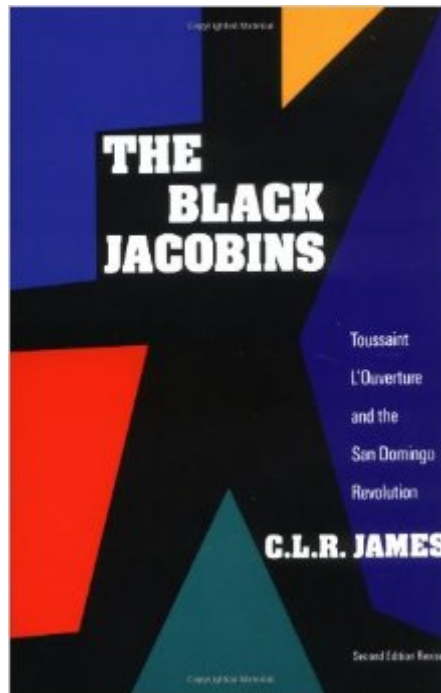


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The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture And The San Domingo Revolution



Synopsis

A classic and impassioned account of the first revolution in the Third World. This powerful, intensely dramatic book is the definitive account of the Haitian Revolution of 1794-1803, a revolution that began in the wake of the Bastille but became the model for the Third World liberation movements from Africa to Cuba. It is the story of the French colony of San Domingo, a place where the brutality of master toward slave was commonplace and ingeniously refined. And it is the story of a barely literate slave named Toussaint L'Ouverture, who led the black people of San Domingo in a successful struggle against successive invasions by overwhelming French, Spanish, and English forces and in the process helped form the first independent nation in the Caribbean.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

James delivers an exquisitely descriptive account of the only slave revolt that ultimately led to the founding of a black republic in the heart of the Caribbean. This well-written book reads like prose making it an easy read. James does an excellent job of letting the reader know who the players in San Domingo were before and during the revolution including - the big whites (planters); small whites (artisans and professionals); mulattoes and blacks. The psychological makeup and desires of each class is fully explained so that the reader instantly understands why alliances between the groups were formed and dissolved over time and their effect on colonial government. The character of Toussaint L'Ouverture, the black general who led the slave revolt and administered the colonial government, is discussed throughout the book and insights into his thinking and perspective are

gained through his written correspondence and his governmental orders. This allows the reader to gain an in-depth understanding of L'Ouverture as a 3 dimensional persona. The book contains an excellent bibliography for reference. Black Jacobins however is not without some minor flaws. First, although James gives a good account of the desires of various sectors of French society, he fails to give as rich an account of the motivations and perspectives of the French statesmen operating in France. Second, James discussion of Dessaline, L'Ouverture's general who persecuted the revolt to its end, is not dealt with in the same depth as the other major personas. Other writers have undoubtedly covered Dessaline but it would have been nice to gain James' perspective. Critics of James have gone as far as to suggest that he subverts racial dynamics for class dynamics.

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