Sir Randol F. Fawkes

The Faith That Moved the Mountain

A Memorial Edition
The Faith That Moved the Mountain

A Memoir of a Life and The Times

by

Sir Randol Fawkes

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 5th Edition

The Faith that Moved the Mountain
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Address for Orders:

The Fawkes Family
P.O. Box C.B. 13623
Nassau N.P.,
Bahamas
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”
This is the 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 organizations 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 organizations accomplished and to 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 realized, 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 than to speak in your 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. Matthew 17:20
“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. From there they greeted workers and children on their journeys homeward.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Fawkes and family in front of their Fort Fincastle home in the 1920s.
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 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 relapsed 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
The Fawkes family is shown during a picture taking moment in the 1940s. Seated are parents Edward and Mildred Fawkes. Standing from left are the children: Bloneva, Bill, Coral, Randol (author), and Gertrude
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 of Fox Hill, a backwoods village. Young’s thick lips, broad nose and woolly hair left no doubt about his African descent. Some called him Frederick Douglas, for both in physique, broad shoulders and a 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. Since 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?
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:

THE GOVERNMENT HIGH SCHOOL
Nassau, N. P., Bahamas

22-6-1929

E. R. Fawkes Esq.
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.

I am
Yours faithfully,
A. Woods
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 by 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 on becoming a lawyer I would fight for a just society in which each child could grow up in 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 11

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 bare-footed, 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 parades 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, finally 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 counselor advising on the subject of how to win friends and influence people, “Speak to everybody, Randol; speak to everybody.”

We all attended public schools. Although none of us was 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, for many years remained a 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.

Almost every day in school, I played all games: football, cricket, tennis with a wooden bat and wrestling with George Robinson and Malcolm Mackey. I was sel-
dom 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 behavior 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, the wearing of flour bag pants was a national custom 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.

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 relapsed 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 butt 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, how-
ever, 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 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 Frusta" (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 the text from Galatians Ch. 6:7. "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. Whatevsoever 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 into 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 occupa-
“One of the hobbies that brought me considerable pleasure and profit was the collection of autographs of famous people.”
tion?” 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 and 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 dictation.

"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 befriended Mr. Bethel and was rewarded with a book, “Creighton and Smart on Logic.” He counselled, "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 it 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. Rogers who later became the first female Headmistress of Govern-
ment 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, the man who is just and determined in his resolution to succeed." (Horace, Book 111, Ode 111) 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 conveyances 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 a Christmas card. However, the more useful I became to him, the faster I advanced to 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 "gadfly" 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 Gandhi 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. 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."

Vikings Sporting Club—Front Row: Left to Right—Addington Cambridge, Ralph Bartlett, Berkley Armbrister, Walter Wisdom, Charles Linwood Austin. Second Row: Jack Ford (Empire), Harcourt Bastian, Cadwell 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
Chapter 3

Duke of Windsor

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 6th, 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 has produced every possible combination. There were the mulatto, the white and the black; the sambo, the black and the mulatto; the octroon, 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.

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,
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 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 to 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 gain 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 former 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.
The Bahamians welcome the Duke & Duchess of Windsor
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 safe keep

Winston Churchill: “We will fight on the beaches. We will fight in the streets, We shall never surrender.”
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 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
HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR’S EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

A typical colonialist cabinet circa 1948-1953. From left to right: the Hon. 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. McKinney, 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; the Hon. William Sweeting, receiver general and treasurer; and Attorney, the Hon. Harry P. Sands.
Joe, Osborne Kemp and Caleb Gibson; and The Bahamas Federation of Labour governed by an Executive Committee consisting of Charles Rodriguez, 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 now 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, all-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 came 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 40 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 were 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, thereafter 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 flight 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 laborers had a legitimate grievance 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 labor 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.

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

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 confidence 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 symposiums. 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 but of caustic criti-
cism 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, "England 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."

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 brainwashed 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 organizations. 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 practice 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 colonialis 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?' Are not the laborers 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 fam-
ily? 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 pur-
chase. 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 from 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

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.
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 of 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 4th, the labourers reported for work on the jobsite. A week later, they
received one shilling per day raise in their pay, plus free meals during the lunch-
eon breaks.

What price is freedom? In addition to all the blood, sweat and tears, 128 per-
sons were prosecuted in the Supreme and Magistrates' Courts for their involve-
ment in the riot. One hundred and fourteen were convicted. Among those impris-
oned were Harold Thurston, Malcolm Mackey, Joseph Rolle (alias Joe Billie), Tho-
mas 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 ap-
pointed by the Duke of Windsor, later interviewed some ninety-nine witnesses, of 
which my dad, Edward Ronald Fawkes, was one, and made the following recom-
mandations:

(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 ac-
tive 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 Govern-
ment 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 in 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 Finder, 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 were, pitted the wits of four black parliamentarians: T. Augustus Toote, a Barrister-at-Law in whose Chambers I was to serve as an articled 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 consid-
eration 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 legend: '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 Legislative Council in Session 1945

From left to right:


“A first taste of tokenism after the 1942 Riot.”
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.
A Few Important Facts About the Bank

Reprinted from program created for the opening of the People’s Penny Savings Bank, Ltd.
Situated on the
Corner of Market and McPherson Streets
Friday 21st day of November, 1952 at 3:30p.m.

The idea of the bank was first conceived by a group of ten men on the 14th of September, 1951. These men met weekly and deposited small amounts regularly. On the 22nd January, 1952, The People’s Penny Savings Bank Limited was incorporated under the laws of the Colony with twenty-one men as its founders.

The bank’s funds were raised, and are still being raised y the sale of shares on which dividends will be paid to the shareholders in proportion to the number of shares purchased.

The bank’s chief object is to inculcate in the minds of the Bahamian people the virtue of thrift until it becomes a habit and to provide the people with a quick, easy and safe means of saving for the rainy day. The organization, at present, does not boast of being a bank, but rather a “school of thrift” where any man, woman or child may open an account with an amount as small as a penny.

The construction has an irresistible appeal to the imagination of the people for whose benefit the bank was principally founded. Its clean colonnade front immediately suggests strength and cleanness of methods. The panel features and its artistic ornaments make the structure a decided asset to the particular locality. It is a vigorous, photographic representation of the value and virtue of thrift and suggest a clarion call for an awakening of new ways of thinking and living with special emphasis on economy.

The plans for the bank building were drawn by Mr. Percy Hanna, the assistant secretary, while Mr. George Hepburn was the person responsible for the construction, the foundation of which was poured by the charter members on the 5th day of July, 1952.
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 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 flooded 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 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 Sedition 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:

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, a lone Labour member, was hopelessly outnumbered. 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.

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 implied 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.
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 Stapleton, 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.
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 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 Honorable G. W. K. Roberts. He used his casting vote to break the deadlock; and he did in favor of the laboring 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 honorable 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 whatsoever 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.
“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 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."
Labour Day—1962
Labour Day 1962

Top photograph:

Sir Randol addresses the crowd.

Middle Photograph:

The workers gather at the Southern Recreation Grounds.

Sam Stubbs sings “Bahamas Glorious Homeland”.

Labour Day 1962
Top Photograph: Sam Stubbs leads the Labour Day Parade in 1962.

Bottom Photograph: Workers listen attentively at the Southern Recreation Grounds (Labour Day 1962).
Labour Day Through the Years
Labour Day 1965

- Top Photograph: Sir Randol gives an address at the Labour Day rally.

- Bottom photograph: Sir Ralph Gray addresses the crowd.
Labour Day—1982

Top Photo: Sir Randol and Lady Fawkes marching on Bay Street.

Bottom Photo: Sir Randol addresses the crowd gathered on the Southern Recreation Grounds.

VETERAN Labour leader Sir Randol Fawkes is seen here addressing nearly 2000 workers of the Trade Union Congress at Southern Recreation Ground in June, 1982. His speech was part of the annual Labour Day Rally.
Top Photograph:

Labour Day - 1987

Bottom Photograph:

Labour Day - 1977
Labour Day—2001
Labour Day—2007
I employed a 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 un-opposed! 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 since 1948 had 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 the 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 soon to become THE UNIVERSITY 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 seminars 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.

This 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. Ps. 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 and 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 member

But the P.L.P. and Labour representatives could not be silenced. We marched,
TRADE UNION SPEAKERS SAYS:

TRADE UNIONS FREE BAHAMAS OF “EVIL YOKE OF COLONIALISM”

“For 300 years The Bahamas was suffering from the yoke of colonialism, evil colonialism, until we were able to get together and win the praise of the world. And we did it in nineteen days without shedding a drop of blood. In doing so, we were able to win over and change the course of history.”

So said Mr. Randol Fawkes, President of The Bahamas Federation of Labour in an address last night at the Vernon Temple Men’s Club.

Mr. Fawkes continued: “The trade union movement is founded on a bed of Christianity. We are too intelligent to resort to the pyrotechnical demonstrations which union movements used forty years ago. In The Bahamas we gathered in our thousands to pray and sing hymns; while around us strutted troops with rifles and bayonets.

“Without unions there would never be a Federation of the West Indies; and without unions there would never be a story as glorious as that of Ghana,” the speaker continued.

“Out of the union movement has grown some of the world’s greatest cooperative concerns and if it is asked if the unions have done anything contrary to the economy of Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad, the answer is “Yes!” They have put shoes on bare feet; they have put money in purses and they have improved working conditions.”

EXPLANATION

Explaining the workings of the trade unions, Mr. Fawkes told the gathering: “An employer would be less inclined to say, ‘Take it or leave it,’ he would have to think. He would have to think beyond the scope of one employee in many; he
would have to think of his employee as a unit.

“But Bermuda does have an economy which requires special consideration. It is impossible for anyone in Bermuda to receive full rights and privileges unless there is a trade union here. The whole of Bermuda must be as one man,” said the speaker. He remarked that he would visit the longshoremen and their employer today.

“The trade union movements believe in democracy and free trade and the Bermuda Industrial Trade Union will succeed with the backing you give it.

**SCHOLARSHIPS**

“We intend to recommend scholarships, both in London and the United States for some of the members. It will give them something which will stand them in good stead in the building of the new Bermuda. We will assist your officers as long as they are willing to help you in Bermuda to help yourselves. After all, the more you put into a thing the more you will get out of it.”

Mr. Fawkes closed with the words, “I give you the 11th commandment; yes, the 11th. It was said by our good Lord at the last supper: ‘Serve one another.’”

*Trade union leaders—Mr. Randol Fawkes, the internationally known Bahamian trade unionist, was pictured (centre) upon arrival here on Thursday for an historic conference of the Bermuda Industrial Union. Mr. Fawkes, who is due to leave tomorrow, was scheduled to meet the Governor, Sir John Woodall today. Tonight, he will speak at a meeting at the Leopards’ Club Auditorium. Members of the B.I.U. Executive who met the leader at the airport are from left to right: Mr. Walter Astwood, Mr. Leonard Bascome (President), Mr. Charles Bean and Mr. Leon Parris.*
QUESTIONS

The floor was then placed open for questions and in answer to the first one, Mr. Fawkes replied, “The trade unions must be in conformity with the economy of the country. There must be a suitable social climate. Union members must be able to vote in all union and political elections.”

In answer to a question about house help being hired by American servicemen for fifty cents an hour—as opposed to a generally recognized one dollar an hour for hired help in other fields, Mr. Fawkes replied, “We had similar trouble in The Bahamas but this was rectified by dispatching a letter to the responsible authorities in the United States advising them of the union scale of pay. If you follow the sample practice you will achieve success.”

In answer to another query, Mr. Fawkes replied, “There should be a representative on all boards concerning labour; no matter what. In the Public Works Department, telecommunications or any service in which labour is used.”

THURSDAY’S BANQUET

On Thursday, Mr. Fawkes spoke at the first anniversary dinner of the Bermuda Industrial Union held at the Leopards’ Club Auditorium.

Mr. Fawkes, who is a member of the House of Assembly in The Bahamas said that the purpose of Trade Unionism was to foster good relations and not to be encouraging strikes.

“Trade Unionism and the Free Trade Union movement regard strikes as almost an obsolete thing,” he went on. Strikes were used only as a last resort “and I think it would be true to say that it is not the policy of any trade union movement to take the head of the employer and deliver it on a platter.”

Regarding trade unionism in The Bahamas, he said, “We have always adopted the method of non violence since we feel that violence is outdated and archaic.”

NO FEAR

No one, Mr. Fawkes commented, need fear the Free Trade Union movement. He added that the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions had a membership of millions in 78 countries. All the unions had asked for was “Bread, peace and freedom.”

He continued, “It is the responsibility of trade unionism to extend the hand of friendship, and to use the bargaining table and the methods of persuasion in order
that through the give and take of discussion, which is the true making of democracy, a final solution to any problem may be reached and solved.

“Wherever responsible Trade Unionism existed, there was a peaceful settlement of any dispute,” the speaker claimed. Thanks to the help of such a movement, the "social stature" of the "humble worker" had risen.

**DIGNITY**

“He achieves a greater dignity and respect on the job site; a greater dignity and respect in the eyes of his fellow man. We can even boast of trade unionists being in the upper councils of the United Nations,” he added.

“There is another important feature about Trade Unionism,” Mr. Fawkes said, “which has always been emphasized by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and that is the international movement is not based on colour. The union movement recognizes all colors.

“Workers are regarded as almost the most important people in a country. Take the workers out of the country and you will have no country. Get the workers cooperating in the building of new Bermuda, and you will find that you have cooperation and all of the problems which might have beset the Caribbean area would be mastered by you, simply because you have made up your minds and made the decision to tackle it in a responsible and intelligent way.”

**PROBLEMS**

The speaker said he felt that both The Bahamas and Bermuda could solve their problems, that they could make the future safe for all.

“Let us say that it is the duty of every government to lend a hand and recognize its own responsibilities in helping, in educating and to a certain degree, in giving guidance and training to trade unions where necessary.”

He continued, “Before this conference is finished and before I leave on Sunday morning, I believe that a strong liaison will have been forged between the Bermuda Industrial Union and the International Conference of Free Trade Unions. I feel sure that the good wishes, friendship and true spirit of camaraderie to all the workers of the world will be with the workers and laboring masses of Bermuda.

**PROGRAMME**

“We are in the process right now of working on a five year programme towards which all our efforts will be directed. That programme contains certain economic"
goals: the establishment of proper machinery, the encouragement of co-operatives, the improvement of the institute of technology and making available to all persons of ability and skill, positions they can master.

“I must state that the trade union movement is not a political movement and let me put you at ease and say that the trade union movement does not tolerate the domination of any politician or government but carries out and executes the will of its members.

FRIENDSHIP

“I hope, and the International Trade Union hopes that this meeting here with so many of Bermuda’s distinguished personalities and so many of the representatives of labour, that this will be the beginning of a beautiful friendship that will rebound to the benefit of Bermuda itself,” Mr. Fawkes remarked.

He stressed the importance of self respect and honesty of purpose and concluded by saying: “the International Confederation of Free Trade Unionism is with you and together let us work under the banner of one union and brotherhood, one destiny.”

Mr. Alexander Rome said that the executives of the Bermuda Industrial Union were working “unceasingly” to obliterate three hindrances in the development of labour: politics, personality cult and the wrong concept of the meaning of strikes.

“Violence is out,” he said. “We are concerned about the development of labour in a decent and dignified way.”

THANKS

A vote of thanks to Mr. Fawkes was given by Mr. Leonard Bascome. He said he felt that the Bermuda union needed help “from the outside and that is why we approached Mr. Fawkes.”

Other speakers who congratulated Mr. Fawkes on his talk included Sir John Cox, Speaker of the House of Assembly, the Hon. J.W. Sykes, Colonial Secretary, the Hon. H.J. Tucker, M.C.P., Dr. The Hon. E.A. Cann, Mr. Thaddeus Richardson and Mr. Algernon Blakeney. Mr. Russell Pearlman, general manager and public relations officer of the Leopards’ Club was in charge of the broadcasting system. Mr. Martin Wilson was the master of ceremonies.
and 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 poverty 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 provided housing for people in lower income brackets and left them 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 were institutions 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 authorized 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 voteless. In 1958 they lagged far behind their male counterparts in the field of human rights. The chief roadblocks 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 counseling 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 policy making 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 favored 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 intestate and without lawful children, the wife could 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 intestate 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 is 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 Magistrates 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 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 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 the amount owed for 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.

Photo at right: Mary Ingraham
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 30s 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 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 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 Honorable 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 Honorable 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 service 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, photostat copies of which 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 the 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 businesses and pay government taxes. An earlier petition points out to the Honorable 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 beneficent neighbor, 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 honorable 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 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 of many projects in which men are not naturally interested and which would free you 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 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 Ground 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 BAHAMAS 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, A. D., 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 odder 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!
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.

Making History—Miss Ruby Ann Cooper (left) made history on July 2nd, 1962, when she became the first woman to register as a voter in The Bahamas. Here, she is being congratulated by a fellow Bahamian while Maxwell J. Thompson, Parliamentary Registrar, looks on.
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 executive government was in the hands of a Governor appointed by the Queen. He had the power of veto and was advised by an Executive Council of not more than nine members. 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 members 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 responsi-

bility 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 ex-
pression 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 purpose.

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 fending off opposition from all other 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's services.

I wanted to see a government that offered employment to every qualified Baha-
mian not because he was a U. B. P. or P L. P but because he was a Bahamian
ready, willing and able to serve.

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 dis-
patched, 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 the senior member for the 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
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). “This little band of prophets”.

The Bahamas Constitutional Conference opened at the Colonial Office in London. Seen here at the talks are (from the left, Mr. A.R. Braynen, Member of the House of Assembly and Independent member of the Bahamas delegation and the Honorable R.H. Symonette, Speaker, the House of Assembly.

Top Photograph:

The Bahamas Constitutional Conference, May 1963
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."

Hon. Etienne Dupuch, O.B.E.
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 the Executive Council in 1949 and appointed Leader for Government Business in 1954. Knighted 1959. Shipyard owner and managing director of various firms. "I can govern as easily as I can eat 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, he 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 the Bible in one hand; dagger in the next."

GODFREY KELLY - Barrister-at-Law. Member of the House of Assembly 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 the 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 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 the 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 was the Junior Member for the East Central District of New Providence. Appointed to 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 Honorable 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 Ministers. Except in matters of foreign affairs, defense, 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 felt 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."
“Representing the government was His Excellency, the Governor, Sir Robert Stapledon. His advisor was the Solicitor General, the Honorable Kendal G. L. Isaacs. Nigel Fisher, the debonair Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for the Colonies, served as Chairman.”

Top Photograph: Sir Robert Stapledon

Bottom Photograph: Mr. Kendal Isaacs
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, "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. Bossman' she say to me, "'You want anything today?'"

"Sure, Sarah, come in," I replied, beckoning to her at the same time to open the gate.

"'Me? Come in dere? Bossman, tie ya dog furst!'"

"'Oh, Sarah, don't worry bout dat dog. He gat rubber teet."

"'Well, Bossman,'" 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.

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.
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 meeting 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."
Top Photograph: 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. platform.

Bottom Photograph: Mr. L.O. Pindling and Mr. Randol Fawkes confer and ignore the request of the police officer to leave the platform.
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.

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 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 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.

On looking out of the windows of the House of Assembly, we noticed that the
A march was staged in June of 1963 to protest unemployment and work conditions in the country. Among the crowd is Milo Butler at the front; towards the middle is Arthur Hanna; at the rear is Randol Fawkes.
Even the conchy-Joe now catching hell.
Foreigner got his job.

1962 UnEmployment March
1962 UnEmployment March
mob of over eight thousand was causing congestion on the main routes to 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 the 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 uninterruptedly, I called on my untouched reserves of faith and strength. "Lord Jesus," I prayed quietly, "I place my life in your hands."

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.
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 away from 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, "I want to thank you for saving the life of my son."

"I," I askedsearchingly, "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.

MINOR MIRACLE—The crowd subsided and allowed the car to worm its way to safety.
In 1954, the powers in being struck me down. Men like the Honorable 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 the 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?

Workers carry the author on their shoulders after the demonstration.
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. 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 na-
tion. 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 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?"

Middle Photograph: Sir William Alexander Bustamante

Photograph at right: INDEPENDENCE DANCE - Prime Minister, Sir William Alexander Bustamante, dances with H.R.H. Princess Margaret on the occasion of Jamaica’s Independence (August 6, 1962).
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 royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
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 American-Caribbean Poet, sing of the glories of Mother Africa:

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
Thy slaves toiled at thy 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.

Claude McKay
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 plantations in other islands and the selling of slaves on the auction block. 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 for 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 in 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 it 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.

My motion for a Select Committee, however, was seconded by Brother Spurgeon Bethel.

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 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 thir-
teen 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, the 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, Mr. Randol Fawkes and Douglas. Seated are David, Mrs. Fawkes and sitting at the piano is Francis.
Promptly at 8 o'clock on that November 1970 evening, 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 Grieg'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 Grieg'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 for 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 laboring 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 said 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 is 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 employed in fixing the problem. 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 book."

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 at 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 in 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.
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 which keeps 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 contumeliously, "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.
David performs as a fiddler in the Queen’s College production of “Oklahoma” (1976).

Douglas and David riding the unicycle
"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 mountain top 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 tire 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 Music Masters' 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.

Rosalie, David and Douglas prepare to attend the final concert of the Bahamas Music Festival.
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 that he soon transferred to the university of Northern Illinois to study for a Bachelor of Science degree in accountancy. He eventually became a Certified Public Accountant.

At a student orientation at the University of Northern Illinois when asked by Professor and students where he had received his basic training in accountancy he replied, "At Wheaton Bible College."

"And what did they teach you about accountancy at Wheaton Bible 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 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 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 nine 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 Glinton 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
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 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.

![La Campanella—115 John F. Kennedy Drive](image)

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. But, as you can see, I am loathe to quit without thanking God again for sending 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 (F or G irls)
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.
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.

111

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.
Top Photo: Fawkes family seated in the gardens of their McPherson Street home (1958)

Middle Photo: Rosalie, Douglas and Francis (early 60s)

Photo at Right: David and Douglas on the swing set (1962)
Life in McPherson Street

Top right photo: David
Middle photo: Lady Fawkes
Bottom photo: Sir Randol
Life In McPherson Street

Top Photo: A birthday party in 1962.

Middle Photo: Lady Fawkes, Francis and Douglas

Photo at bottom: Returning from Sunday mass at St. Agnes Church (early 60s)

Seated Janice Major and Julia Burnside

Standing: Douglas Fawkes, Cheryl Major, Francis Fawkes, Wayman Burnside and Rosalie Fawkes
Top Photo: Mrs. Jacqueline Fawkes officiates at the opening of Central Gas Company (1967).

Photograph at right: Mrs. Wallis Lockhart presents a bouquet to Mrs. Jacqueline Fawkes at the opening of Central Garage (1967).
"Further steps will be taken to assist my colonial territories to reach independence or some other status which they have freely chosen."

These words, spoken from the British Throne by Queen Elizabeth II on the opening of the British Parliament in April, 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, the 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 defense 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. In two articles in its October 5th and 9th issues, the *Wall Street Journal* carried an expose of the Bahamian situation. 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 daughter 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.

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 organization 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 Oh 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 3, 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 the 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 increase minimum 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 sum-
moned 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 the exercise 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 had 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 fiber 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!"

A meeting at the House of Labour
"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 members of parliament 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 Manasseh and I am the least of my father's house." (Judges 6:15)

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 Evangelical Baptist Church and Father Arthur Chapman of St. Cecilia'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 UBP and the PLP 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 of the country," said a voice which I recognized to be that of Father Arthur Chapman of the Roman Catholic St. Cecilia 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 lifelong 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 because I saw the hand of the Master in it. "Bliss was it in 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, 1954, I was forced into exile in New York City. Four years later, 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 sea shells a man chose not to be rich. The Negro just said, 'No.'"

I received a deluge of messages from the free world. Premier Sir Grantley Adams of Barbados telegraphed: "Congratulations on your monumental decision."

The next day Sir Roland telephone my office at the House of Labour. The call was received by Brother Alfred Smith, a stone mason from Fox Hill. 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. Kennedy 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."

January 10th, 1967 might not have witnessed the greatest battle 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 three of their former cabinet 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.
Top Photograph: The author, the Honourable Randol Fawkes and his wife, Jacqueline on their way to the opening of Parliament—1967.

Bottom Photograph: The wives of cabinet ministers gather at Government House for the swearing in of the new cabinet. Standing from left to right: Mrs. Jacqueline Fawkes, Lady Grey, Mrs. Marguerite Pindling, Mrs. Zoe Maynard, Mrs. Beryl Hanna and Mrs. Daphne Wallace-Whitfield.
A First Cabinet Meeting—1967
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 the 38 seats in the Assembly, hoped to add a few more. The United Bahamian Party needed only twenty seats to maintain the 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 the 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; the U.P.B. 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, more important Fawkes’!

Lynden Pindling offered Braynen the Speakership, and it was accepted. The Speaker had no vote, except when the House is tied. So contending forces remained 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
Bay Street Boys Couldn’t Buy Randol Fawkes  
(continued from the previous page).

knew and so did Fawkes, that the revolution hinged on a solitary vote. If Bay Street Boys could bring Randol Fawkes to their side, at any price, Pindling and his “colored” government was stillborn. “Name you 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 a 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 Nassau Guardian  
January 14th, 1967

I’m Still Independent

The 62 year old Bahamian politician who could make or break the PLP 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 PLP leader, Lynden Pindling, has asked him to be the new Speaker in the House of Assembly.

“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.”
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 under mine 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.

Mr. Wallace Groves, President of the Grand Bahama Port Authority, addresses the audience at the launch of the Industrial Relations Charter. Seated from left to right are Hon. Dr. Curtis McMillan and Hon. Mr. Randol F. Fawkes.
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 in order to respond affirmatively to our call for them to 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 an 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."

WALLACE GROVES, President, Grand Bahama Port Authority Ltd.

"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, the Hon. Randol Fawkes launches the Industrial Relations Charter sending the P.L.P.–Labour Coalition on a path of government with righteousness based on justice. Mr. Wallace Groves, President of the Grand Bahama Port Authority, listens intently.
Top Photograph: Trade unionists and employees leave for Freeport to launch the Industrial Relations Charter.

Photograph at right: Mr. Randol Fawkes, accompanied by a visiting delegation from Nassau, visit the International Bazaar in Freeport.
Upon my return to Nassau, I found a letter from Father Brendan F. Forsythe, O.S.B. It read:

Mary, Star of the Sea Church
FREEPORT, GRAND BAHAMA

April 4, 1967

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. Forsythe
Shortly after the General Elections, The Bahamas Federation of Labour formally ratified the proposed PLP-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."

Way down at the back of the auditorium there sat Uncle John Woodside among the sweltering masses. 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."

**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 the radio and posted in various post offices. Above, the Honorable 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.
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 to Palm Beach International Airport, Florida on February 26th, 1967. There, along with His Excellency, the Governor, Sir Ralph Gray, 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 AUTEC.

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 masse 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 American Ambassador to The Bahamas, makes a presentation to the Hon. Mr. Randol Fawkes.*
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 Honourable Turner Shelton, the U. S. Consul General in The Bahamas, saw to it that we were given the VIP 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.

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The Fawkes family travels to New York City in July of 1967.
There we renewed our acquaintances with businessman, Gerald Roberts, Earnest Strachan and Lois Bethel, protocol officer and secretary respectively at the United Nations; John Deleveaux, banker; Sylvia Matthews nee Coakley, outstanding scholar and Everett Bannister. P. Anthony White, a Bahamian journalist who filed this report with The Bahamas Observer, 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 had actually begun. 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.

Doubted 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 man-power and womanpower from New York would be forthcoming. Yes, I heard Bahamians sing that night as they never sang before. The song was Bahamas -
Glorious Homeland the last stanza of which goes

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 honour
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 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 Trades 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."

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
"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 tramped 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, it’s 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.”
Mr. and Mrs. Randol Fawkes engaging in ministerial activities in New York - July, 1967.
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.”

The Faith that Moved the Mountain  Chapter 18

Hon. Randol Fawkes
Minister of Labour

Hon. Lynden O. Pindling
Premier and Minister for Tourism

Hon. Milo Butler
Minister for Health and Welfare

Hon. Clement Maynard
Minister Without Portfolio
The First Black Government
(continued)

Hon. Cecil Wallace-Whitfield
Minister for Works

Hon. Curtis C. McMillan
Minister for Communications

Hon. Jeffrey M. Thompson
Minister for Internal Affairs

Hon. Carleton E. Francis
Minister for Finance
The First Black Government
(continued)

Hon. Clarence A. Bain
Minister without Portfolio

Hon. Arthur D. Hanna
Minister for Education

Hon. Alvin R. Braynen
Speaker of the House of Assembly

Hon. Warren J. Levarity
Minister of Out Island Affairs
EPILOGUE


Sir Randol F. Fawkes

A Chronology

Randol Fawkes, elder statesman; attorney-at-law; free trade unionist; civil rights activist; sportsman, author and musician, changed the course of Bahamian destiny forever.

He was born in Nassau on March 20th, 1924 and was the second son of the late Edward R. Fawkes and Mildred Fawkes.

He was educated in the public schools in the Bahamas and in the U.S.A. Three months after his graduation from high school in December 1942, Sir Randol’s father indentured him to Mr. T. Augustus Toote, a Barrister-at-Law. Afterwards, he was called to the Bahamas’ Bar in April 1948.

On June 3rd, 1951, Sir Randol married Jacqueline Rosalie nee Bethel of West End, Grand Bahama. This marriage produced three sons: Francis, Douglas, David and one daughter, Rosalie.

In his struggle for equality for all, this great innovator conceived of many of the social and historical milestones that we as present day Bahamians should not take for granted. As one of the chief architects of majority rule, he was instrumental in bringing into existence the first black government. He is also the recognized father of the Free Trade Union Movement, which is still a formidable force in this country. It is because of Sir Randol Fawkes that a bill was piloted through the House of Assembly thus making Labour Day a paid public holiday.
Because he was a great visionary, many times he anticipated major national developments long before they were recognized or even implemented. For example: the motion for independence; the existence of the Court of Appeal, the affiliation of the Bahamas with the University of the West Indies, and many other developments are attributable to his farsightedness.

Multi-talented in athletics and the fine arts, he was the President of the Viking Sporting Club. He also showed a flair for music and the visual arts. However, he intuitively recognized God’s purpose for his life. His ministry was to the poor and dispossessed and to this end this supreme liberator fulfilled his mission. In Bermuda, he acted in an advisory capacity in the formation of the Progressive Labour Party thus ending an oppressive era of minority rule. In 1999, he launched the trade union movement in the Cayman Islands.

Perhaps, the greatest legacy he left for this generation was his strength of character. Recognized internationally, he was never spoilt by fame. He never became arrogant or unapproachable. Instead his “mighty meekness” prevailed - and he never lost the common touch. As a highly principled and moral Christian leader, he was tempted by wealth but did not succumb. He was never materialistic, but successfully defended his pension as a matter of principal. His greatest character trait was his willingness to stand up for what he believed in almost life-defying circumstances. This singular quality - which is almost non-existent today - set him apart from most. This seems to be the hallmark of Sir Randol Fawkes one of the greatest foundational leaders of our times.

Here is a Chronology of the Accomplishments of this Bahamian Hero:

♦ 1948 - Called to the Bahamas’ Bar.

♦ 1948 - Spearheaded the movement for the existence of the Court of Appeal.

♦ 1949 - Joined the Citizens’ Committee.


♦ 1951 - Founder and secretary of the first commercial bank: The People’s Penny Savings Bank.

♦ 1952 - One of the founding fathers of the Bahamas Amateur Athletic Association (BAAA).
1955 - Founded the Bahamas Federation of Labour

1955 - One of the founding members of the Progressive Liberal Party.

1956 - Elected to the House of Assembly for the Southern District.

1956 - 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.

1958 - Played host to the late Dr. Martin Luther King.

1958 - As president of the Bahamas Federation of Labour, he led the General Strike which resulted in major constitutional and labour reforms. Later, the strike 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 his outstanding contributions to Bahamian life and times.

1958 - Honoured in Nassau by the National League of Beauty Culturalists in Nassau.

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.

1961 - Responsible for the resolution for the creation of a Labour Exchange and Old Age Pension Act.

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 his concerns at the Constitutional Conference in London.
1966 - He was one of the first persons on record to advocate national independence and he pleaded his case before the United Nations.

1967 - As an elected Labour leader, broke the deadlock between the United Bahamian Party (UBP) and the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) by throwing his vote with the P.L.P.

1967 - In the P.L.P.—Labour Coalition Government, he became the Minister of Labour and Commerce with Copyright Law in his portfolio.

1967 - Successfully launched the Industrial Relations Charter for the Bahamas in Freeport.

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 formed the basis of the F.N.M. government.


1978 - Knight Bachelor conferred by the Queen.


1993 - Named man of the year by the Cable Beach Kiwanis Club, New 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 Millennium Souvenir Edition.

1999 - Featured as one of the faces of the century in the Guardian’s edition of *Memories - The Turning of a Century*.

2000 - Was listed in the Wendell K. Jones Publication: *The 100 Most Outstanding Bahamians of the 20th Century*.

**BOOK PUBLICATIONS**

1949 - *You should know Your Government*

1962 - *The Bahamas Government*

1966 - *The New Bahamas*

1979 - *The Faith that moved The Mountain* (three editions published)

2004 – A Memorial Edition of *The Faith that moved the Mountain*

2004 - *Labour Unite or Perish*

**AFFILIATIONS**

Chairman, National Association for the Protection of Human Rights;

Bahamas Trade Union Congress National Executive Board

*Chronology compiled by R. Francis Fawkes*
The Homegoing Service for Sir Randol Fawkes

Christ Church Cathedral
George Street

Thursday June 22nd, 2000
Lady Jacqueline Fawkes, accompanied by her son David, views Sir Randol’s body in the foyer of the House of Assembly.
The body departs the House of Assembly and arrives at Christ Church Cathedral.
The funeral procession moves towards Christ Church Cathedral.
Father John Taylor gives a homily and a piano selection is rendered by Francis Fawkes.
Top Photograph: The funeral service at Christ Church Cathedral
Bottom Photograph: The body departs for burial at Lake View Cemetery on J.F. Kennedy Drive.
Processional to the cemetery
The interment is performed by Rev. Eugene Butler at Lake View Cemetery on J. F. Kennedy Drive.
Top Photograph: Rosalie Fawkes, Lady Fawkes and Lois East
Bottom Photograph: The Fawkes family poses for a photograph after the burial service.
Gathering at “La Campanella”:

Top Photograph: Mr. David Fawkes and Lady Jacqueline Fawkes are pictured with Sir Randol’s siblings: Mrs. Gertrude Burnside, Mrs. Bloneva Deveaux, and Mrs. Coral Taylor.

Bottom photograph: Mr. Leonard Bethel, Mrs. Mizpah Bartlette, Mrs. Eunice Rogers, Rev. Dr. Susan Wallace. Lady Jacqueline Fawkes, Mrs. Lois East and Mr. Leander Bethel (siblings of Lady Fawkes).
Gravesite - Lake View Cemetery, John F. Kennedy Drive

Epitaph on Tombstone: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.” 2 Timothy 4: 7,8
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 years, 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 book and 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 stories 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 Bay 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 of fine music. When famous concert artists like Van Cliburn, Richter, and Andrae Watts appeared in concerts in Miami, we would travel to attend these events.

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 change abruptly.

"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."

*The Fawkes family visits Freeport, Grand Bahama in 1968.*
At home, my father chose to live, as he himself described 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, “O for goodness sakes, Lift your 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 one of his favorite 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 every day. 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.
Sir Randol’s Library
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 living so well?”

Sir Randol and Lady Fawkes at home (1982)
Life at La Campanella
Lady Fawkes enjoying her garden.
“Lady Fawkes designed a stylish home and created a Garden of Paradise.”
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 he evoked such strong feelings 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.”
Sir Randol provides counsel to the Paradise Island Casino croupiers at the House of Labour (October, 1974).
“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 *The Faith that Moved the Mountain*. “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.”

*Sir Randol’s coffin being escorted from the House of Assembly to Christ Church Cathedral - June 22nd, 2000*
My earliest recollection of my father occurred at the age of three. At that time, our family was moving from our home in Fort Fincastle to our newly built house on the corner of McPherson Street, not too far from the Purity Bakery. During those early years, my father appeared to me to be somewhat distant. However, as I grew older, I recall that he spent many moments with the family in Bible reading and other activities.

My father was a very curious man and as such had books on just about every imaginable topic. These books occupied nearly every room in the house. He often said to me, “You should have an opinion on almost every topic.” At other times, he would say, “Never plead ignorance.” As a father, he tried to expose us to the best in literature, science and music.
Since my father was also musically inclined, he learned to play the jazz saxophone and later on tried his hand playing the classics on the piano. When I was very young, I heard him play *A Dream of Love* by Franz Liszt and Beethoven’s *Moonlight Sonata*.

When I was learning the piano, I would play songs like *Baa, Baa, Black Sheep* and *A Bicycle Made for Two*. “Keep on practicing,” my father would sometimes say, “and some day you will play like this.” He would then play a musical selection with perfection. I listened to the wisdom of my father. I practised and soon was playing very difficult pieces at a young age.

I recall on many occasions playing for acquaintances of his at our house and also during the family’s travels abroad to Freeport, Michigan, New York and Atlanta. During the last few years of his life, I am grateful to God that he saw me play the most difficult pieces on the piano more frequently. These performances were both live and televised. I believe that they filled his latter days with great happiness, satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment as a father.
Sir Randol accompanies Francis to Interlochen Arts Academy in Interlochen, Michigan (1966).
As time went on, he concentrated more on law and politics, especially the Labour Movement which was responsible for his sixteen years as a parliamentarian. His political career had very high points but there were also low experiences. I believe his greatest experience occurred when he broke the tie between two political parties, thus being responsible for black majority rule in 1967. I often told him that this was no mere coincidence, but that it was the hand of God working in his life. He agreed and also saw it as having something to do with his high level of faith.

Towards the end of the century, he was fortunate to see the daily newspapers portray him as one of the great Bahamians of the 20th century. However, by nature, he was very modest. He desired neither fame nor gain. When first presented with the knighthood, he wanted to reject it. I told him to accept it. He agreed and was knighted by the Queen in 1978.

As he came to the end of his life, he became very popular. He was in demand as a speaker at different conferences, in the schools, on the radio and on television.

I noticed that just before he died, he wore a red tie when attending most of these events. One day, I asked him, “Why are you wearing that red tie? It does not match your suit.” He replied, “I am wearing this red tie to remind me of the blood atonement of Jesus Christ.” As a Christian leader, even though he experienced difficulties, he exhibited the joy of the Lord in his life and said frequently that he bore no grudge towards anyone.

The last few weeks before his death were spent in continuous prayer and Bible reading. When he left this life suddenly on 15 June, 2000, my mother said she could feel that he was at total peace. She observed that he died just the way he had lived—in prayer.
As he came to the end of his life, he became very popular. He was in demand as a speaker at different conferences, in the schools, on the radio and on television."
Sir Randol Fawkes
March 20th 1924—June 15th, 2000

Father of the Labour movement

Article reprinted from Consumerism Today
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CT— Consumerism Today
RF— Randol Fawkes

CT  Sir Randol, I feel it would be most appropriate if you began by telling us a little about your childhood, and the schools you attended.

RF  There really isn’t much to tell, as I never went to college. My father was a stonemason, and my grandfather a stevedore. I am the last child of my parents, and as the last child you usually get the best of what your parents have to offer; and I did get the best of the books that my other brother and sisters left behind.

But I also got some of the pants (trousers) that my father and my brother left. They were made out of flour bags, and consequently one day as I went to school
School, Mr. Howard Chipman of Western Senior School said to me, “Brother Fawkes, I bet you those pants that you have on do not belong to you.” So I rushed at him to fight him, but he said to me, “No don’t fight me, tell me this. Why are the two pockets joined on together?” Those pants had come down from my father to my brother and then to me, and were made out of Robin Hood Flour bags.

CT  So did you grow up on the island of New Providence?

RF  Yes I grew up here. I went to public schools, Western Senior, where Philip Burrows and George Robinson of Base Road were schoolmates. Now George and I used to play the harmonica, and I had a harmonica band with about ten little boys at that time. When I graduated from Central High School which is now Dr. Walker, C.R. Walker School on the hill, I went to Government High School. I spent about three years there and graduated. After leaving school, I taught myself shorthand and typing which became very useful to me when I went into Mr. Toote’s office as a clerk. In those days 1942-1943, there weren’t that many good shorthand writers, neither typists.

Now there was another young man in Mr. Toote’s office at the time, Mr. William Swain who was older than I was but was very proud and had an attitude. We both studied law but when Mr. Toote would drive up in his car and say, “Boys go and get my books,” Swain’s attitude was “boy I ain’t come here to run no errands.” But I would get excited when he would say, “Get the book,” because I wanted to see what he was reading. So when I saw what he was reading and after about six months of serving freely as a clerk without any salary, he said. “You’re pretty good. Do you want to study law?” I said, “O.K...fine.”

Now our office was below the Supreme Court in a basement where the Old Victoria is now. And when it would rain, the whole office would get flooded, and we would have to clean up. But Swain would complain, “Man, I didn’t come here for this. I came here to study law.” So because of this attitude whenever Toote needed help, he would call me and in this way, I got the best of what my tutor had to offer. The more things he asked me to do, the better I became. He had a well stocked library which was like a palace to me and I took full advantage of it. I complete my studies in 1948, and was called to the Bahamas Bar that same year.

CT  You spent some time in New York City. What time period was this? What was the purpose of your stay and what were some of the highlights and significant
momsents of your stay?

RF The time I spent in New York was really a period of voluntary exile. As soon as I was called to the bar in 1948, I became a revolutionary in a hurry. I wrote the first constitution for the Bar Association and was moving fast to get them interested in social problems; getting better labour union laws and changes to the constitution. Now the older attorneys—I was the youngest one at the time—became quite frightened and agitated by the changes for which I was advocating. So from the outset, the other members of the Bar were set on getting rid of me or trying to trap me. Once they suspended me for about two years and so instead of staying here, my wife and I went to New York City.

In New York City, I was able to be present at everything that was happening at the time—that is between New York and Washington. The discrimination battles involving Thurgood Marshall and Robert Carter? I was there. When Haille Selassie and others came, I was there, I couldn’t get up to talk to him as every time I moved toward him, his guards moved towards me. You see, they didn’t know who I was or what I wanted. I wanted to talk to him about some of the similar disaster here (in The Bahamas) but I wasn’t able to get that close.

I was very impressed by Emperor Selassie’s speech and so was his entire vast audience. After his address, there was what seemed to be at the time, an endless silence then the whole audience got up and gave an overwhelming standing ovation.

While in New York, I worked at Knicker Bocker Ice Co. and a magazine on Wall Street where I did some typing. Now when Immigration would come around, I would go out through the back door and so I know about running from Immigration.

Of course while in New York, I read profusely and no book ever passed me, and I only had to read it once, as I made personal notes as I read. The speeches I made in 1967, I wrote about twenty years before as I always knew where I was going. And that’s the solution to a happy childhood and a productive adult life. Find out where you are going, and when you are young, attach yourself to some individual in that particular industry or profession. Do anything that is honest to get ahead and you will find that one day you will be there where you want to be. It worked for me.
CT  You were called to The Bahamas Bar in April of 1948, over fifty years ago. We note that many of the leaders of the local Black Equality Movement were attorneys. What influenced you to become an attorney?

RF  First and foremost, I wanted to help the poor. And with my movement and aggressiveness, the only way I could keep myself out of jail, was if I knew more law than they did. Because they had tried to put me in jail about ten times, but was never able to do it. This last time, they tried to send me to jail for contempt of court. This was just a few years ago. I was seeking a court date for my case and the judge said to sit down but I didn’t know to whom he was talking to as he did not address me by name. So I said, “I will not sit down!” and that’s an excellent beginning for a book as it grips you right away.

Of course you know I have been fighting my pension case against the government for some years now and I still haven’t gotten it yet. I was having difficulty getting a court date as I had mentioned; this was in 1995 and Burton Hall was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. I was being a nuisance to everyone, trying to get my pension and so I decided to take it to court and they would not call up the case.
It just so happened that at the same time, a big international lawyers’ meeting was being held in Nassau. Chief Justices and attorneys from all over the world were coming. So I got up in the meeting and said, “My Lord, (Chief Justice from Jamaica) is your court free and independent or is it subservient to the cabinet in power? So he says, “Oh no, oh no, that doesn’t happen, that’s the worst thing that can happen.” So when he was finished, I made a gesture and said, “Amen, Amen!” The place was full of lawyers.

The next day I got my court date. It may not be due process but it is an effective process and I got the date and won the case. So I have my methods and if I have to make another speech like the one I made recently in the Senate, both parties will be out as the people, as you very well know, are on my side. And like I told them, if I have to come back, I will be coming with 65,000 strong. Even if I have to wake up every rioting bone man, straw vendors; they will follow me. As the straw vendors said, I gave it to them: Old Age Pension—I wrote the Bill; National Insurance and so forth. The other fellas were lazy. I wrote about six books and there is more to come.

CT You joined the Citizen’s Committee in 1949. Who were some of the other members of this committee; what was its purpose and objectives and to what extent did it achieve those objectives?

RF The United Nations General Assembly had recently adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and this declaration had declared that everyone should have freedom of speech, and freedom of the press to play these ideas back and forth without interference.

So when the movie picture *No Way Out* came out—this was a movie in which Sydney Poitier, our own Sydney Poitier, portrayed a doctor. Racial tensions were high; the movie portrayed racial tensions and we wanted to see it. So we formed the Citizen’s Committee and fought for change and eventually we were able to see the movie. But that brought us together and shortly after, Maxwell Thompson tried to form a political party called the *People’s Political Party*. But he was not successful for the simple reason that he didn’t have a labour union to support him. You understand, there was no mass labour movement at the time. When the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) was formed, I was in New York in exile, self imposed exile. But when I came back, I joined the PLP. I met the young L.O. Pindling and I found him to be quite a help. The labour movement would not be where it is today without the help of L.O. There was one progressive movement; L.O. took care of the political arm and I took care of the labour arm, bread and butter economics. So L.O became leader of the PLP because he was the most articulate spokesman in the PLP and I became leader of the labour movement for the same reason. We got along well but I think he was watching me all the time. I did not need to watch him because I was very happy to have someone who wasn’t afraid to take the nec-
necessary, daring steps. He spoke well and they decided to call me “Moses”. And when I spoke, my speeches were well delivered, properly studied and the rhetoric was pure.

So when I spoke, and I remember closing one address, “not against war but against wrong” and they said, “Speak it again Moses.” Then L.O. spoke and he spoke so well that the people started calling L.O. “Moses”. You understand? So he would come to me every night (I was older than he was by about six years) and he would pick my mind, just the way A.F. Adderley used to pick the mind of R.M. Bailey and C.H. Reeves. They would pick their minds and then go out and pretend as if the ideas were their own. L.O. did the same thing but I didn’t mind as I regarded him as my baby brother but I don’t know what he regarded me as.

Now as the people began calling L.O. “Moses”, I realized that if I was going to fulfill my destiny of bringing relief and assistance to the poor, I needed to redefine my destiny. So I began to search my Bible which was never far as I was always in trouble and came across the story of Joshua and decided that this was the role I was going to play. So L.O. remained *Moses* and I became *Joshua*. 

*Sir Lynden and Sir Randol greet each other at a political rally.*
L.O., as you probably know, was the only child of his parents. And as such he became self-centered, selfish and he used everything and everyone, no matter who they were, he used them on his climb to the top. Of course, he used me too, but I meant for him and the people to use me because I realized that was the only way for us to progress together.

When the time came to confront the government of the day with a general strike, L.O. was the attorney for The Bahamas Taxi Cab Union. But he had reached a cul-de-sac; he didn’t know what to do. He didn’t have a union; I had a union. So Cliff Darling (now Sir Clifford Darling) and L.O. asked me for help. I agreed. I told them to get a Royal Commission to consider the transportation problem, like they are trying to do now. But when the powers that be refused to cooperate, I said, O.K.; we will call a general strike. But I knew that if I weren’t careful after calling a general strike, they would bring a treason or sedition case against me, which they did. They planned to make an example out of me. At that time, my call went out and Garth Wright came on the scene. A very important man as at that time if I didn’t have a good general secretary, I could not have won as we would not have been able to get the necessary funds. And of course, L. Garth Wright later became
the F.N.M’s General Secretary.

**CT** Did you form The Bahamas Federation of Labour?

**RF** Yes, it was 1955 when my wife and I returned as a result of people writing me in New York and telling me to come back and represent them in the House of Assembly. So my wife and I returned. The people were true to their promise. I was elected to the House of Assembly and then the reform movement started.

**CT** Sir Randol, what is your opinion of the labour movement today? Has it conquered its mountains or is it still faced with the same obstacles as back then?

**RF** Actually what has happened is a very cleverly conceived plan by the former United Bahamian Party and the conservative members of the P.L.P. They got together; there was a marriage between them and as a result they saw the economic upswing coming. So they became enamored, in love, sweet hearts with the two top level bodies. The Bahamas Trade Union Congress under Obie Ferguson, who is just waiting for the commands of Bay Street and Dr. Thomas Bastian whose clout has been just like a paper tiger. And that happened because he has fellows like Barry Farrington on the Executive Board of Workers’ Bank, You knew that?

**CT** No we did not.

**RF** He has invited quite a number of Bay Street affiliates to become associated with the bank and the movement and consequently, he finds it difficult now to even call a strike. So where Bastian was before a captain calling his laboring masses to do battle against Bay Street—today, Bastian has been converted into a paper tiger with no teeth at all. You follow?

**CT** Yes Sir!

**RF** In my day, I did not allow the Progressive Liberal Party to dictate to the Bahamas Federation of Labour. For the simple reason that whenever there was a dispute, they wanted to know if I was negotiating as the Bahamas Federation of Labour or was the P.L.P. coming into the picture? I said, “No, this is entirely an industrial dispute; this is not a political dispute. This is a dispute about bread and butter.” And I made myself very clear about that. The P.L.P. didn’t like that because whenever I made a move they wanted a ride—a free ride but I would not mix my negotiations in that fashion.

Today both political parties are trying to ride the bandwagons of the TUC and others. As a result they (the labour movement) are not as effective as they can be for the poor people. I hope there will be another Bahamas Federation of Labour but it takes a long time to build a man.
CT You were elected to the House of Assembly for the Southern District in 1956. Who was your opponent and were you a Progressive Liberal Party candidate at the time?

RF Yes, I was a Progressive Liberal Party candidate. My opponent was Keith Duncombe’s (former President of the Bar Council) father, Kip Duncombe. I really should have gone in unopposed, as I was the acknowledged “Father of Labour” - nobody would dispute that, not even today. However, Etienne Dupuch, they were always trying to destroy me with their newspaper reports; he would splash ink on the paper and say, “Look, that’s Randol Fawkes!” But that sort of thing really helped me as they say the only thing worse than bad publicity is no publicity, so bad publicity can be good.

CT Our government is on record this year as being interested in constitutional reform. Now to most Bahamians this is all new. However, you have already served on a House Select Committee on constitutional reform what is the legacy of that committee?

RF Actually, that all began from the moment I entered the House. I had already written about four books on constitutional change; “You should Know Your Government” and so forth. I served on that committee and when they had the constitutional Conference in London I was there. You must remember that very shortly after I got into the House, they tried to outlaw the Bahamas Federation of Labour. They really tried to destroy me and when I made a motion for the reinstatement of The Bahamas Federation of Labour and I looked around for a member from the P.L.P. to second my motion, nobody got up to second the motion. So Mr. Asa Pritchard said, “Sit down Mr. Fawkes, you don’t have a second in this House.”

So since they refused to second my motion, I decided that I would go as a representative of Labour. So when the Constitutional Conference came up in 1963, the P.L.P. who was vex with me and the nucleus of today’s F.N.Ms. went to the Constitutional Conference and they would not take me. They both agreed that Fawkes must not go! So what happened was that I wrote the Queen’s Secretary of State, Mr. Boyd, and told him that the Bahamian delegation had left 99% of its brain-power in Nassau—that was me. As a result, in a week or two, I got my invitation to go to London.

CT so you broke with the PLP and formed the Labour Party when the P.L.P. refused to second your motion for the reinstatement of The Bahamas Federation of Labour?

RF Oh yes! That was the beginning. That was the spark that started the flame.
So we went and incorporated the B.F. of L. Now whatever they did in Africa to stifle the Free Africa Movement, they did here to the Bahamas Federation of Labour. They conspired to put me in jail, but they were never able to succeed. So we went ahead and developed the Labour Movement through the B.F. of L. as the people did not realize that the B.F. of L. was outlawed. And that is why we incorporated it when we did. So that sufficed until 1967—keeping the movement alive until it did what it was supposed to do: namely, change the government.

So you can see that every single day the P.L.P. or the F.N.M. tried to kill me politically and I enjoyed it. They were bad; I was bad but it gave me a reason to live. I practiced my law; they never paid me. I got my money from my law practice but I got my reason to live from the trade union movement. I felt that I was becoming a force for good and God was with me and I took Him with me into every battle. He made promises and kept them and I never lost.

CT You played host to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in December of 1958 but you also met emperor Haille Selassie and Marcus Garvey. Did these men have any influence on the struggle for majority rule in The Bahamas? Why was Marcus Garvey denied access to The Bahamas?

RF No, I did not meet Marcus Garvey. I was acquainted with his wife who wrote a very famous book on the life of Marcus Garvey. She was in Jamaica at the time I was Minister of Labour and Commerce. I invited her here but the powers that were here did not allow her to come.

CT So it was Mrs. Garvey and not Marcus Garvey that was denied access here?

RF Yes, Marcus Garvey was here before. When I was a little boy of about five or six years old, my father took me to see Marcus when he was here. This was in about November of 1929. But I remember the incident because people kept telling me that I was going to be like Marcus Garvey. The books that I read written by his wife were so impressive that he just never vanished from my memory. He was a prophet I would say—a real prophet and a forerunner. Much of the revolutions and changes now taking place in Africa, he foresaw. He foresaw it, wrote about it and was an excellent speaker.
He had a booming voice and did not need a public announcement system.

**CT** So would it be safe to say that people like yourself, Malcolm X and Rev. Dr. King were all influenced by Marcus Garvey?

**RF** Yes, I was more influenced after reading Garvey’s biography by his wife. Martin Luther King was a great influence also. What impressed me about King was that he was so small in stature. Yet he had a philosophy that was quite convincing.

When he visited there was a great exchange between our movements. My movement was known as the “Mighty Meekness Movement” and his theme was non violence. So when he heard about my plight—that I was arrested for sedition, he called me via telephone and said, “This is Martin Luther King. I am coming down. See you soon.” So I said, “Oh, we would be happy if you do.” So he said, “In the mean time, I am praying for you.” So at the end of the Sedition Trial, he appeared and we had a long talk and compared our philosophies. And he asked me what was my strongest branch or section in The Bahamas Federation of Labour. So I told him the street sweepers and the garbage collectors. If we had a problem and needed to call a strike, the first thing we did was call out the street sweepers and garbage collectors. We use to call them scavengers but at that time, I changed their name to Public Health Employees in order to give them more dignity and self
respect.

Now when Martin Luther returned to America, he was influenced by what I said and developed a greater relationship with the street sweepers and garbage collectors there. As a matter of fact, when he died, he had a few of them as pallbearers.

Before he left however, we sang for Martin. It went something like this:

*If each 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,
   It would be a wonderful world.*

*Chorus:*

*If we could consider each other
   A neighbor, friend or a brother
   *It could be a wonderful, wonderful world
   It could be a wonderful world*

*If there were no poor and the rich were content*
If strangers were welcome wherever they went
If each of us knew what true brotherhood meant,
It could be a wonderful world.

CT  “A people without the knowledge of their past history, roots or culture is like a tree without roots” is a famous quotation of Marcus Garvey. Yet most young Bahamians lack a knowledge and appreciation for the achievements of men such as yourself, Milo Butler Sr., R.M. Bailey and others. What do we as a people, through our government, social and civic agencies, need to do now to correct this anomaly and great disservice?

RF  Actually you need to encourage the people to do some research. Now an excellent attempt at research into the history of The Bahamas was done by Mr. Winston Saunders, the better half of Dr. Gail Saunders.

I agree with the statement of Marcus Garvey, and actually, some of his writings he had to publish himself. And people may say that his life was not valuable but the birth of nation hood that is happening in Africa, even to this day, owes its existence to his philosophy. Now my personal belief is that the history of our forebears and even the history of men such as C.H. Reeves, after whom a public school is named, ought to be taught in our schools. C.H. Reeves was the father of the first female Head Mistress at Government High School, Mrs. Anatol Carradad Rodgers nee Reeves. And most people do not know that she was one of the first Bahamian women to fight against discrimination in this country!

Bahamians need to be able to trace their history and these are some of the things that they need to know. C.H. Reeves who came from Barbados was the nephew of Sir Conrad Reeves who was the first black Chief Justice in the entire West Indies and was also the first black knight of the British Empire.

The story of R.M. Bailey was basically the same. Notice that these expatriates were real pushers. Arnold Franklyn Pindling knew what was going on in Kingston, Jamaica and he knew just where were in history. So he said, “I will train my boy to be Prime Minister one day.” And he could have said that with the accuracy of night following day. And that’s what happened. So as you can see, the West Indian influence was so tremendous that the moment Hubert was sure of his seat in the government, he and a delegatation went down south to the Caribbean community where they were saturated with all kinds of philosophies. They came back with a social contract in which they said they had reached an agreement with the people who had given them the government.

Now I had reason on occasion to criticize Janet Bostwick’s philosophy on the social contract because she said that the law courts were in that social contract and I told her that the law courts were not in it. You see, she wanted to include the law
courts in that social contract implying that the law courts would agree to be dictated to by Cabinet and that is what my pension case is all about.

CT The labour movement in The Bahamas is no longer united. What advice do you have for contemporary labour leaders in this regard?

RF The only advice I can give them is that they have to study Business Administration. How they can bring the administration together without losing any power or sovereignty of separate unions. In fact, you said they are not united and asked me for advice for them; well they should unite and stay clear of these political parties. Because, no matter what they do, the political parties want to get on the bandwagon. And in getting on the bandwagon, they adulterate the aspirations of the labour movement. And eventually they will destroy it.

CT What organizations or movements are you still involved with? Are you still active in the community at large?
RF  No, I am not active now. All I am doing now is writing. I have about three books to write before I sign off and I have occasional speaking engagements.

CT  Do you feel that the government and people of The Bahamas recognize and appreciate the many significant contributions that you have made to the development of The Bahamas during your career? Do you feel slighted in any way?

RF  No, I do not feel sighted because I know that I have the power within me to make my own destiny. And with God’s help, He’s going to help me write my books and as a result of my books, Randol Fawkes will never be erased. The word is far more powerful than any sword.

CT  What concluding comments/advice would you like to share with the people off The Bahamas as we wrap up?

RF  Form a labour party as soon as possible and fight for the poor. For God says in Psalm 41, “Blessed is the man who helps the poor for The Lord will be there for him in times of trouble. So if you form a party, make up your mind you’re going to have plenty trouble, however, if you stick to the Word, you will succeed brilliantly. O.K.?

CT  Thank you very much Sir Randol.

In 1958, at the British Colonial Hotel, Sir Randol was honored by the Natural Beauty Culturists’ League U.S.A. From left to right are Madam Willamae Saunders (local founder and President), Madam Katie E Wickham (National President), and Sir Randol F. Fawkes.