



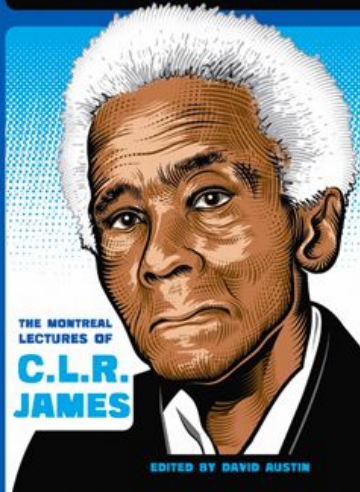
THE BLACK  
JACOBINS  
C. L. R. JAMES



TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE  
and the San Domingo Revolution

# The Revolutionary Black Marxism of C.L.R. James (1901-1989)

**YOU DON'T PLAY WITH  
REVOLUTION**



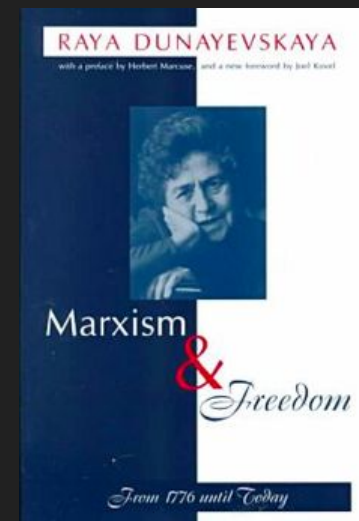
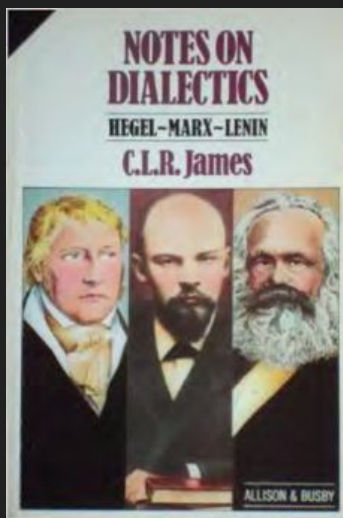
THE MONTREAL  
LECTURES OF  
**C.L.R.  
JAMES**

EDITED BY DAVID AUSTIN

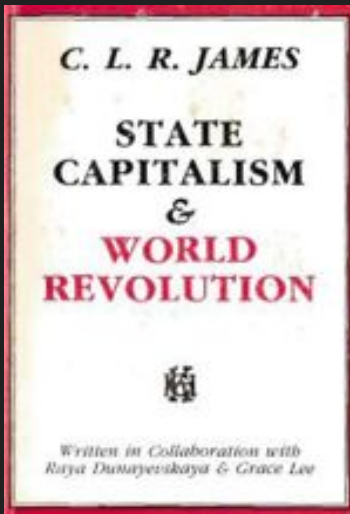
**CLR JAMES NOW!**



THE REGAL THEATRE AT THE CUNY GRADUATE CENTER  
FRIDAY NOVEMBER 4, 2016  
NEW YORK POSTER ARTISTS: THE CUNY GRADUATE CENTER  
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- 1940: James and others broke with the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Trotskyism
- James writing collaboratively with Raya Dunayevskaya in the “Johnson-Forest tendency”; later joined by Grace Lee (Boggs).
- *Notes on Dialectics* (1948); *State Capitalism and World Revolution* (1950)



# C.L.R. James: Detained and Deported

C.L.R. JAMES

MARINERS  
RENEGADES  
AND  
CASTAWAYS



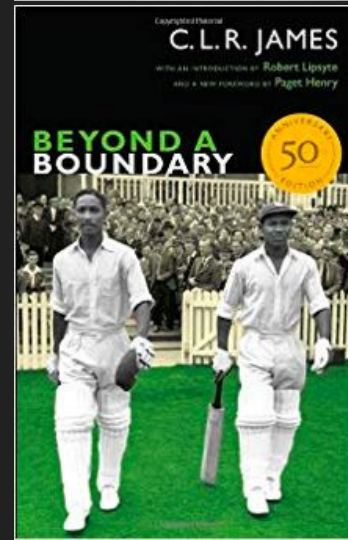
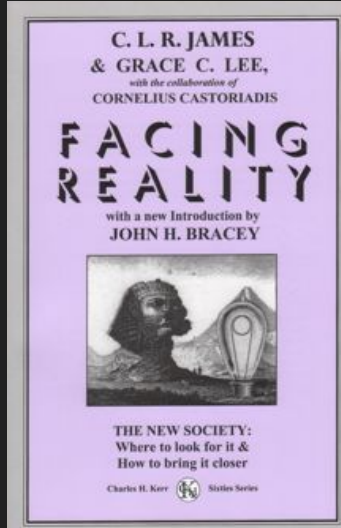
The Story of Herman Melville  
And The World We Live In

ALLISON & BUSBY

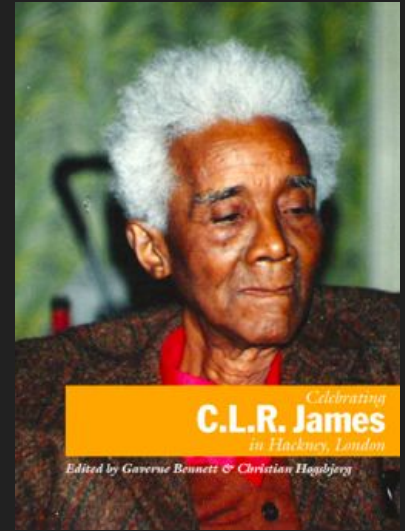
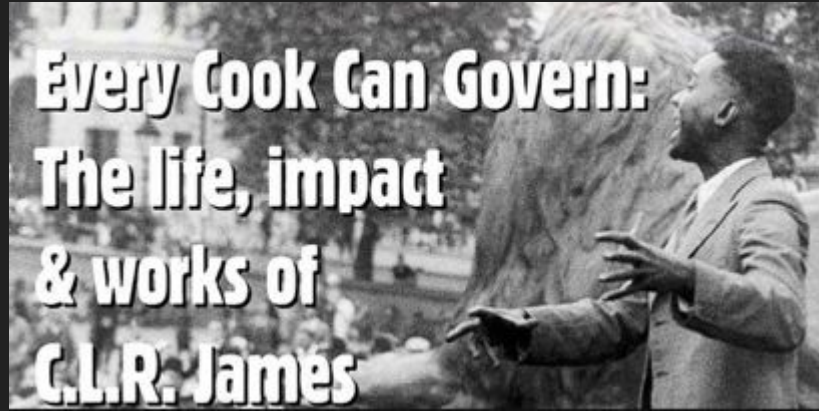
- 1952: James interned at Ellis Island as an “undesirable alien”; he would be deported to England in 1953
- While interned, James writes *Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways: The Story of Henry Melville and the World We Live In*
- A “parable of American anticommunism” in the 1950s, James mails a copy to every member of U.S. Senate.

# C.L.R. James in the 1950s and 60s

- 1953: James deported from U.S. to England, returns to Trinidad in 1958
- Continued to be active in anti-colonial independence movements in Africa and the West Indies
- Continued to write collaboratively with ex-Trotskyists in Detroit via “Facing Reality”
- 1963: publishes *Beyond a Boundary* about cricket and imperialism, considered among the best books written about any sport







1960s-1970s: James conducts lecture tours in many parts of the world, is allowed to re-enter the U.S. to lecture and hold short-term teaching appointments

May 31, 1989: James dies in London, where he spent most of his final years

“Every Cook Can Govern”: vision of democratic socialism, influence on “autonomist Marxism”

# C.L.R. James: Early Years

1901: born in Trinidad and Tobago, a British colony in the southern part of the Caribbean

1918: graduates from Queen's Royal College in Trinidad, and continues to teach history and English there through the 1920s

1932: moves to England, first to Lancashire, then to London in 1933, where he joins a Trotskyist group

1936: publishes *Minty Alley*, the first novel published in Britain by a black person from the West Indies

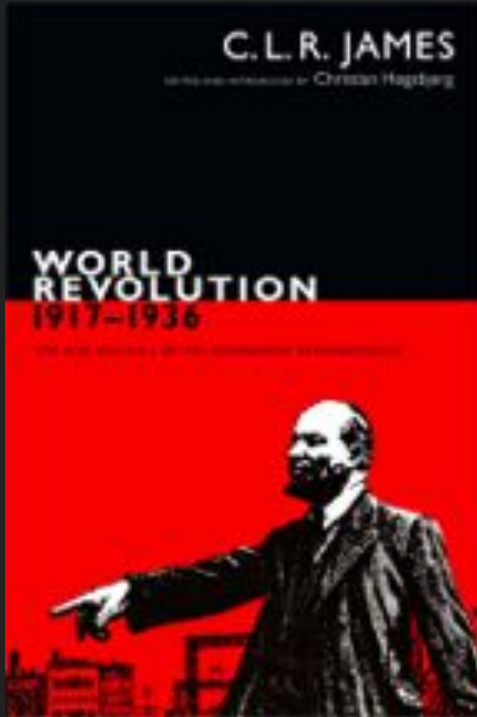


# The Anti-Fascist Struggle of the 1930s



C.L.R. James speaking out against Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia at an anti-fascist rally in London's Trafalgar Square, 1935.

# The Historical Materialism of C.L.R. James

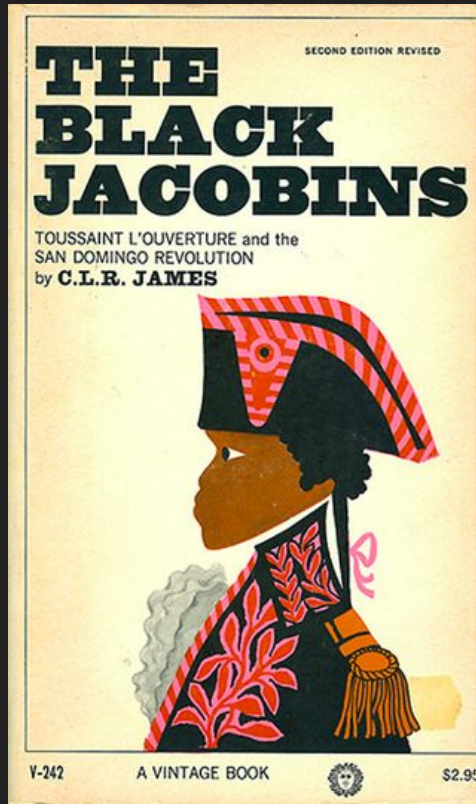


## *World Revolution, 1917-1936: The Rise and Fall of the Communist International (1937)*

- criticism of Stalin's "betrayal" of the Bolshevik Revolution
- The first comprehensive anti-Stalinist study of the Communist International



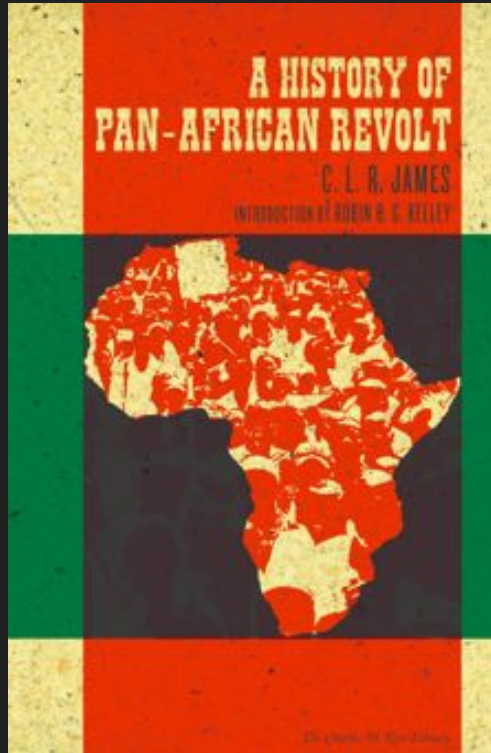
# The Historical Materialism of C.L.R. James



*The Black Jacobins: Touissant L' Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution (1938)*

- Historical study of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) led by enslaved people against their French colonizers
- James originally wrote a play about Touissant L' Ouverture staged in London in 1936, starring Paul Robeson

# The Historical Materialism of C.L.R. James



## *A History of Negro Revolt (1938)*

- Slave revolts in the Caribbean, North America, and Latin America
- Revolts against imperialism in Africa
- Black nationalism in the United States
- James: “The only place where Negroes did not revolt is in the pages of capitalist historians”

# C.L.R. James in the United States

- 1938: James meets with Trotsky in Mexico to discuss the “Negro question”; also meets with Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo
- After his trip to Mexico, James came to the United States, eventually settling in Detroit
- Writes about race and revolution in the U.S. for *New Internationalist*

