

Keith Gray

April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Sir Randol Fawkes Essay

### Fawkes's Fight For Justice

In the mid-1990s, Sir Randol Fawkes and the Bahamas Federation of Labour fought against a great oppression towards Bahamian workers. In the 1950s, The Bahamas's estimate revenue each year was about 3 million pounds, yet many Bahamian workers remained under paid. In fact, one unjust policy at a major hotel made new waiters sign a "two week no payment" document. Although the waiters knew it was wrong, many didn't have a choice mainly because the unions at that time were divided and too small to make a notable impact.

Fawkes once stated that, "one man alone trying to take on a corporation is like a man trying to take down an elephant". Knowing this, Fawkes decided to take it a step further by unifying the small segments of unions, thus creating a much bigger organization called The Bahamas Federation of Labour. Under B.F.O.L, Fawkes and his team made every effort to bring equality and ensure that Bahamian workers were treated fairly in the workplace. Some of the key benefits included better wages, overtime payments, vacations and insurance for Bahamian workers.

Although some progression was being made, in 1958, the Government sanctioned that specific Caucasian-owned tour companies were in charge of transportation from the airport to the city. The Bahamas Taxi Cab Union was devastated and was informed that their services weren't need anymore. Afraid of going out of business, the Taxi Cab Union blocked all traffic to and from Nassau's new airport, stopping all new arrivals from coming into the city. After weeks of negotiation, and seeing hopeless Bahamian Taxi Drivers, the Taxi Union called upon Fawkes at the B.F.O.L to assist them in this dilemma, resulting in a general strike during the peak season of tourism. This aided the Taxi Cab Union by reinforcing Fawkes's message of more dignity and respect on the jobsite.

In conclusion, Fawkes once said "We knew that we were witnessing the birth of Bahamians working together with other Bahamians for a new Bahamas". Today, because of his hard work and sacrifice, many Bahamian workers today enjoy the benefits that were fought for by B.F.O.L.