefully to the time when all the feudal straps and bonds would be snapped asunder – when our homeland, too long the mother of dwarfs, would give birth to a new breed of giants willing to donate all their talents to their God and country.

“Then I saw the ardour for liberty catching and spreading a general improvement in human affairs, the dominion of kings giving way to a rule of law and the reign of superstition changing to the rule of reason.”

The shock of their recent defeat at the polls struck panic among the members of the old guard United Bahamian Party who stood on the shores of history but they could not hold back the tide. So completely were they overwhelmed by despair that two of their Cabinet former Ministers fled the country. Stafford Sands, the former rambunctious Minister of Finance and would-be Premier, fled to Spain where he died a year later; Donald E. d’Albenas, another Cabinet Minister, returned to his native Canada; and the former parliamentary representative for Eleuthera, Useph Baker, suffered an immediate heart attack and died.

Realizing that a million dollars was a very nervous thing, the *Tribune* caused a further tightening around the breasts of the Bay Street merchants by spreading tall tails about the flight of capital from the Colony. In this way Sir Etienne Dupuch had hoped to undermine investor confidence in the new administration.

But Brother Pindling and I were swift to move. He travelled abroad to all our tourist offices on a speaking tour to counteract the adverse effects of the *Tribune’s* propaganda. I remained in my Labour Ministry’s offices and drafted the Industrial Relations Charter for the Bahama Islands and the new Representation of the People Act.

It was decided that the Charter should be launched in Freeport where a healthy dialogue between Management and Labour was so desperately needed. The Charter detailed reciprocal rights and responsibilities in the settlement of industrial disputes. It was not a legally binding document but rather a code of ethics—a set of guidelines for all parties.

On the day of its formal introduction, more than five hundred representatives of Capital and organized Labour, from Bimini to Inagua, crowded into the Camelot Room of Freeport’s Kings Inn. Enthusiasm ran high as Owens of Illinois, the owners of Morton Salt, U.S. Steel and Barcardi Industries rushed for the few remaining seats to respond affirmatively to our call for them to

Mary, Star of the Sea Church

FREEPORT, GRAND BAHAMA

PHONE 8854

April 4, 1967

P. O. BOX 172

The Honourable Randol F. Fawkes
Box 451
Nassau

Dear Randol:

My, how my heart swelled with pride on hearing your truly splendid speech this afternoon. I simply must write to tell you how pleased I was with the content and fine delivery. You certainly put everyone in no doubt of your sincerity, fairness, and above all your ability.

May God continue to bless that mind and heart of yours and fill you with courage and humility which are the marks of greatness.

In times like ours it is so easy to be swept off ones feet and to be extreme; "in medio stat virtus". May you be like St. Thomas More and be a "Man for all seasons".

With admiration and affection;

Brendan F. Forsyth

become nation builders in partnership with the Bahamian people.

"I have nothing to take from you but your fears and suspicions; nothing to ask of you except your faith and confidence in the future of The Bahamas; and nothing to declare except my Ministry's thanks and gratitude for an opportunity to serve you." With this opening statement I proceeded to lay the foundations for our modern industrial relations policy as it is known today. There was

instant rapport with the audience and this was maintained throughout.

When I sat down a gentlemen handed to me his programme on the back of which was written: "Congratulations on a sincere and brilliant achievement." (Signed) WALLACE GROVES, President, Grand Bahama Port Authority Ltd.

Upon my return to Nassau, I found a letter from Father Brendan F. Forsythe, O.S.B. It read:

Shortly after the General Elections, the Bahamas Federation of Labour formally ratified the proposed P.L.P.-Labour Coalition at a meeting specially called for the purpose. At the same time I was granted leave of absence from the Presidency in order that I might serve as Minister of Labour and Commerce in the new Government without any semblance of conflict of interest.

This accomplished, I then strove to assure the ladies and gentlemen of the House of Labour that the door of my new offices would always be open to them. Seeking to drive home the point I said, "Any time you wish to see me you may come right in and have a talk."



BELATED HARVEST: Bahamian agricultural workers who toiled on the American farms during 1947 to 1954 received their salaries twenty years later (1967). The names of those to be paid were announced over radio and posted in various Post Offices. Above the Honourable Randol F. Fawkes, the new Minister of Labour and Commerce, issued a cheque to Mr. John Woodside of East Street while Accounts Clerk, Basil Huyler, looked on.

Way down at the back of the auditorium there sat Uncle John Woodside among the sweltering mass. He stood up and said in half whisper and half shout, "Brother Fawkes, I want to see you right now."

The response came a little sooner than I had expected. At the end of the meeting, I walked to the back of the hall and inquired, "Uncle Woodside, what's the problem?"

"Brother Fawkes," he began, "in 1947 I was a migrant worker on the American farms. It was the law that two and one half percent be deducted from my weekly salary and sent to The Bahamas Government Labour Office in Nassau to be held in trust for my use upon my return. But when I returned they could not find my money. Brother I want you to get my money for me before I die."



Minister of Labour and Commerce Honourable Randol F. Fawkes meets the Vice President of the United States of America, the Honourable Hubert H. Humphrey while Dr. Curtis McMillan (center) and His Excellency, The Governor Sir Ralphy Grey look on. Occasion: The Commissioning of the Atlantic Undersea Testing and Evaluation Centre in Fresh Creek, Andros Island (January 20, 1967).

As was my habit I promised immediate action.

The following day I assigned my chief industrial officer and my accounts clerk to search for Uncle Woodside's claim among the voluminous files of migrant workers. They toiled all day, every day for a week or so. They were at the point of giving up the search as a lost cause when they espied one last bundle of old papers entombed in a corner of the room.

Nervous eyes and fingers ran down the list of names of unpaid migrant workers with the respective balances opposite their names.

STOP THE PRESS: Halfway down the sheet was John Woodside among a few others. Payments to those forgotten farm labourers commenced immediately.

My first assignment abroad took my wife and me on February 26th, 1967 to Palm Beach International Airport, Florida. There, along with His Excellency, The Governor, Sir Ralph Grey, Dr. Curtis McMillan and their wives and the Honourable Clarence A. Bain, we represented the United Kingdom Government and the Bahamas Cabinet at the United States Navy's commissioning ceremonies of the Atlantic Undersea Testing and Evaluation Centre commonly known as AUTEK.

The agreement, providing for this most advanced deep water testing facility in The Bahamas, was signed in Washington D.C. by representatives of the British and United States governments in October, 1963. The facility is located in the Tongue of the Ocean, off Andros Island. It was and is a key naval depot supporting vital submarine activity.

As we disembarked from the United States Air Force aeroplane we became immediately aware of the large number of Bahamians residing in Florida. They had turned out en mass to greet their hometown brothers and sisters who had made good. Some even bolted the police cordons to embrace us.

The Honourable Turner Shelton, the U. S. Consul General in The Bahamas, saw to it that we were given the V.I.P. treatment. The red carpet was unrolled; uniformed outriders guided our limousines and, to top it all, we were welcomed officially by the Vice President of the United States of America, the Honourable Hubert H. Humphrey.

Our next overseas task took Jackie and me to New York City to recruit Bahamian manpower to fill the local job vacancies. There, at the United Nations, we renewed our acquaintances with businessman, Gerald Roberts, Earnest Strachan and Lois Bethel, protocol officer and secretary respectively;

John Deleveaux, banker; Sylvia Matthews nee Coakley, outstanding scholar; Everett Bannister, and P. Anthony White, a Bahamian journalist who filed this report with the *Bahamas Observer* that best described what happened during our visit:

*Minister Induces Bahamians – Turned New Yorkers to Pack
Up and Come Home*

*by Paul Anthony White, Editor
Bahamian-Caribbean Commentary*

They came to the Summit Hotel on June 25th in ponderous, venturesome groupings. They all knew why they were there, and even if The Man did not appear, the die had already been cast -The Bahamas had become again, indeed, a glorious homeland.

The Man was the Minister of Labour and Commerce, the Honourable Randol F. Fawkes, M. H. A. The occasion was the appeal of The Bahamas Government to Bahamian residents of New York to pull up their transient American stakes and return home to help build The New Bahamas.

Mr. Fawkes, as gay and ebullient as in those good old days when he stood on Windsor Park in January, 1958, calling on all workers to pray together, march together and fight together, now appealed to Bahamian-Americans who were "tall enough, strong enough and true enough" to take advantage of job opportunities in The Bahamas.

The Bahamians-turned -New Yorkers listened intently to each word, each anecdote passed on, each offer of a new life in those Islands where life actually began. Although the Premier had already assured us on February 25th that there was a burial plot awaiting each in Grants Town, the Minister of Labour and Commerce filled in the gap between birth and death by promising each a job-a passport to the new epoch in the Bahamian adventure.

DOUBTING THOMASES

At the end of the speech there was an exciting period of questions and answers. Although Mr. Fawkes was more than equal to the task, one could not help but become keenly aware that some queries were posed by doubting Thomases as baiting, testing devices designed by those who found it difficult to believe that anyone else could govern but the Anglo-Saxon. But the Minister had not spent 15 years in the vanguard of political struggle for nothing; his philosophy was refined and his abstractions mature. One by one he dispelled their fears and those who came to scoff started to fill up application forms for jobs. I filled up one too.

And then, suddenly patriotic ardour took on a new dimension. Powerful emotions were translated into the music of Chopin's Revolutionary Etude. The actor on the stage this time was the young pianist Francis Fawkes, the 15 year-old son of the Minister. He played the music the way Chopin himself would have liked it. Out of the tempestuous, stormy passages of the left hand, the melody, furnished by the right, arose aloft, now passionately, now profoundly majestic until sonorous pianistic thrills echoed throughout the Embassy Suite of the hotel. We all shared vicariously in the experience of the artist and knew, for sure, that the new Bahamian was indeed among us.

Later as Mr. Fawkes joined all present at a cocktail party, he was seen here and there in the midst of his brothers and sisters assuring each of the Government's need for his or her particular skill or talent, pressing home the idea of a new day. He seemed so fervent, so determined to put the case for the Bahamians that one could not but remember that this was the same little giant that wooed and won thousands in the Southern District in 1956; who forced brimstone into history for 19 days in 1958 and who, with a smile and a quote of a "Mighty-Meekness", closed ranks on January 10th, 1967 and catapulted Bahamians from political enslavement into social, economic and cultural freedom.

*And as they each said "Good night" and shook the vigorous hand, though it remained unsaid, the air was filled with patriotic feeling that convinced all that manpower and womanpower from New York would be forthcoming. Yes, I heard Bahamians sing that night as they never sang before. The tune was **Bahamas -Glorious Homeland**; the last stanza of which goes:*



Minister of Labour (author) congratulates P. Anthony White on his decision to return home

ONE DAY WHEN WE
ARE OLDER,
AND TO OUR SONS
UNFOLD
THE BURDEN ON
BROAD SHOULDERS,
OF COMMON MEN
AND BOLD;
WITH ONE HEART
THEY SHALL HON-
OUR,
WITH ONE VOICE
PROCLAIM THEE:

BAHAMAS - GLORIOUS HOMELAND,
SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY

Mr. Fawkes wrote it in 1958 and is still involved in writing more pages in Bahamian history yet to come.

To any ordinary man this would have been enough for a fleeting five day visit but to Mr. Fawkes this was only the beginning. The following day he and Mrs. Fawkes were guests of honour at a testimonial banquet at Hotel Commodore. The list of the sponsoring



**MINISTRY OF LABOUR
NASSAU
BAHAMA ISLANDS**

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

NO. _____
IN REPLYING PLEASE
QUOTE THIS NUMBER

17th June, 1967

My fellow Bahamian,

For many a long year we have yearned for the moment when we may issue a call to you to return home and help us build the new Bahamas. That moment has arrived. A job awaits you if you act now.

With this object in view you are invited to attend a special meeting of Bahamians in the Convention Hall of the Regency Hotel, New York City on Sunday, 25th June, 1967 at 7.00 p.m.

Hoping to see you there.

Believe me,
Fraternally yours,

**Randol F. Fawkes
Minister for Labour & Commerce**



The American - Bahamian Connection: Randol (now Sir Randol) Fawkes, caps a triple handshake with Peter Ottley of New York's Hotel and Catering Workers' Union and Cadwell Armbrister of the B.F. of L's Airline and Airport Workers Union. Others in photograph on front row stooping with pipes: Roy Johnson of Electrical Workers' Union; George Moxey of Bahamas Musicians Union; third row: New York Attorney, Hopes R. Stevens with briefcase and files; Dudley Williams of Bahamas Electrical Union; Philip Smith, Richard Johnson, Bartholomew Bastian, B.F. of L's Bahamas Hotel and Catering Workers' Union.

committees read like a "Who's Who" of the New York labour movement. There was Harry Van Arsdale, the aggressive head of New York's Trades Council; Peter Ottley and Jim O'Hara, Officers of the Hotel Trade Union and also the Honourable Percy Sutton, the Manhattan Borough President.

The next day and the day after that Mr. Fawkes in his role as Minister of Commerce, conferred with groups of prospective investors about the development of the Bahamian economy. Jackie Robinson, famed baseball star and advisor to His Excellency, The Governor Nelson Rockefeller, arranged the meeting. This conclave concerned itself with the proposed construction of hotels, international pavilions for the marketing of Caribbean products and the possibilities of a mini-world's fair by 1978 or at the latest in 1992. Phew!

I don't know what course others may take but as for me, Bahamas Glorious Homeland, here I come.



The first P.L.P. - Labour Coalition Government in Parliament. Seated from left to right are: Hon. Warren Levarity, Hon. Jeffrey M. Thompson, Hon. Clarence Bain, Hon. Randol F. Fawkes, Hon. Milo Butler, Hon. Dr. Curtis McMillan, Hon. A.D. Hanna, Hon. Carleton Francis, Hon. Lynden O. Pindling.

THE NEW MINISTER OF LABOUR AND COMMERCE ISSUES A CALL TO SERVICE IN THE BAHAMAS

“My fellow Bahamian:

“A new Bahamian was born on the tenth of January, and an old one died on the eleventh.

“Dead is the Bahamian who stood idly on street corners with his dirty hands in empty pockets. In his place is the new Bahamian-on-the-move, in whose hands are the instruments of nation building; in whose pockets, the rewards of honest toil.

“When the people of Abaco or Andros are preparing to build a ship, groups of men tramp through the forest in search of the tallest, the straightest, the strongest timber with which to build masts and spars.

“Way over yonder there is a tree that appears to be perfect for the purpose; but no, there is a twist in it, a flaw that only the experienced eye can detect. Comes a storm it will snap and splinter and, under rough weather, the ship into which it is fitted will be lost, together with the captain, the crew and the passengers.

“Here is another tree that has the ship builder puzzled. But on a second look, its heart is half-rotten. It has knots in it. It is just a shell of fine outward appearance. It is not fit for shipbuilding.

“Suddenly, a smile comes over the face of one of the men. He calls all his brothers together and says, ‘I have found it. This is the tallest, the straightest, the strongest tree in the forest - we shall build our ship out of this timber.’

“Ladies and Gentlemen, brothers and sisters, today we are searching the forest of humanity in the State of New York for Bahamian timber strong enough, honest enough, true enough to build our ship of state.

“Brother! Sister! Are you true enough, honest enough, stout enough?”

“Are you the kind of timber with which we can build our new nation?”

“Are you a Cedar of Lebanon? If you are, then we want you to return home now to help us build our ship of state.”

- I'M - STILL INDEPENDENT

The 62 year old Bahamian politician who could make or break the P.L.P. as a government in its present state arrived in Nassau yesterday and announced: "Consider me still an Independent."

And in an exclusive interview with the GUARDIAN, Mr. Alvin Braynen, one of the men in the election limelight, emphasized the word "independent."

But, said Mr. Braynen, who officially resigned from the United Bahamian Party only yesterday, the P.L.P. leader, Lynden Pindling, has asked him to be the new Speaker in the House of Assembly.

Fawkes WILL Support P.L.P.

Labour Party boss Randol Fawkes announced the news yesterday which everybody had expected since Tuesday's election.

He will support a P.L.P. Government.

A meeting of his party and the Federation of Labour unanimously agreed on the role he should play in the new House of Assembly.

REPLY

"I have given him my reply, but you will have to ask him for it," he said.

However, when asked if he would like to be Speaker of the House, Mr. Braynen, who gained the Independent's sole seat in the House when he won, at Harbour Island, replied: "Who wouldn't? Any Bahamian would like to be the Speaker."



Fresh from my labours in New York, I returned to Nassau on a Wednesday afternoon at about 3 o'clock. The House of Assembly was in session. The taxicab had scarcely come to a standstill when out I jumped and headed for Parliament. I wanted to share the success of my mission with my colleagues. As I scaled the stairway I heard familiar voices coming from the debating chamber. When I reached the top platform the whole legislative session came into full view. I was stunned almost into disbelief. The picture was so different from the one I had grown accustomed to expect. The new Speaker, the Honourable Alvin R. Braynen, sat in his elevated Bench presiding over the affairs of mortals. Then I looked on the Speaker's right hand side for the mountain of white power that had been a fixture for over two hundred years. Lo and behold! It had moved! It had disappeared! The United Bahamian Party was no more. And I thought to myself and remembered:

If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain "Move hence to yonder place," and it shall remove and nothing shall be impossible to you.

Say it again, Brother!

Once more, Sister!

Speak it still again!

Always keep alive that kind of faith while working honestly and patiently toward your goal and you too shall become more than a conqueror.

THE FIRST BLACK GOVERNMENT

"Almighty and everlasting God, inspire me as I relate what uncommon courage was exhibited by common men and women in the founding of our new Commonwealth of The Bahamas."

Thank you, Gentle Reader, for your
unseen but ever felt companionship.

* * *

Sir Randol F. Fawkes



Randol F. Fawkes

1924-2000



Epilogue



After experiencing a brief illness, Sir Randol died on Thursday June 15th, 2000. His funeral service was held a week later on June 22nd at Christ Church Cathedral. His body was interred at Lake View Cemetery on J.F. Kennedy Drive.



A procession made up of family members, members of the Trade Union Movement and the Police Band moves along Bay Street and escorts the body of Sir Randol to Christ Church Cathedral for the funeral service.



Francis Fawkes completes a rendition of Chopin's Funeral March.

* A Tribute *

by

Rosalie J. Fawkes

On the Occasion of
The Funeral of Sir Randol F. Fawkes
Christ Church Cathedral
Thursday June 22nd, 2000.

To the outside world, Randol Fawkes was known for his involvement in the Trade Union Movement, politics, and his law practice. But that part of him did not dominate his home life. When I think back to my early childhood days, I have little recollection of my father discussing politics with us.

Daddy's passion in the home was music.

Every time he travelled abroad, he made a point of visiting a bookstore and a music store. On his return home he would bring for us albums of classical piano music, pieces for the violin and records that contained the life story and music of the great composers.

In 1966, when we moved to 115 J.F. Kennedy Drive, before he even purchased furniture for the house and carpet for the floors, he went to Miami and on his return, he said, "I have bought for you children a Steinway baby grand piano." He loved to sit on the sofa in the living room and listen to our practice sessions.

Shortly after entering the house, unsuspecting visitors would be informed that they would be serenaded by our piano and violin selections.

Sometimes as we practiced at the piano, he would come and stand nearby and with his hand propped up under his chin, he would begin to critique our performance and tell us how the piece should be interpreted; how we were to bring out the shadings and the nuances in the music.

My parents spared no expense when it came to cultivating our appreciation for fine music. When famous concert artists like Van Cliburn, Richter, and Andrae Watts appeared in concerts in Miami, we would travel to attend these functions.

In recent years whenever Dad came to my house for a visit, he always observed

the same ritual: the first thing he would do upon entering would be to go to the bookshelves. And he would say, “ I have come to see what books you have taken out of my library!”

“ Those are all my books Daddy,” I would reply.

“ Well where are my books then – I have noticed that all the books have gone out of my library!”

Then within seconds he would spot the piano and the tone of the conversation would abruptly change.

“ O Rosalie, play a piece for Daddy. Play for me ‘Were You There When They Crucified My Lord.’ Come on now,” he would plead, “ this might be the last time you play for me.”

After a performance I would turn and say, “Well what do you think of it?” I knew I could depend on him to provide me with constructive feedback.

About two years ago after playing one of my sacred piano arrangements, I again turned and said:

“What do you think?”

His reply was, “ Rosalie you have perfected the art!”

At home, my father chose to live, as he himself would describe it “in the realm of the mind.” He never seemed to remember that there were domestic chores to perform.

In the house he would position himself at the dining room table which would always be strewn with books, papers, and a heap of files. “Daddy,” we would say, “ can’t you see all the housework we have to do. Come and help us.”

“Can’t you see I am thinking,” he would reply, “ I am a philosopher.”

“A philosopher? What do you mean you are a philosopher?” Tempers were now rising on all sides.

“ I am a thinker,” he would roar. “I am thinking great thoughts for the nation!”

Randol Fawkes was a man that did not want his mind occupied with ordinary, everyday matter. If anyone in the house said anything to him of a trifling nature, in an annoyed manner, he would cry,



Sir Randol and his wife share a light hearted moment with relatives (1980).



*“Going for a spin.”
Sir Randol and Lady Jacqueline learning to ride David’s new motorbike (1977).*

“O for goodness sakes, Lift you thoughts; elevate your mind!”

Through the constant reading of books, he was able to condition his thought life and insulate himself from the trouble and controversy that always seemed to be raging around him.

He was not given to reading books written by unknown authors. He wanted to read the classics, the great works of literature, biographies of people like Martin Luther King, Winston Churchill, and Marcus Garvey. And always and at all times the Bible and all the local newspapers.

At 2 o' clock every morning when the house was quiet, he would get up to read, write and research and then in recent years, at the crack of dawn, and with glad anticipation, he would get himself ready to go to one of his favourite haunts: the House of Assembly, the Law Library and the Post Office.

To the very end Randol Fawkes loved the House of Assembly. When people would call him at home wanting to meet with him, he would reply, “Meet me at my office- the Opposition Room, the House of Assembly.”

A few days ago, I asked the House of Assembly clerk, Mr. Forbes what Daddy did at the House of Assembly everyday? He told me that Daddy often spoke with him and went about the streets, meeting the people, walking and talking with them-so happy and delighted to see them all.

“My brother, my sister,” he would characteristically say, “ I am so glad to see you!”

A few weeks ago, someone asked my father to what did he attribute his success in life. He replied that it was his relationship with God and his wife that sustained him. After the battles had been won or lost, he could always return home and find a refuge, a safe haven.

In “The Faith that Moved the Mountain,” my father wrote and I quote: “Jackie’s finest hours will always be those times in her husband’s turbulent career when he walked in the valley of the shadow of imprisonment and was treated like a social pariah. Women of lesser courage and faith would have reacted differently, but she surmounted every crisis without resorting to the excuses those hardships could have provided.”

In quieter times, Lady Fawkes designed a stylish home, created a Garden of Paradise and stretched a penny so well that many years ago I remember saying to her, “Mother is it not amazing that although we have no money, we are liv-

ing so well?”

Randol Fawkes was many things to many men: to some he was a champion, a great man, and a freedom fighter. To others he was a thorn in the flesh.

After his death, I wondered why this man evoked such strong feeling one way or the other. My conclusion is that he was bold and daring enough to confront people with the truth.

He dared to confront the wealthy employers about the exploitation of the poor working man; he let the downtrodden know that collectively they had a voice; that they had the power to move mountains. The union made them strong. He was a man that could not be bought. He turned down overnight wealth in order to give his people a chance to control their own destiny. He was a principled man who railed against corruption in high places, the breaking of the code of ethics, the lack of moral fiber in leadership. Like a voice in the wilderness he kept crying, “Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people.”

“Son of the soil, your friend and brother,” he liked to describe himself, “I shall be your mouth piece, a trumpet for the rights of the young as well as the old.”

I close this tribute with these prophetic words from his book “The Faith that Moved the Mountain.”



Rosalie Fawkes

“Personally, I did not mind suffering for this cause. When one challenges constituted authority as I had done, one must be prepared to suffer the consequences. If I shall succeed without sacrificing, it is because some of the former Bahamian heroes have sacrificed before my time; but if I suffer without succeeding, then it is in order that those who come after me may succeed. Furthermore, it seemed like good mathematics to me if one – I – should die so that one hundred and fifty thousand could live in Freedom.”



“O When the Saints Go Marching Home”, one of Sir Randol’s favourite songs that he enjoyed performing on his mouth organ, is played by members of the Police Band as they lead the way to Lake View Cemetery for the interment.



Rev. Eugene Butler, a prayer warrior during the General Strike, pronounces the last rites at the grave site.



The Fawkes family poses for a photograph after the funeral service. From left to right: Douglas, Francis, Lady Fawkes, Rosalie and David.



“I have fought a good fight.”

* ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF A BAHAMIAN HERO *

Sir Randol F. Fawkes
1924-2000

1948 Called to the Bahamas Bar.

Spearheaded the movement for the existence of the Court of Appeal.

1949 Joined the Citizens' Committee.

1951 Founder and secretary of the People's Penny Savings Bank.

1952 One of the founding fathers of the Bahamas Amateur Athletic Association (BAAA).

1955 Founder of the Bahamas Federation of Labour.

1956 Elected to the House of Assembly for the Southern District.

Spearheaded the movement for associating the Bahamas with the University of the West Indies.

1956 Served on the House Select Committee on labour relations and constitutional reforms.



Sir Randol addressing the workers.



Sir Randol and Lady Fawkes being escorted to a reception aboard the Yacht Britannia (1978)



Sir Randol and Lady Jacqueline being introduced to well-known author and motivational speaker Norman Vincent Peale in Freeport, Bahamas (1984).

- 1958 Served as host to the late Dr. Martin Luther King.
- 1958 As President of the Bahamas Federation of Labour, he led the General Strike, which brought about major constitutional and labour reforms. Later, it paved the way for the downfall of British Colonialism in these islands.
- 1958 On a lecture tour of New York City, he was recognized by the Caribbean League of America and Abyssinia Baptist Church for outstanding contributions to Bahamian life and times.
- 1958 Honoured in Nassau by the National League of Beauty Culturalists.
- 1959 In Bermuda he assisted fellow trade unionists in the formation of the Progressive Labour Party as an alternative to minority rule.
- 1961 Piloted a bill through the House of Assembly thereby establishing Labour Day as a paid public holiday.
- Responsible for the resolution for the creation of a Labour Exchange and Old Age Pension.
- 1962 Re-elected to the House of Assembly.
- 1963 Represented the Labour Party at a Constitutional Conference in London.
- 1963 Was one of the first and the strongest proponents for Local Government in the Bahamas and addressed these concerns at the Constitutional Conference in London.
- 1966 As one of the first persons on record to advocate national independence, he pleaded its cause before the United Nations.
- 1967 As an elected Labour leader, he broke the deadlock between the United Bahamian Party and the Progressive Liberal Party by throwing his vote with the P.L.P.
- 1967 Became Minister of Labour and Commerce with Copyright Law in his portfolio in the P.L.P.-Labour Coalition Government.
- 1968 Successfully launched the Industrial Relations Charter for the Bahamas in Freeport.



The opening session of the Bahamas Constitutional Conference 1968.

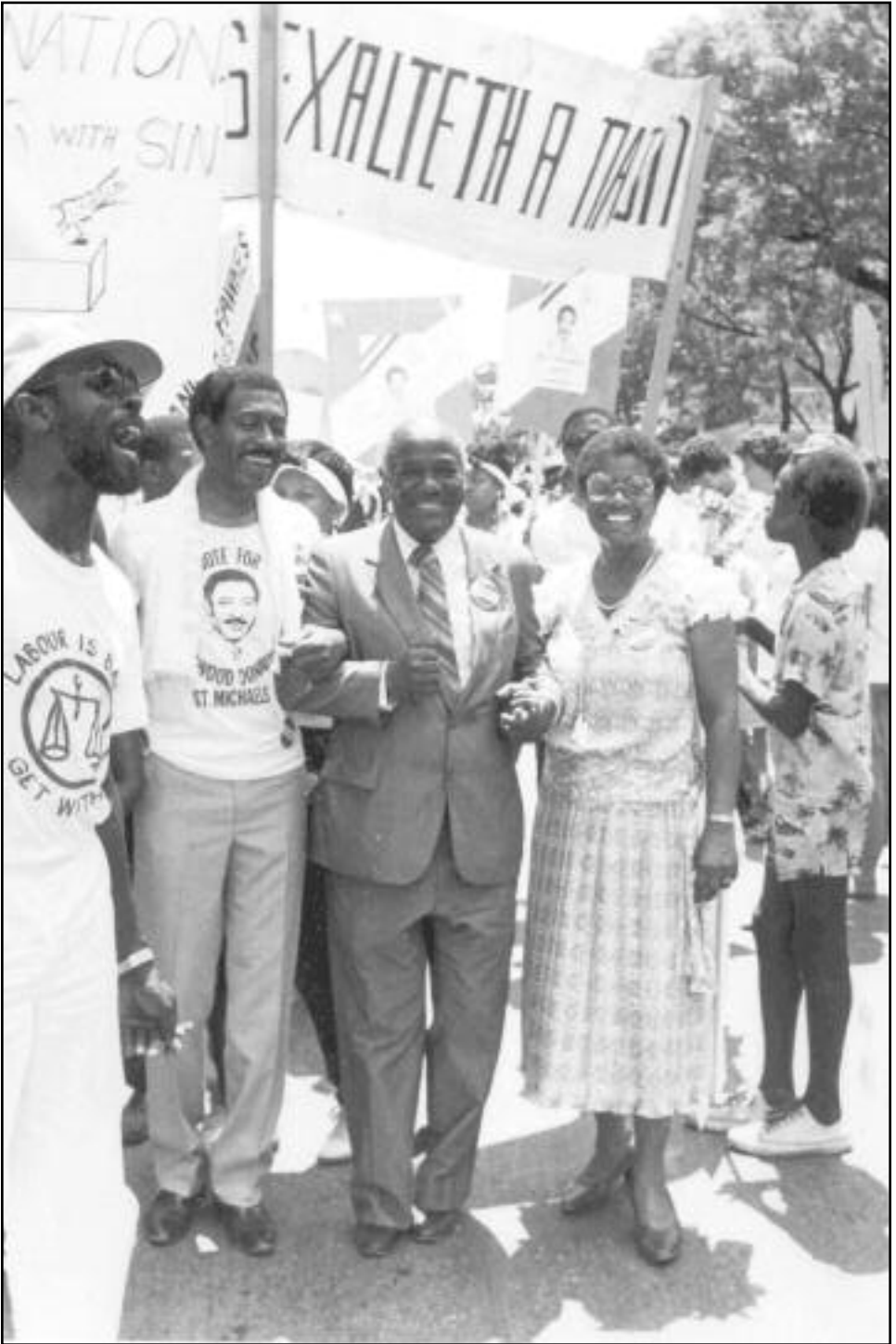
- 1968 Represented the Labour Party at the 2nd Constitutional Conference in London.
- 1970 He was the architect of the November motion of no confidence in the P.L.P. Government. This resulted in the dissident eight who led the way in the formation of the Free National Movement.
- 1972 Listed in *Personalities Caribbean - The International Guide to Who's Who in the West Indies, Bahamas and Bermuda*.
- 1978 Knight Bachelor conferred by the Queen.
- 1990 Cited by the Grand Bahama Human Rights Association and the Abaco and the New Providence Associations as the Father of the Human Rights Movement in the Bahamas.
- 1993 Named Man of the Year by the Cable Beach Kiwanis Club, New



Sir Cecil Wallace Whitfield, Sir Randol and Lady Fawkes take part in a Human Rights March in 1980.

Providence, Bahamas.

- 1997 Reaches an amicable settlement of his pension case in the Court of Appeal. This resulted in the Parliamentary Pensions Act 1995 for former parliamentarians and senators; and the Sir Randol Fawkes Pension Act 1998.
- 1998 Received the Silver Jubilee Award in recognition for his outstanding national contribution in the field of Trade Unionism and Labour.
- 1999 Launched the Trade Union Movement in the Cayman Islands.
- 1999 Cited as one of the most influential Bahamians of the 20th century in the *Tribune's* souvenir edition.
- 2000 Was listed in the Wendell K. Jones Publication: *The 100 Most Outstanding Bahamians of the 20th Century*.



Sir Randol - A Champion to the End. Pictured from left to right: Mr. Rupert Moxey, Dr. Eldwood Donaldson, Sir Randol and Lady Fawkes

BOOK PUBLICATIONS

1949 – You Should Know Your Government

1962 – The Bahamas Government

1966 – The New Bahamas

1979 – The Faith That Moved The Mountain

AFFILIATIONS

-Chairman, National Association for the Protection of Human Rights;

-Bahamas Trade Union Congress National Executive Board

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