

FACING REALITY

by

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NEW INTRODUCTION

It surprises many individuals to hear me speak favorably about C. L. R. James, the author of "Facing Reality". I am always asked, "How can a young Pan Africanist like yourself relate to a Black Marxist, like James?" The basic thing most people who ask this type of question fail to realize is that this generation of Black Youths are instinctively hostile toward bourgeois society and not toward individuals identified as Black Marxists. It does not matter whether our forerunners were affiliated with the Communist Party or the Socialist Party or that they studied Marxism during some point in their lives. We respect men like W. E. B. DuBois, George Padmore, Kwame Nkrumah, Frantz Fanon and C. L. R. James for their contributions to the development of the Black Liberation Struggle. Even though it can be stated that James and his generation represent the "old world," and my generation represent the "new world", we are in actuality one World and one Movement. "You are of one generation, I of another," James wrote recently in response to a letter from me concerning this new introduction. "If you feel it is necessary to say certain things... then don't let me stop you."

I have been given the green light by C. L. R. James to introduce you to this new edition of "Facing Reality". As far as I am concerned, Facing Reality is a classic, and one of the hallmarks of social thought. When C. L. R. James wrote this book in 1958, he did what few, if any, political analysts had done; he gave us a glimpse of the emerging new society. This comprehensive political analysis must be read with a great deal of seriousness. Those individuals who are serious-minded will find that James' methodology will help them transcend the political confusion and nonsensical political discussions that most people get caught up in.

"Facing Reality" is an eye opener. Unfortunately, only a few people have been exposed to such an analysis of our society. I must say here that C. L. R. James has taken

the lead in the development of a new perspective of man and his society. The reality James forces us to recognize is that our societal system is fluctuating between a state of crisis and paralysis. Certain elements of the social order are in motion and their self-activity make the revolution. After reading "Facing Reality" you will be better able to identify these revolutionary elements and determine how we have to respond to them.

I do not want to give the impression that Facing Reality contains all the information we need to wrestle the political questions confronting us today. Nothing new has been added to this book since 1958, except this new introduction. But the basic analytical and theoretical framework which C. L. R. James laid out then is still "relevant." To many individuals it will be something new!

"Facing Reality" is a direct break with the outdated conceptions and theories of Marxism. James destroys the myth that the revolution is impossible unless it is lead by a vanguard party. His focal point is the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and the development of Workers' Councils. However, James does not just deal with the political developments in Hungary; he also traces what he considers obvious patterns of movement in the United States, Poland, France, England, China and Ghana. Throughout "Facing Reality" James contends that the new society already exists, and we have to recognize and record the facts of its existence. He also takes the position that: "It is quite untrue to say that contemporary society faces the possibility of collapse. As a way of life, as a civilization, as a culture, modern society has collapsed already."

Essentially "Facing Reality" is evidence verifying the existence of a new society. The author tells us where to look for it and how to bring it closer. I regret that there is not enough space to cover many aspects of the rapid development of the Black movement during the last decade which would further show how important this book is. Those who read this edition of Facing Reality should reflect back on the political impact the independent Black

movement has had upon the political development of the world, utilizing the perspective C. L. R. James outlines for us. I mention the Black movement here because the Black Revolution in the United States and the emergence of politically independent African nations is one of the most significant political phenomena of the Twentieth Century. Also because I believe as James writes on page 152, "In the United States who fails on the Negro question is weak on all. 'Black and White, Unite and Fight' is unimpeachable in principle and undoubtedly has an excellent sound. But is often misleading and sometimes offensive in the face of the infinitely varied, tumultuous, passionate, and often murderous reality of race relations in the United States." That is definitely a statement for our time.

While reading "Facing Reality" you will find many statements for our time. For instance, James describes African-Americans as one of the "authentic outposts of the new society." Like the Hungarian Revolution, the tremendous upsurge of the Black movement particularly in the United States has shown that the vanguard party theory is obsolete. For in the United States Black people and students have become the vanguard. They represent part of the new emerging society.

I am just amazed at how close "Facing Reality" takes us to the events related to the political developments which we lived through during the last decade. One year after this book was first published, Robert Williams organized a Black militia of approximately two hundred United States Army veterans to protect the lives of Black people in Monroe, North Carolina, against the Klu Klux Klan. The African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde Islands was also organized in 1959. A year later Black students in the United States left the college campuses to spearhead non-violent direct action demonstrations against forced segregation. By 1966 Stokely Carmichael had come forward with the slogan Black Power and Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale formed the Black Panther Party. President Julius Nyerere and the people of

Tanzania followed Stokely's articulation of Black Power with the Arusha Declaration of 1967. The Arusha Declaration committed Tanzania to African socialism. I cite these few historical facts because these are examples of some of the things we have to trace to understand where we are. And C. L. R. James provides us with the perspective to do so.

Again, I want to make it clear to the reader that people of African ancestry are one people, moving in a revolutionary way to break the stranglehold of capitalism and racism. Although the Black movement has a certain spontaneity of character, it is ridiculous to believe that Black people are unorganized. In the United States, Africa, the Carribean and Europe people of African ancestry are resisting the forces of oppression and building a new society. The analytical and theoretical work of C. L. R. James is an important contribution to OUR struggle and the struggle of oppressed peoples of the world.

In conclusion, I hope "FACING REALITY" is as helpful to you as it has been to me in gaining a better understanding of the world in which we live. If I was not convinced that it would be, I would not have written this introduction.

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