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Looking Back: The Struggle To Preserve Our Freedoms

Ms. Joan E Williams

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It reads like a spy thriller but events written about in this intriguing book really happened in little Jamaica in the 70's where the author, now an outspoken talk show host, was forced to join other courageous, freedom loving activists in the struggle to preserve their freedoms. This was during the era when the cold war raged and Jamaica was caught up in the deadly struggle between the USSR and USA for world domination. During that period Jamaicans actually fought an "undeclared civil war" as political deception/intrigue, the massacre of innocents and even downright treason by a government minister became dangers that had to be overcome as the dominant international spy agencies, the Russian KGB, the Cuban DGI and the American Central American Agency (CIA) assisted their local surrogates to try to dominate Jamaica, then eventually the entire English Speaking Caribbean. In looking back now, Joan boldly declares that she feels nothing but gratitude to the CIA for their surreptitious assistance to those who were not prepared to capitulate and lose their freedoms to the power hungry Michael Manley regime. She writes “In light of the fact that those who tried to sell out our country to the eastern bloc were armed and financed by the Russian KGB and the Cuban DGI, I reiterate even now, that had the CIA or whichever other US agency not assisted the JLP in the undeclared civil war that raged between 1978 and 1980, the freedoms we accept as normal today would not have been preserved." Her determination to remain a free citizen however, even meant her having to make the ultimate sacrifice of having to send her children away, but this lady reluctantly made the painful decision for she wanted them to enjoy the freedoms she had been accustomed to. However, as she reviews the terrible economic conditions in Jamaica today compounded by the fact that the country is one of the top 5 "Murder Capitals of the World," Williams wonders out loud if it was all worth the effort? However, since she discovered close relatives in Cuba, she visited that country recently and concluded, “I have visited Cuba four times, including once in 2014 to get acquainted with and spend a few days with some cousins who were born there. Although the natural beauty of that country cannot be totally destroyed, life there is simply intolerable for the residents. And I am not talking about only the lack of freedoms but also how the system makes it impossible for people to advance economically no matter how hard they work. So poverty is pervasive while corruption and prostitution are rampant as people turn to any means necessary to survive. So if it’s the CIA that assisted us to win the battle that saved us from becoming a deprived, browbeaten and hopeless people like the Cubans, I feel nothing but gratitude towards them." In Looking Back, Williams does not only reminisce about the past however, but more importantly, wonders about the future under what she describes as the “Bastardisation of the Westminster System" as practiced in Jamaica today. For while Jamaica is theoretically a “democratic” nation, she reveals how some 25% of their electoral constituencies are tightly controlled by gunmen aligned to senior politicians in the dominant parties, the JLP and PNP. This is what she sadly insists accounts for the fact that Jamaica’s murder rate remains frighteningly high while the young people lose hope. This is a timely, thought provoking and insightful book which is a “must read” for persons interested in democracy, politics and international affairs. In Part 2 of this mini- autobiography, Williams shares the torment she went through when her only son was murdered and the surprise possibility she is forced to face since 2014, that he was actually murdered by someone in the Police Force, which is paid by taxpayers to "serve and protect." She also shares some quite hilarious views on family, religion, marijuana and other matters, ensuring that readers are never bored.

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