

Race and Politics in the Bahamas

Colin A. Hughes
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 250 pp.

In a racially stratified society, political, economic and social concerns inevitably become racial issues. This is not an empirical statement but a logical one, the truth of which derives from the meaning of the term racially stratified and of the adjectives political, economic and social. The distribution of the power to rule (the political), of the goods and services necessary for survival (the economic), and of prestige and acceptance (the social) is necessarily influenced by the categorization of and attribution of worth to persons based on racial characteristics. To be more specific, racial concerns among blacks in biracial and multiracial societies in the process of emerging from white minority rule are inextricably linked with politics, economics and social practices; it is precisely these three factors which were the signs of inferior status and also the means of perpetuating such status, and they become subsumed, in the view of most victims of discrimination, under the designation of racism. The struggle for racial equality and the restoration of dignity must be expressed in political, economic and social terms. If Colin A. Hughes in Race and Politics in the Bahamas had recognized this he would have avoided several serious problems in his first two chapters and would have developed a satisfactory conceptual framework within which to discuss racial relations and politics in the remainder of the book.

His discussion of race relations is plagued by insufficiently examined assumptions which weaken its impact. Despite shortcomings, however, the book is of value. Hughes raises important points on race relations and, though he fails to deal with them at length or in detail, the fact that they are raised is a valuable stimulus for further research. More important he presents a dispassionate

account of political development in the Bahamas from 1953 to 1977. In doing so he not only supplies a corrective for the "house" histories, personal recollections and partisan polemics that abound in book, pamphlet and newspaper form, but also provides a valuable source for students of recent Bahamian political and social history.

The book begins with a sketchy chapter on the Bahamian background which, despite its failure to deal in depth with the development and perpetuation of racial stratification and with the awakening of black racial consciousness, does introduce points of importance. Worthy of note is the long-standing tradition of corruption, of bribery and intimidation and of the selling of votes in open elections; Hughes notes that the secret ballot did not extend to the entire Bahamas until the early 1940s. After reading this, one is not surprised at the accusations levelled at politicians today. Hughes also mentions that there were more qualified electors in the Bahamas in 1864 than there were in any other island of the West Indies by the late 1930s, indicating perhaps that the ruling group in the Bahamas did not feel threatened by black voters. It is also stated that the Bahamas missed the labour unrest of the 1930s that affected a number of Caribbean islands. The last two points support to a limited extent a contention made later that the Bahamian situation was unique in the British West Indies. Regarding the Burma Road riot of 1942, Hughes quotes from the findings of a governor's commission of investigation which denied that race had anything to do with the incident but blamed it on labour unrest, placing some blame on the House of Assembly for maintaining daily wages for Bahamian workers at four shillings. Hughes seems to accept this at face value, though it seems a number of questions could

be asked. For instance, if blacks were the only ones kept at the minimum wage how could race not be an issue? Why is no mention made of white support for the position of the black workers? It is obvious that the riot was an example of the close connection between racial and economic matters in a stratified society. This aspect deserves a more detailed investigation.

Also requiring a more extended examination is the influence of the Loyalists. It can be argued that their arrival laid the foundation of a racially stratified society. Hughes suggests later in the book that, since their existence in the Bahamas was of short duration, the influence of the plantations and, by implication, the Loyalists themselves was of little importance in shaping later developments. Harsh vagrancy laws, opposition to the amelioration of slavery and to the ending of the flogging of female slaves and in general a more stringent view of race relations after the Loyalists' arrival call this view into question.

Still another area that deserves more attention, if only to dispel the notion that racial awakening began in 1953, is the development of black political awareness. Evidence indicates that there was an awakening of black consciousness by at least the last quarter of the nineteenth century. L. D. Powles commented on it in The Land of the Pink Pearl. Governor Ambrose Shea expressed concern over the increased assertiveness of blacks in the late 1880s. The Freeman, a newspaper edited by S. T. Smith, was active for a short period advocating improvements for the working class--blacks--and improved educational provisions as well as civil rights. Letters to the editor of the Guardian from black correspondents also bear witness to the growing race awareness and pride which extended into the twentieth century. While the truck system and political corruption kept many blacks under control in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and while many more, no doubt, remained docile, others were beginning the campaign which culminated in the twenty years between 1953 and 1973. Though mostly nameless, these Bahamians deserve mention; a more thorough examination of their role would have better set the stage for the real black political emergence of the 1950s.

Similar problems arise in the second chapter as Hughes sets himself the task in ten pages of defining a system of colour categorization, explaining the role of economics, showing the uniqueness of the Bahamian situation and describing that situation as it was in the first half of the twentieth century. Although the discussion lacks a strong conclusion and becomes confusing at times, it again raises important questions.

Citing a work by M. G. Smith, Hughes lists five aspects of the colour concept. The first is appearance, colour itself and physical characteristics; the second is genealogical, one's ancestry; the third is associational, one's friends and colleagues; the fourth is behavioural, one's adherence to ranked cultural norms; the fifth is called structural colour and is determined by the distribution and types of power, authority, knowledge and wealth. His purpose in introducing this categorization system is not made explicit nor are his reasons for adopting category five for his discussion explained. What does he mean when he states, as he does in chapter three, that eight of the members of the House in 1949 were Negro according to structural colour? Did these men have high or low shares of power, authority and prestige? What was the position of the poor white Bahamian with little advantage in any area? He certainly was not black so his greatest asset was probably his white skin. What of the mulatto and his share of advantages? Evidence shows that from the mid-nineteenth century Bahamians of mixed race were at times in positions of power, wealth and prestige. The introduction of the fifth category, and indeed the third and fourth, confuses the issue since more questions are raised than are answered.

A common sense view of racial classification would seem to be that in a racially stratified society in which the classification was carried out by the dominant white elite, colour was the simplest and most efficient means of ranking, of separating the "we" from the "they". Using ancestry for classification purposes, as was done in the Bahamas from 1824, was another convenient method of ranking in those special cases which sought to separate whites from those of mixed

race when skin colour alone was an insufficient criterion. Using associations, behaviour and structural colour characteristics unnecessarily complicates an already complex issue by adding the element of culture as a consideration. Race and culture are not identical and the historian who uses the terms interchangeably invites the accusation of equivocation. The fact that they do often coincide is an historical point that does not make them the same. Hughes passes quickly to economic considerations and leaves this problem unresolved.

That an economic relationship was intimately connected with the idea of racial difference in the Bahamian context is obvious. Slavery, the ultimate stratifying force, was, of course, an economic institution. Hughes does not delve deeply enough into his examination of slavery, merely suggesting that after emancipation, racial differences and antagonisms replaced those of economic class as determinants of social, economic and political relationships. It is just as likely, however, that racial stratification preceded the advent of a wealthy class, that racial discrimination--perhaps the result of slavery--led, through its reinforcing of the economic situation to the perpetuation of a white elite which claimed the greatest share of the wealth of the colony. It is again seen that race and economics cannot be separated. The mention of the white indentured servants is obfuscation. The slaves were black and that fact alone was enough to place them in the lowest status in the eyes of those who exploited them as well as those of their paternalistic friends. Colour ranking applied only slightly less to free black Bahamians and liberated Africans as is indicated in the expressions of white Bahamians and officials in the twenty years before Emancipation and for a century thereafter. Hughes' belief that a new order was formed is questionable since a racial hierarchy had already had a long history by 1834. After that date economic factors reinforced racial discrimination which in turn limited the access of black Bahamians to the means of improving their economic, political and social conditions. Historians would probably agree that the apprenticeship and truck systems were economic of maintaining racial stratification and that, contrary to Hughes' contention, it was not inevitable

that a hierarchic system based on race would remain after emancipation. Hughes' view omits any consideration of historical causation.

Another questionable view expressed by Hughes is that in a racially stratified society, as cultural uniformity increases the hierarchic nature of the society decreases, presumably because members of the dominant race will be more likely to accept acculturated members of the subordinate one. This may be true but does not seem so necessarily. It is equally likely that blacks will not be accepted readily no matter how much they adopt elements of the dominant culture and that the frustrations that arise from their rejection provide motivation for seeking power through political action.

At another point Hughes suggests that the opportunities to gain wealth rested on personal initiative than on inherited status, but in the next sentence he quotes a former governor who stated that Bahamians lacked the quality of perseverance but were opportunists. This is peculiar for one might ask whether personal initiative is not a sign of perseverance. Hughes complicates the issue by not distinguishing between blacks and whites in this situation. Some historical evidence should be presented to support his view that a strain of individualism fostered by the economic ups and downs during the century after Emancipation was encouraged by the continuous prosperity after World War II and helped undermine the hierarchic system. It is doubtful that many black Bahamians derived much wealth in the century after Emancipation and unlikely that the raised status of a few after the Second World War greatly weakened the existing social and racial hierarchy. A view more often expressed is that Bahamians, black and white were complacent opportunists, survivors of good times and bad and very slow to change. It seems probable then that a growing sense of deprivation among certain black Bahamians after World War II rather than individualism, gave rise to conscious political action which eventually brought down the racially stratified system.

Hughes has trouble trying to demonstrate that

the Bahamian experience is "deviant" from the norm of the British Caribbean. Briefly put, his points include the fact that the white-black ratio of population differed from other islands except Bermuda, that the influence of poor whites was significant, that cultural ties with the United States were important, that African influences were stronger than those of the plantations and that the fishermen of the Bahamas were probably more self-reliant than the cane cutters of the sugar islands. These are interesting and provocative points but deserve treatment in books rather than in sections of chapters. Also, if one is making a case for uniqueness it should be made explicit what the uniqueness led to. Hughes does not define the political, economic or social results caused by the so-called deviation. Dealing only with the last point he makes, it must be said that the self-reliance of the fisherman was definitely limited by the truck system--an economic system which alone deserves a book--and that of the sponger is certainly questionable.

As regards the racial situation as it existed between 1900 and 1950, Hughes rejects the description given by Etienne Dupuch of a pyramidal structure with the British official class at the top, the white Bahamians next and the "coloured majority" ranked from light to dark at the bottom, a structure that, he admits, resembles the typical West Indian hierarchy. His objection seems to be that Dupuch at other times attributed the beginning of racial segregation to the influence of the American tourists in the 1920s. Here he confuses segregation with racial stratification. He rejects Dupuch's description in favour of one of a "single society deeply divided into two antagonistic groups by racial differences". He dismisses the influence of the Government House class except for social purposes and he may be correct in this, but one would like to know how its earlier influence--which lasted beyond the mid-nineteenth century--was lost. Hughes' problem is oversimplification; Dupuch is closer to the actual situation though he also presents an oversimplified picture. One can agree with Hughes, however, that by 1950 "a few Bahamians believed that change was necessary in their islands".

It is in chapters three through seven that the major contribution of the book is made. Headed respectively The Rise of Party Politics,

1953-57, The General Strike and General Election, 1958-62, White Power, 1963-66, Black Power: The First Phase, 1967-70 and Black Power: The Second Phase, 1971-77, they contain the most complete and objective account of party politics thus far published. Hughes uses newspapers and other contemporary sources and presents detailed discussion augmented by interesting pictures and superb maps and tables showing election results. His brief but cogent analysis of over two decades of political activity is impressive.

Chapter three traces the development of black assertiveness, noting that until the 1950s blacks were largely denied access to the press and the House of Assembly, the two major political forums of the day. It describes the creation of the PLP under W. Cartwright, H. M. Taylor, Cyril Stevenson, Clement Pinder and others and notes the creation by Lynden Pindling of the party's first platform which appealed to all classes and races, men and women. Hughes then describes the gradual change of the PLP into a black party as racial polarization became irreversible. He follows the brief career of the Bahamian Democratic League, a multi-racial group of which he was a member, that contested four seats in 1956 and notes that by the time the BDL contested the seats the chance to form a multiracial party had been lost. While Dupuch places much blame on the PLP, Hughes sees the Bay Street interests as having had more to do with the racial polarization. He outlines attempts to deal with discrimination, citing Bert Cambridge's early attempt to have a select committee formed on the subject, Taylor's plan to bring a question before the House and finally Dupuch's resolution. He mentions the slow and steady growth of the PLP, its efforts and those of Bay Street to obtain constitutional reforms showing that the latter wanted the influence from the Colonial Office limited while the PLP sought its protection while the reforms were implemented. Attempts of the PLP to recruit labour are examined and the roller coaster relationship of Randol Fawkes and the Bahamian Federation of Labour on one hand and the PLP on the other is explored. In all, Hughes delivers a balanced account of the growth in adversity of black political involvement, of racial polarization in politics and of attempts by Bay Street to maintain the status quo. He provides little material for myth-making, but rather

a hard look at politics as it was practised.

Chapter four focuses on labour issues, electoral reform and the campaign and election of 1962 in an environment of deteriorating race relations. Hughes shows how the interplay of race and economics led to the general strike as the hotel operators' discriminatory treatment of black taxi drivers partially deprived the latter of their economic livelihood. Feelings ran high and strong charges were made. The Guardian maintained that the strike was the result of the preaching of race and class hatred, suggesting that the PLP was behind it. Hughes indicates that the involvement of the PLP was more hesitant than its enemies claimed--or than its friends claim now--and that it was reluctantly forced to support the BFL. He shows that PLP relations with Fawkes and his union were not stable and that men such as Milo Butler supported the strike primarily as private individuals. Butler, incidentally, emerges as a popular grass roots radical hero who regularly injected race into political debate. By appealing to a history of discrimination and by identifying the "white man" as oppressor, Butler employed an effective tactic at an opportune time. His support for the strike seems to have been stronger than that of his party as a whole. It may have been difficult to support Fawkes who is seen as a mercurial figure possessing great popular appeal. The demands he made on the party and his alleged attempt to dominate it may have been partly to blame for differences. The PLP leaders reluctantly supported him while trying to woo him back into the fold, but remained uncomfortable with labour, an interesting note in the light of recent strained relations between the PLP government and the TUC.

Race was an unavoidable issue in the PLP's struggle for electoral reform. Hughes mentions efforts to increase the number of seats in the House by dividing populous districts, to end plural voting and to enfranchise women. He notes the PLP's political gains in increasing its own membership in the House from five to ten in by-elections of 1959 and 1960. He says also that race relations continued to deteriorate as the PLP became, by its own admission, a black party faced with the necessity of overcoming a white minority party. This is not difficult

to understand in view of the racial and economic alignment of the 1950s and the failure of the BDL to gain support. The UBP, dominated by Bay Street and containing only token black representation, came to be associated with white supremacy for historical reasons, because of the Knäur "report" and due to other actions which were seen by blacks as slights. In the battle of words the UBP stressed prosperity and accused the PLP of concentrating on race. The PLP demanded for blacks a share in the prosperity and did keep race in the forefront, certainly a reasonable political tactic as race was the focus for political and other grievances. In this regard an item deserves note for its irony and its insight into the minds of the colonial rulers. Hughes refers to the departure of the governor, Sir Raynor Arthur:

In a reflective speech...he denied that there was any cause for racial feeling...and warned against the emergent party system being allowed to divide on racial lines. A white party could not hope to win an election and a Negro party would find that its raison d'etre would disappear.....

An ironic observation to be made here is that in the short run Arthur was mistaken, for once the parties did divide along racial lines the UBP did manage to win one election and the PLP did not find that its raison d'etre disappeared. Indeed, race remained an important--perhaps the one important--issue as is evidenced by the slings and arrows of campaign rhetoric still directed at the UBP years after its demise. Arthur's statement points out a blind spot not atypical of British colonial officials faced with similar problems in multiracial colonies in Africa and elsewhere in the West Indies. They could not understand how race could be a divisive issue and at the same time could not comprehend how blacks could reject their leadership in a gradual approach to majority rule. They demonstrated a naive notion of race relations. It should have been obvious that the slightest disparity in economic, political or social terms, if it was based on race, was sufficient reason for "race feelings," Arthur's well-intentioned words notwithstanding. It is too early to make a judgement on the long term accuracy of

Arthur's statement, though it might be argued that the results he predicted are inevitable. That is, given the two necessary conditions, a democratic system and racial division, the minority party cannot win and the racial issues that raised the majority party to power lose their importance after an interval of time. How long an interval remains to be seen.

As the election of 1962 approached the racial division feared by Arthur appeared to be a reality. Though the PLP made gains in such areas as the enfranchisement of women, the party viewed concessions from the government with suspicion. Milo Butler as spokesman made it clear on numerous occasions that the PLP, as the party of the black majority, should rule. The UBP stressed PLP inexperience. On substantive issues there was little disagreement between the platforms of the two parties, though the PLP had a more restrictive plank on jobs for foreigners. The campaign was not waged on issues and—as others in recent memory—consisted of the usual allegations of violence, plots and corruption. The PLP lost two seats because, as Hughes suggests, of the continuing prosperity and of the failure of the PLP to impress sufficient Out Island voters with its emphasis on racial oppression. Both of these issues as well as the effect of the enfranchisement of women require further study because statements as to their influence on the outcome of the election are inconclusive. It seems obvious that the racial division that existed at higher levels of politics and society had not reached the attention of the grass roots voters. It is also obvious in hindsight, that when it did reach their attention the days of the UBP were numbered.

Chapter five carries the account through the waning days of UBP power to the 1967 election. Though there were few overt racial issues—the Cat Island land case being the most notable—race remained a pervasive emotional influence. An example of this is the general concern expressed regarding education, with protests being made against the use of outmoded school texts which portrayed blacks negatively and recommendations being put forward that black studies be added to the curriculum. Principal issues were the adoption of a constitution and the peaceful advent of responsible government, development of Freeport, casino gambling, the debate over salaries for parliamentarians and conflict of interest charges against certain UBP members. Two other events touched upon by Hughes are of interest. The first is the

ouster of the old guard PLP members and their replacement by a group of younger men followed by the consolidation of power by what Hughes refers to as the left wing of the party under Lynden Pindling. The second was the work of the Constituencies Commission and the dissatisfaction it aroused which led to the mace incident. The first may have had racial implications while the second, though described in political terms, was definitely a racial issue.

The shock of the 1962 defeat may have proved disruptive for the PLP. There was probably a breakdown in communications for in early 1963 Taylor and Stevenson were censured for making statements without party authority. Taylor resigned amid some bitterness after the 1963 convention and, though Stevenson remained for a few years, he was no longer considered reliable. The party's one white member resigned in 1963. Keeping the issue of race in mind, Hughes points out that Pindling "was...a man of the people, darker in complexion than Taylor, less Anglicized than other university graduates like Adderley and Turnquest, and still a successful professional man with whom the rising Negro middle class could identify". He does not conclude that a plot existed within the PLP against light-skinned members, though he cites a speech by Adam Clayton Powell, the black American congressman, warning against making colour distinctions in a black party. The mention of Adderley and Turnquest adds a cultural element of some minor importance and is interesting because the two were prominent among the four parliamentary dissidents who condemned the mace incident as unnecessary and violent and deplored the unfair treatment of Taylor, Stevenson, Purkiss—the one white member—and others. What form the treatment took is unspecified. The group formed the National Democratic Party, leaving the PLP with only four members in the House. Hughes suggests that, after the schism, the PLP overcame the temptation to resort to "radical tactics" and returned to the House, which it had boycotted since the mace incident, to use it as a political forum through which it could maintain contact with the people.

Two points deserve mention in connection with the mace incident and the events leading up to it, including the physical

removal of Milo Butler and Arthur Hanna from the House. These are the underlying issues and their racial implications and the question of whether the incident was a spontaneous act or a preconceived political tactic. Though details are lacking, it is obvious that the PLP saw the report of the Constituencies Commission and the failure of the House to accept PLP amendments as an attempt by the white minority to protect its position in the next election. It also appears, from the slight evidence presented, that the actions of Butler and Hanna and later those of Pindling and Butler constituted a dramatic challenge and were not spontaneous, but were planned for their effect on the black electorate. Hughes suggests that the incident was a sign of uprising that stopped short of violence because violence was not part of the plan. In his view, Pindling and the PLP could have created a riot; that they did not shows restraint and also indicates planning.

As election approached the PLP concentrated on the issues of electoral reform, casino gambling and conflict of interest, and there was little overt reference to race. The party also complained strongly of the "almost total control of the media" by their opponents, an ironic twist in view of the control over radio and television exercised in the most recent campaign. A more thorough examination of the factors influencing the outcome of the election is necessary. Race, though underplayed as an issue, was central as a black party ran against a white one. The PLP benefited by an article in the Wall Street Journal which connected the UBP with United States gambling interests, giving greater credibility to corruption and conflict of interest charges. Anti-colonial "winds of change" probably had some influence on the voters as well. Those of New Providence supported the PLP while those in the Out Islands remained largely behind the UBP. Though the election resulted in a deadlock, the UBP had reached the point predicted by Arthur, after which a white minority party could not win. Fawkes and Alvin Braynen tipped the scales in favour of the PLP and the days of the UBP were numbered, not only as a white party but indeed as a viable opposition. Though race remained a central issue in Bahamian politics, the days of racially polarized parties were coming to an end.

In the sixth chapter, describing the first four years of PLP government, Hughes notes that the party, despite growing internal dissension, took steps to consolidate its gains, which it did

impressively in the election of 1968. It also undertook to deal with national issues and to the surprise of some, was not handicapped by its inexperience or by the racial stance with which it was identified. It introduced constitutional changes and demonstrated its "adaptation to changing times" in taking a cautious approach to casino gambling and to the development of Freeport. Its budget reflected changes in priority with education and health becoming the major recipients of funds. Immigration policy was changed but did not reflect racial so much as political and economic needs and nationalistic considerations, the stress being on the training of Bahamians to replace expatriates. Questions suggest themselves here that might have been pursued by Hughes. How, for example, did Bahamian nationalism arise and what was its relation to race consciousness? When did nationalism replace--if in fact it did--race concerns as a major motivating force in Bahamian politics and in such areas as immigration control and the independence movement?

The UBP, damaged by the scandal attached to the investigation of the Gambling Commission and to the departure of Stafford Sands, was further weakened by its defeat in the election of 1968. Despite efforts to open the door to blacks, it appeared to be in the midst of its death throes. Negotiations with the NDP on a possible merger proved unsuccessful. It was evident that any viable opposition from the early 1970s onward would have to originate among black politicians. In the next few years, dissidents from the PLP supplied such men, and as the old guard UBP members stepped aside they were replaced by blacks who attempted to form an opposition to a black government.

Areas of controversy noted by Hughes include the introduction of salaries for members of the House; the extension of parliamentary privilege and limiting of court challenges in privilege cases; the government's about face on Bahamianization that was found necessary in education; legislation amending the Hawksbill Creek Agreement; poor relations between the PLP and labour and the dissension within the party that led to the suspension of Wallace-Whitfield, McMillan, Levarity, Foulkes and four others. These issues

are dealt with fairly by Hughes, but much more research is necessary to clearly illuminate all of them. Hughes' dependence on newspapers as sources is a weakness in the discussion of these issues, as it is in regard to charges of PLP intimidation during the election and to Fawkes' persistent charges of conflict of interest against the PLP.

Hughes mentions the problem the nation and the party had to confront in coming to terms with Black Power. Pindling is seen as the leader of the black power wing of the PLP, but was himself a moderate, and the party, reflecting its leader, maintained a moderate stand and was not receptive to the rhetoric emanating from the United States or from other West Indian nations. It was able to maintain its own direction in the face of some popular support for the new philosophy among the Bahamian public. The PLP view might have been that, having achieved political power, and continued militancy on race was not an issue as it remained in the United States. While expressions of black pride were heard, Black Power was often associated with racial tolerance that could now be practised by a black population under a black majority government.

Chapter seven brings the chronological account to a close. Hughes characterizes the period, which ended shortly after the 1977 election, as one of political success amid economic difficulties. The PLP government faced the problems of a stagnant, inflation, rising food prices, increased demand for welfare and utilities, the urgent need for trained Bahamians in business and the civil service and the ever growing population. As a party the PLP continued to face dissension within its ranks which was a greater threat than the efforts of the splintered opposition.

Hughes suggests that the government met with limited success in the economic sphere. He is critical of the over expansion of hotel room capacity due to an overestimation of tourists. He blames the government for poor planning of education in believing that pumping money into an obsolete and inappropriate system would bring about improvement. He notes the difficulties the PLP government continued to have with labour, suggesting the possibility that the PLP might have seen labour as a potential political rallying point for an opposition. Also mentioned are the development of a land tax system, of an immigration and work permit policy and of a policy on casino gambling. The establishment of the

Hotel Corporation, National Insurance and the College of the Bahamas is also considered. A number of these actions by the government remain controversial, and Hughes withholds judgement on them.

Other points that deserve special note are the possible waning of the power of the churches, especially as regards the casino gambling issue; the search for a national identity in terms of culture; the question as to the balance between national dignity and pride and economic survival and development; the idea of nationalism as it affected immigration, the hiring of expatriates and the educating of Bahamians. Any one of these topics would be worthy of research by anyone following Hughes' example.

Hughes also provides a case study on how not to form an opposition. In doing so he raises the general problem in newly independent nations, the difficulty of challenging the party of freedom. The tendency, as he recognizes, is to glorify the party and almost deify its leaders and from the beginning, to write history that is more mythical than historical. In a democracy, fragmented groups struggle to come to an agreement on certain issues to present in opposition to the governing party, but the euphoria of victory is slow to die and the party in power is often able to extend its tenure in office. This was the case in the Bahamas as the NDP, the Free PLP, the Free National Movement and the Bahamian Democratic Party all failed to develop a programme or raise issues around which to unite in opposition to the PLP government. The PLP itself, faced with challenges from its back bench members and the defection of men such as Carlton Francis and Edmund Moxey, was able, nevertheless, to gain a sweeping victory in the 1977 election. The failure of the opposition may have been due partially to political and personality differences. The element of race, however, remained a factor despite the fact that, as Hughes notes, racial polarization of the political parties ended when Wallace-Whitfield became leader of the opposition in 1971. The UBP was dead, but it remained and remains a target and both the FNM and the BDP found to their dismay that association with former UBP members or efforts to merge with the remnants of the party made targets for the

PLP. One former UBP parliamentarian stated, "The U.B.P. way of life is finished forever in this country. Face the facts, we are living in a black man's country and they are going to run it their way, not ours". After centuries white domination had been broken, and it might be said that it was too early to attempt to incorporate whites back in the political system. Whether this is true or not, efforts by the opposition to include whites seemed to do more harm than good.

In chapter eight, Hughes suggests a reason why the race issue is not dead. He states that the "replacement of the political, social and economic hegemony of a white bourgeoisie by the hegemony of a black bourgeoisie...is complete in the social sector..." As long as persons are deprived of economic benefits for racial reasons, the issue of race cannot die. Hughes recognizes the connection between race and economics and race and the other two factors which he did not deal with clearly in the first two chapters.

Hughes is on stronger conceptual grounds in chapter eight than in the first two chapters as he examines myth making and the politics of symbolism. He discusses types of symbols, paying particular attention to what he calls condensation symbols, those that stir the emotions and bind citizens together with a common experience. He lists five of these: the Burma Road Riot, the anti-discrimination resolution of 1956, the General Strike, the mace incident and the 1967 election. He notes the importance of myths in defining the enemy and in defining the hero. Both myths and symbols, he suggests can lead to questionable history, but seem to be part of the process of defining a new nation.

Hughes brings up some other interesting points on the importance of the charismatic leader, the effects of living on an island and on the question of race itself. Verging on the metaphysical he asks if race is a physical and mental force that replaces class or if it is a complementary factor of class. This seems to indicate that he is still not sure of himself in dealing with race and is on safer ground in discussing politics.

In addition to the weaknesses there are some mistakes that detract somewhat from the book and could have been avoided. Woodes Rogers arrived in 1718, not in 1713. The Crown bought out the proprietors in 1783, not in

1733. The heading of chapter eight should read racially rather than radically divided. Finally Arlington Butler, the first black speaker of the House of Assembly, was not the son of Milo Butler, the first black governor general.

To conclude, despite the shortcomings that have been dwelt upon at length, it must be stressed that this is an extremely valuable work that deserves to be in classrooms and libraries in the Bahamas and elsewhere in the West Indies. It should serve as a sourcebook of ideas for historians and political scientists for some time to come. Though flawed, it is a pioneering work of scholarship and an example of the virtually unlimited areas of Bahamian history requiring study. To the serious student of modern Bahamian history and politics, Race and Politics in the Bahamas is invaluable, a necessary first step.

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