



CLR JAMES — MAN OF THE PEOPLE

AN EXHIBITION OF HIS LIFE AND WORK

at the RIVERSIDE STUDIOS
CRISP ROAD, HAMMERSMITH, LONDON W6
FEBRUARY 18th to MARCH 15th 1986

Tuesday to Sunday 12am to 10pm

LECTURE

February 18th to 24th
at Riverside Studios

A series of lectures which will
illustrate James's impact across continents

February 18th 7p

CLR JAMES - MAN OF THE PEOPLE
by Tim Hect

February 19th 7p

CLR JAMES AS WRITER AND LITERARY CRITIC
by Wilson Harris

February 20th 7p

ORGANISING IN THE USA 1938-1945
by Grace Lee Boggs and Martin Glaberman

February 21st 6.30p

CLR JAMES - THE TROTSKYIST ACTIVIST IN BRITAIN 1932-1937
by John Arch

February 22nd 6.00p

CLR JAMES - THE CRICKET WRITER
by Tim Hect

CLR JAMES - THE PAN AFRICANIST

FILM

TALKING HISTORY

James and EP Thompson

BEYOND A BOUNDARY

James on Cricket

Six filmed lectures by James

SHAKESPEARE, AFRICA, AMERICAN SOCIETY

CRICKET, SOLIDARITY, THE CARIBBEAN

Further information from Creation For Liberation

The Basement, 165 Railton Road, London SE24 0LU. Telephone 01-737 2011

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Photograph: Julian Stapleton



CREATION FOR LIBERATION PRESENTS

CLR JAMES — MAN OF THE PEOPLE

AN EXHIBITION OF HIS LIFE AND WORK

CATALOGUE



Photograph: Julian Stapleton

This exhibition was commissioned by the GLC Race Equality Unit as part of the Black Experience Arts Programme

PAINTER VIOBE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE
GLC
1981-1986

Working for London

CREATION FOR LIBERATION PRESENTS

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at the RIVERSIDE STUDIOS,
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Tuesday to Sunday 12am to 10pm

The exhibition was designed and constructed by Walter Menteth and Lorenzo Apicella.

Lorenzo Apicella's experience includes a wide variety of both real and theoretical projects here and in the USA. He combines his practice with teaching at Canterbury School of Architecture.

Walter Menteth is presently engaged in the building of projects predominantly in South London and has undertaken a number of urban design and building studies concentrated in that area. He has worked with Creation for Liberation and the Race Today Collective.

Consultants

CLR James and Darcus Howe

Research and Collection

Anna Grimshaw

Coordinator

Leila Hassan

Exhibition Designers

Walter Menteth and Lorenzo Apicella

Exhibition material reproduction

RT Studios

Exhibition photographs reproduction

Julian Stapleton

T H A N K S

**To those individuals and institutions who
lent us material, some of which was very
precious to them.**

This exhibition was commissioned by the GLC Race Equality Unit as part of the Black Experience Arts Programme

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Edited by Darcus Howe

Sub-edited by Trevor Esward who also assisted with the
chronology

CLR JAMES: A CHRONOLOGY and guide to the exhibition

CLR James, writer and political activist, is uniquely a figure of the 20th century. His work in history, politics, literature sport and aesthetics spans six decades: it is both historical and contemporary. In his classic book *Beyond a Boundary*, James writes: "Times would pass, old empires would fall and new ones take their place, the relations of countries and the relations of classes had to change, before I discovered that it is not quality of goods and utility which matter, but movement; not where you are or what you have, but where you have come from, where you are going and the rate at which you are getting there."

This exhibition chronicles James's life and times through photographs, documents, correspondence and related material. It is organised into a number of periods which are tied to particular phases in James's intellectual and political development. These periods also reflect the different countries in which he was resident. They are: 1901 — 32, Growing up in Trinidad; 1932 — 38, Trotskyist and Pan-Africanist in pre-war Britain; 1938 — 53, Marxist theoretician in America; 1953 — 66, The return to the Caribbean; 1967 — to date, Teacher, writer and mentor to a new generation.

Much of the material is available for the first time, unearthed through extensive library research and from James's own personal archive.

Anna Grimshaw, January 1986

1901 — 1932 GROWING UP IN TRINIDAD



1901 — 1910

Cyril Lionel Robert James born on January 4 1901, the eldest of three children, in the small town of Tunapuna, Trinidad. His father is a schoolmaster, his mother, of some education, has a great love of literature which she passes on to her son. "She read perpetually and as she put the books down I picked them up."

The house overlooks the cricket pitch; it is located directly behind the wicket and James is able to watch from the window. He develops a keen interest in the game and on his fourth birthday is given a cricket bat and ball. But James does not just want

to play cricket, he wants to understand it too, and throughout his childhood he steadily builds up a library of articles about cricket which develops his understanding of the game.

1910 — 1918

With his father's coaching he wins an island exhibition (scholarship) to Queen's Royal College (QRC). At QRC education is modelled on the English public school with an emphasis on discipline, sport, the classics, European history and literature. Most of the masters, under the headship of William Burslem, are Oxbridge-trained. Burslem had been educated at Manchester Grammar School and Oxford. His retirement speech in 1920 betrays some of his main concerns. "I should like to say something to you, which I hope you will take in good part, before I leave you forever. First, I think you should not be satisfied with the conditions of the cricket ground — the out-field, I mean. There can never be good fielding on a bad ground, and there are boys in the present eleven who, with suitable opportunities, would become excellent fields. Secondly, I have always felt a little ashamed that the College played second class cricket."

James distinguishes himself in sport. In 1917 and 1918, as a member of the QRC First XI, he is amongst those with the highest bowling averages. He also excels at athletics, becoming school high jump champion in 1916 and 1917, setting a school record of 5 feet 5 inches. After he leaves school he increases this to 5 feet 9 inches, holding the high jump record from 1918 to 1922.

But QRC does not just provide opportunities for sport. James reads incessantly and voraciously. Lunch breaks are spent in the Masters' room reading among other things the whole 37 volumes of the work of the novelist, William Makepeace Thackeray, absorbing, if not fully understanding, Thackeray's sharp social satire.

However, James's academic career at QRC proves to be a disappointment to his parents, who had hoped it would lead him into one of the professions open to educated black

men. His school years had been ones of continual rebellion against school and family discipline. As James himself has written, "When I left school I was an educated person, but I had educated myself into a member of the British middle class with literary gifts and I had done it in defiance of all authority."

1918 — 1932

On leaving QRC James is playing cricket to a good standard. He is an opening batsman and a right-arm fast medium bowler. In 1918 he has to choose for which cricket club he will play. The different clubs reflect Trinidad's social divisions, divisions based upon wealth closely tied to colour. James, as an educated black man, has to choose between Maple, the club of the brown-skinned, and Shannon, the club of the black middle class. James chooses Maple on the advice of Clifford Roach's father. Roach is later to go on to a distinguished career in West Indian test cricket and for some years he and James open the batting for Maple. But later James realises that the decision to join Maple was a political mistake. As James has written in *Beyond a Boundary*: "My decision cost me a great deal. For one thing it prevented me from ever becoming really intimate with W. St. Hill, and kept Learie Constantine and myself apart for a long time. Faced with the fundamental divisions in the island, I had gone to the right and, by cutting myself off from the popular side, delayed my political development for years. But no one could see that then, least of all me."

The end of the First World War initiates a new political era in the West Indies. Many men had served in the British Army (James himself had tried to enlist in 1917 but was rejected as too young) and they return to the islands more sensitive to colonial restrictions. In Trinidad there is a growing working class movement, particularly in the oil-fields, and the return of soldiers from the war swells growing opposition to Crown Colony government.

But James is not politically active in the 1920's. His main concerns are cricket and writing. With Albert Gomes, Alfred Mendes and Ralph de Boissiere he launches two literary journals as outlets for their own writing: *Trinidad* (1929 — 30) and *The Beacon* (1931 — 33). In these James publishes short stories and essays on history and philosophy. Now his attention is caught by Captain Cipriani, one of the most outspoken critics of colonial government, and he starts to collect material for a biography of this early nationalist leader.

But history will soon lead James to England. Throughout the 1920's he earns a living as a teacher and among the schools at which he teaches is QRC. He continues to play cricket for Maple but becomes close to a number of Shannon players, particularly Learie Constantine. While on

tour in England with the West Indies team in 1928 Constantine is signed up as a cricket professional for the Lancashire League team, Nelson. After each English season is over, Constantine returns to Trinidad. On one of his visits home in 1931 he learns that James is preparing to travel to England. At once he invites James to come to Nelson with him to help him write his cricket memoirs. So, the following year, at the age of 31, James leaves the West Indies for England. This is the beginning of an intellectual and political journey which will identify him with some of the most important political movements of the 20th century.

1932 — 1938 TROTSKYIST AND PAN AFRICANIST: PRE WAR BRITAIN



1932

In March James arrives in England. He spends some weeks in London and his first impressions of literary and cultural life in London form the basis of a series of articles in Trinidad's *Port of Spain Gazette*.

In May he moves to Nelson and for the next 11 months lives at 3 Meredith Street with Constantine. He is granted permission to play for Nelson, but there is only one record of his having done so, in a friendly match against Radcliffe. Most of his time is spent indoors, reading and writing.

Nelson, at this time, is a town based on the textile industry and it enjoys a reputation for political militancy, often being referred to as "Little Moscow". When James arrives an industrial dispute is spreading rapidly through Lancashire. The textile employers terminate all agreements with the trade unions on pay and conditions. Thus the majority of Nelson's weavers are on strike through the summer of 1932. Against this background of working class struggle James completes his biography of Cipriani, and with financial help from Constantine, it is published in September as *The Life of Captain Cipriani*.

1932 is also a time of crisis for the British labour movement. The Independent Labour Party has a strong presence in Lancashire. It had been the basis of what became of the Labour Party, but in 1932 it disaffiliates, as its members become increasingly disillusioned with the Labour Party leadership. Henceforth the ILP functions as an independent body with its own MPs. Its leading figures include Fenner Brockway, James Maxton, John McGovern and George Buchanan. Lancashire branches of the ILP and a number of chapel organisations invite James to speak on conditions in the West Indies and his reputation as a fluent speaker spreads throughout Lancashire. His reputation is further enhanced when he secures a job on the prestigious northern liberal newspaper, the *Manchester Guardian*.

In September 1932 on the advice of Constantine he sends an article he has written about the bowler, Sidney Barnes, to Neville Cardus at the *Manchester Guardian*. Cardus calls James to see him and offers him a job as his assistant in reporting cricket for the paper. James spends the next three seasons writing about the game, mainly county matches, for the newspaper. This provides him with a regular income which is to finance both his writing and his political activities over the next few years.



Queens Royal College, Trinidad

1933 — 35

In April 1933 James moves to London. The West Indies Cricket team arrive in London for the season. James studies them closely as they practise in the nets and writes a number of articles for newspapers both in Trinidad and England which assess the strengths and weaknesses of the side.

In the spring of the same year the Hogarth Press publishes a shortened version of James's biography of Cipriani as *A Case For West Indian Self-Government*.

Simultaneously James is immersing himself in Marxist theory. He had begun with Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution*. He then undertakes a serious study of Marx, Engels and Lenin. The Trotskyist movement in Britain is steadily growing at this time and its leading members include Reg Groves, Henry Sara, Hugo Dewar, Margaret Johns, Harry Wicks and Denzil Harber. A number of them are members of the Marxist Group which operates within the ILP. James is introduced to the Marxist Group by Esther and Earle Birney and he joins the Finchley branch of the ILP at the same time as he joins the Group.

In 1935 Mussolini invades Abyssinia (Ethiopia). Abyssinia had remained an independent African country and the invasion brings the question of western imperialism to the forefront of the political stage. James writes and speaks extensively on the Abyssinia crisis, making contributions to the ILP newspaper, the *New Leader*.

A debate arises within the ILP as to whether the party should support League of Nations sanctions against Italy or whether it should call for workers' sanctions. James supports workers' sanctions, realising that League of Nations' sanctions would be a cover for an imperialist annexation of Abyssinia. He sets about organising an independent movement, the International African Friends of Ethiopia (IAFE), to oppose imperialist aggression. Its members include Amy Ashwood Garvey, Jomo Kenyatta, Peter Millard, Albert Marryshow and later, George Padmore.

1936

In March a production of James's play *Toussaint L'Ouverture* is put on at the Westminster Theatre with Paul Robeson in the title role. James has been researching the 1791 slave revolution in Haiti since he arrived in England although the subject has been in his mind before he left the



Paul Robeson

West Indies. James writes the play from his unfinished manuscript on the revolution, realising that the play contribute to the current debate on imperialism.

In April the ILP's formal debate on the question of invasion of Abyssinia takes place. James makes a powerful speech supporting workers' sanctions and this position adopted by the conference. However, ILP Members of Parliament refuse to accept the decision, believing workers' sanctions will encourage war with Italy.

At this critical moment for the ILP, the Marxist Group disintegrates. Some members join the Labour Party. Others follow James into a new independent Trotskyist group where he produces a newspaper called *Fight* (re-named *Workers' Fight*). James also contributes to a publication called *Controversy*, edited by CA Smith.



George Padmore

George Padmore, who had been an old friend of James in Trinidad, arrives in Britain. Padmore had been a member of the Communist Party and had been in charge of the Kremlin's Negro Bureau. But he broke with the CP when, as a result of the Franco-Soviet Pact, he was instructed to support the very imperialist powers, France and Britain, to which he was implacably opposed. Padmore reorganises the International African Friends of Ethiopia creating a new organisation, the International African Friends of Ethiopia Bureau (IASB).

1937 — 38

James edits the IASB paper, *International African Opinion*. He is also writing about cricket again, producing articles on the nature of the game for the *Glasgow Herald*.

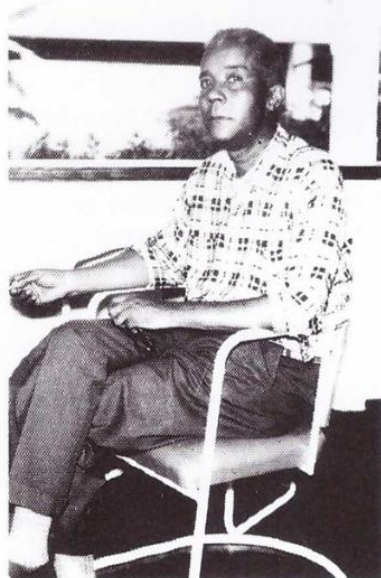
At this time the socialist movement is rife with debate and argument concerning the role and class nature of the Soviet Union, and the role of the Communist Party and Stalin. James sets out a Trotskyist position on this debate in a history of the Communist International entitled *Workers' Revolution*. It is published in 1937 and is recognised as being for the first time a revolutionary socialist position which is nevertheless opposed to the claims of the Communist Party.

As a result James is much in demand as a speaker during the Moscow Trials (1936 — 37) he speaks frequently at meetings organised by the Trotsky Defence Committee.

James is also writing throughout this period. His novel *Minty Alley* had been published in 1936. He translates

Souvarine's biography of Stalin from French. He completes his study of the Haitian revolution and it is published in 1938 as *Black Jacobins*. 1938 also sees the publication of *A History of Negro Revolt*, a masterly work of history aimed at revolutionising existing ideas on the nature of slavery and colonialism.

1938 — 1953 MARXIST THEORETICIAN IN AMERICA



ideas James had raised in *World Revolution*.

1938 — 1939

James Cannon, leader of the American Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) visits England. He meets James and invites him to America.

James arrives in the United States in November 1938 and immediately undertakes an extensive speaking tour for the SWP. He also writes for the SWP paper *Socialist Appeal* both on the black question and the growing threat of war in Europe. James's speaking tour ends in Coyoacan, Mexico, where he meets and debates with Trotsky, particularly on the question of an autonomous black movement and the

Other members of the group include Freddy and Lyman Paine, William Gorman, Martin Glaberman, Filomena Daddario and Nettie Kravitz.

1947

In August the Johnson-Forest tendency publish *The Balance Sheet*, an account of the development of the Trotskyist movement in the United States. Next comes *The Invading Socialist Society*. In the preface to its second edition James writes: "The analysis of Stalinism and the Stalinist parties dominated Marxist thought through that period. What we said was, that the Stalinist parties were not merely 'tools of the Kremlin', but were an organic product of the mode of capitalism at this stage."

Towards the end of 1947 the Johnson-Forest Tendency's position within the WP is becoming increasingly untenable as they depart further from current Trotskyist thinking. In October they apply for re-admission to the SWP and are accepted although the debate on the nature of the Soviet Union has still to be resolved.

1948

James publishes *Notes on Dialectics*. He concludes that Trotsky's analysis of history is fundamentally flawed. James is also moving towards a position which will lead him to question whether there is a need for a revolutionary vanguard party.



Raya Dunayevskaya, CLR James and Grace Lee

1940 — 1946

The debate within the SWP on the nature of the Soviet Union comes to a head. In April 1940 a special convention is held in New York. The question is, whether in the light of the recent Hitler-Stalin Pact, the SWP should continue to give unconditional support to the Soviet Union. The majority of the party, lead by Cannon and Trotsky, argue for continued support. They claim that the Soviet Union is still a workers' state, albeit a degenerate one, and issue a statement: "The majority upheld (the) fundamental program for unconditional defense of the Soviet Union as in no way incompatible with the irreconcilable struggle for the overthrow of the Stalin bureaucracy." (*Socialist Appeal*, April 13, 1940).

The minority, led by Max Shachtman, dissent from this position, claiming: "Revolutionary socialists are obligated to revise the former conception of 'unconditional defense of the Soviet Union', which under the circumstances of the present war, leads to a strategy which is in direct opposition to the interests of the world socialist revolution." (*Socialist Appeal*, April 13, 1940) James is part of the minority and he joins Shachtman in forming the Workers' Party (WP).

Following this split many members of the party move into factories to work alongside the American proletariat. James goes to Missouri where he involves himself in a sharecroppers' strike for better pay and conditions. His reports from Missouri appear in the WP newspaper *Labour Action* during 1942.

Within the WP a small group of people gather together with James to begin a fundamental re-examination of Marxist theory. They include Grace Lee, trained in philosophy and a German language expert, and Raya Dunayevskaya, a Russian linguist. They become known as the Johnson-Forest Tendency (Johnson and Forest being the pseudonyms of James and Dunayevskaya respectively).



Lyman and Freddy Paine

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1950 — 53

The Johnson-Forest Tendency has been preparing a statement on the Russian question and in 1950 it is published as *State Capitalism and World Revolution*. The document characterises the Soviet Union as a state capitalist formation rather than a workers' state and precipitates the final departure from the Trotskyist movement of James and his collaborators.

The Johnson-Forest Tendency is now an independent political movement with its own distinct philosophical and political position. It publishes its own newspaper *Correspondence* to which James contributes

In 1952 at the height of the McCarthy era James is arrested for alleged "anti-American activities" and is imprisoned on Ellis Island prior to his expulsion from the United States. During his stay on Ellis Island he produces *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways*, an analysis of American society and civilisation in the form of an extended criticism of Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick*.

1953 — 1966

THE RETURN TO THE CARIBBEAN



1953 — 64

James is formally expelled from the United States in 1953 and returns to Britain. But during his 15-year absence, Britain has changed. Not only has the experience of the Second World War transformed the country, but its position as head of an empire is becoming more and more precarious as its colonies move rapidly towards independence.

By the late 1940's the Gold Coast (later Ghana) was at the head of a movement which was to bring about the collapse of British rule in Africa. James had met Kwame Nkrumah during his years in the United States and

had suggested that he go to London to work with George Padmore who had been developing and consolidating a campaign for colonial independence throughout the war years. The fifth Pan-American Congress had been held in Manchester in 1945 and although James did not attend, he had kept in close touch with proceedings

Cricket still plays an important part in James's life. In 1954 he begins reporting on the game again for the *Manchester Guardian*. In the next decade he will produce many fine essays on cricket which will lead eventually to *Beyond a Boundary*.

James keeps in close touch with the members of the Johnson-Forest Tendency with whom he worked in the United States. In 1958 a collection of his articles on the Hungarian Uprising of 1956 is published in Detroit under the title *Facing Reality*. Other work by James is also published or re-issued in pamphlet form by *Correspondence* during the 1960's

In the late 1950's Eric Williams, a former pupil of James's at Queen's Royal College, is set to take Trinidad to independence as leader of the People's National Movement (PNM). He invites James to edit the *PNM Weekly*. James accepts and returns to the Caribbean in 1958 after an absence of 26 years. He re-organises the *PNM Weekly*, publishing it as *The Nation*.



Eric Williams

He becomes secretary of the West Indies Federal Labour Party, an organisation committed to a West Indian federation.

In 1960 James makes his first visit to Africa when he is invited by Nkrumah to take part in Ghana's independence celebrations. Following his return to Trinidad he is forced to confront the growing political differences between himself and Williams. The decisive break occurs in mid-1960 when James resigns as editor of the *The Nation* over Williams' support for the retention of the United States' Naval Base at Chaguaramas.

James remains in Trinidad and later that year a series of lectures he has given in Port of Spain is published under the title *Modern Politics*. The book is immediately suppressed by Williams.

In 1962 James produces an analysis of the PNM as a political party which is published as *Party Politics in the West Indies*. The volume is dedicated to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, saluting their struggle against imperialism as symbolised by the Chaguaramas affair.

In 1962 James returns to Britain and becomes increasingly concerned by the events in Ghana which will lead to Nkrumah's overthrow in 1966. James regretfully breaks his longstanding political association with Nkrumah but he still pays tribute to Nkrumah's achievements: "he initiated the destruction of a regime in decay — a tremendous achievement but. . . he failed to create the new society."

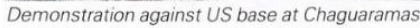


Kwame Nkrumah and Eric Williams

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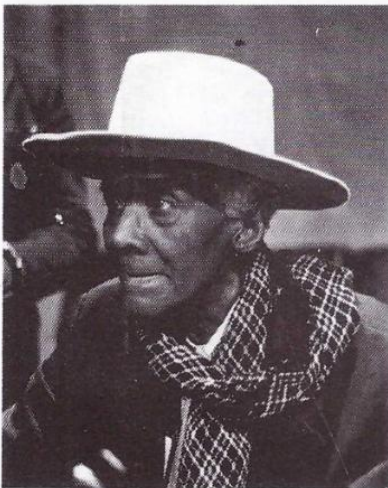
In 1965 two London newspapers *The Times* and the *Observer* commission James to report the MCC's winter tour of the West Indies. On his arrival in Trinidad in March 1965, Prime Minister Williams, who was facing serious labour unrest at the time, immediately places him under house arrest. A public outcry forces his release and he resumes coverage of the MCC tour.

In December 1966 James leaves the Caribbean and returns to Britain, anxious to complete his biographies of those two leading Pan-African movement figures, George Padmore and Kwame Nkrumah.

From 1967 onwards James travels and teaches extensively, addressing audiences in Africa, the Caribbean, Europe and America.

James then goes to teach in the United States. Between 1968 and 1978 he holds posts at different American universities (including North Western

This period leads to further publications. James's work on the African revolution appears in 1977 as *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*. It is followed by two volumes of selected writing, *The Future in the Present* (1977) and *Spheres of Existence* (1980). In 1980 his classic *Black Jacobins* is re-issued.



1 9 6 7 —

In 1986 at the age of 85 James is still writing and contributing to contemporary political debate, and February 1986 sees a new production in London of his play *Black Jacobins* as part of the current exhibition of his life and work at the Riverside Studios.

1986 **Cricket**, edited by Anna Grimshaw, London, Allison and Busby.

P R O G L E C T U R E S



February 18th 1986 7pm

CLR JAMES - MAN OF THE PEOPLE

to be delivered by Tim Hector, political writer and leader of the Opposition, Antigua.

Chair: Darcus Howe

February 19th 1986 7pm

CLR JAMES AS WRITER AND LITERARY CRITIC

to be delivered by Wilson Harris, Guyanese novelist.

Chair: Tariq Ali

February 20th 1986 7pm

ORGANISING IN THE USA 1938-1953

to be delivered by Grace Lee Boggs activist with James and expert in philosophy and Martin Glaberman historian and Labour organiser.

Chair: Darcus Howe

February 21st 1986 6.30pm

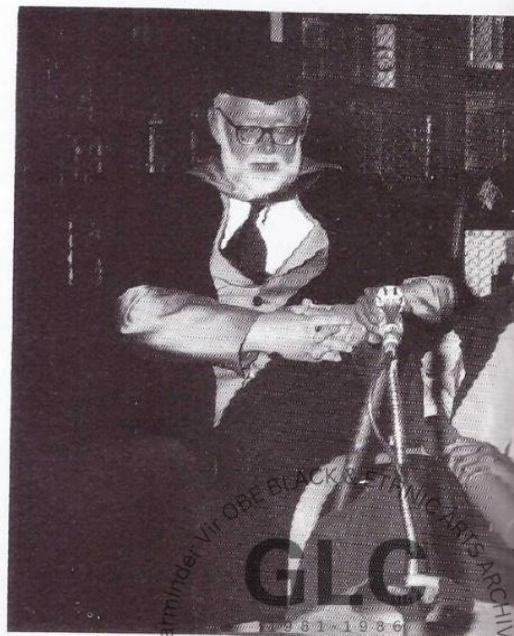
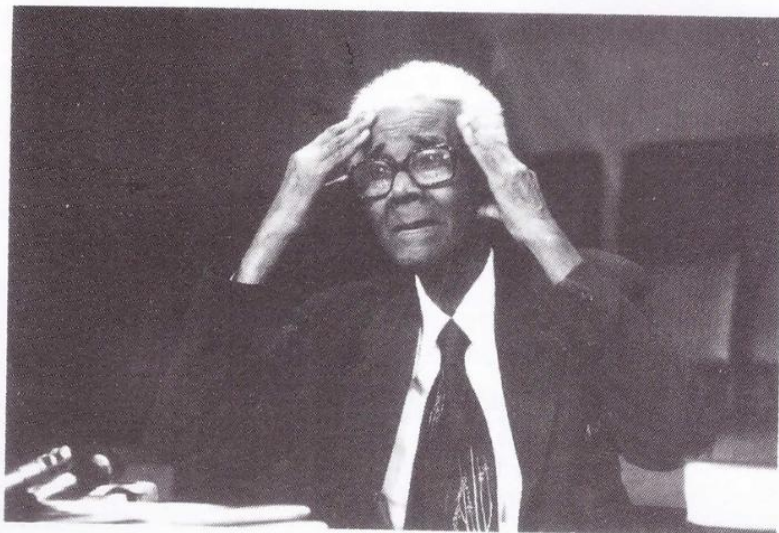
CLR JAMES - THE TROTSKYIST ACTIVIST IN BRITAIN 1932-1938

to be delivered by John Archer, activist in the Independent Labour Party (ILP) in 1934 and member of the Marxist group within it with James.

Chair: Darcus Howe

Other lectures/speakers to be confirmed.

CLR JAMES - THE PAN AFRICANIST



R A M M E

F I L M S

AMERICAN SOCIETY: *The United States and Russia, restrained from mutual destruction only by a material deterrent, are an obstacle to any kind of civilised life*. In discussing the major political parties, the Presidency, the role of blacks and students, he presents a revealing picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the most powerful country in the world.

CRICKET: James interweaves his own memories of important cricket matches, with a brief social history of the game and its importance in British and Caribbean life. His comments on the modern developments in the game are highlighted by an exchange with England ex-captain Mike Brearley. For James cricket is not simply sport, it is an art form.

CARIBBEAN: James discusses the contribution of Caribbean personalities to modern culture and society. He says of the Caribbean people that 'they are a twentieth century people living in a seventeenth century economy' and he offers some plain truths on the Caribbean future.

AFRICA: James, irrepressibly optimis-

tic octogenarian, draws on half a century of his involvement with African liberation. His comments on its most prominent figures — Kenyatta, Nkrumah, Nyerere, Mugabe — in relation to the mass of the population, are particularly pertinent to what is now happening in South Africa and Namibia.

SHAKESPEARE: James, with a challenging interpretation of King Lear, and quotes from the histories and tragedies, argues that Shakespeare was vehemently opposed to monarchy. He also explains why the Bard, 'the most political writer that Britain has ever seen in regard to the creative arts was no 'racist'.

SOLIDARITY IN POLAND: James points to the rise of Solidarity in Poland as the clearest and most recent expression of Marx's analysis of socialism and democracy. He argued as early as 1948 in *Notes on Dialectics* 'that the political parties of the future would be mass political parties involving many millions of people' and that they would choose their leaders from among themselves. His analysis is particularly important for the perspective he offers of the Russian role.

TALKING HISTORY

CLR JAMES and EP THOMPSON

James and Thompson consider the nuclear issue and the rise of mass movements in the context of 20th century wars and accelerating change. They offer perspectives on the Peace Movement, Solidarity in Poland, the revolution in Iran, and the proliferation of people's movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In conclusion they explain why their objective in writing history is 'to give back to the people the history that historians have confiscated from them'.

The discussion is documented with photographs, rare archive film and newspaper headlines. Spartacus R provides the stirring musical backup with his songs.

Produced by Penumbra Productions

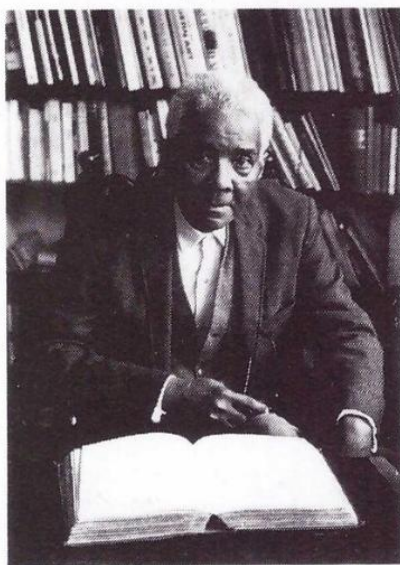


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"CLR JAMES . . ."

selected quotations



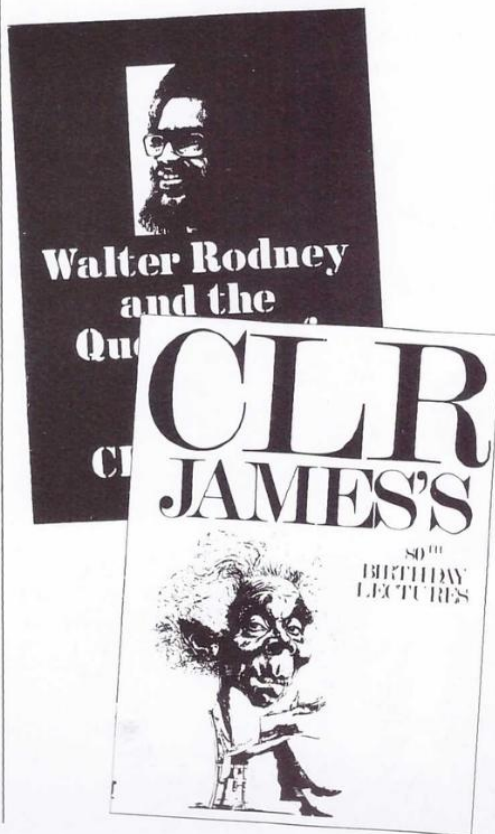
EP Thompson

"Tom Mann and CLR James have one thing in common. On his eightieth birthday, Tom said, 'I hope to grow *more* dangerous as I grow older.' CLR has already shown that he intends to do the same. What an extraordinary man he is! It is not a question of whether one agrees with everything he has said or done: but everything has had the mark of originality, of his own flexible, sensitive and deeply cultured intelligence. That intelligence has always been matched by a warm and outgoing personality. He has always conveyed, not a rigid doctrine, but a delight and curiosity in all manifestations of life. I'm afraid that American theorists will not understand this, but the clue to everything lies in his proper appreciation of the game of cricket." (From *CLR James: His Life and Work*)

Walter Rodney:

"For nearly forty years, CLR James has been interested in the development of political consciousness among African people and in their strivings towards grasping control over their own lives. As an analyst of processes in Africa, James qualifies to be called an 'academic' or 'intellectual'; and as a participant in the struggle for African advance, he becomes a 'revolutionary intellectual'. . . The value of James's contribution to the African Revolution and to an appreciation of it stems precisely from the blend of committed scholarship and activism. . . It is the quality and significance of his writing and political action that really matters. . . As late as 1957, Sir Alan Burns was expressing the orthodox view when

he wrote that Africans welcomed the coming of the British. . . Burns was a colonial governor and wrote on behalf of the British ruling class. The mere mention of a different position in 1938 was an act of defiance and singled out CLR James as a front runner in the field of African studies devoted to African liberation. . . CLR James was a participant in some of the earliest pressure groups in the metropolises urging African freedom from colonial rule in the 1930s. That is why he was capable of writing *A History of Negro Revolt*." (From *CLR James: His life and Work*)



Robert Hill

"The importance to James's work of this process of developing personal/political/organizational connections through individuals who embodied the really revolutionary political stance of the age was nowhere more fundamental than in the preparation of *The Black Jacobins*, the *magnum opus* on which more than anything else James's reputation as a scholar and political theoretician rests. . . *The Black Jacobins* is truly a classical achievement in the balance it maintains between the careful interpretation of politico-historical events and the unique resources of personality to have manifested themselves in Toussaint, Christophe, Dessalines, Rigaud, Roume, and the remarkable General Moise. . . *The Black Jacobins* can finally be said to have revolutionized historical writing in ways dealing both with conception and method." (From *CLR James: His Life and Work*)

Sylvia Wynter:

"The pattern of *Beyond a Boundary*, working out the logic of its own motifs, uncovers 'large areas of human existence', as James points out, that his 'history, economics, politics' had left unaccounted for. Here it reveals that a separation, a gap appeared between the mode of popular desire, i.e., what the masses wanted to 'live' by, and what the 'ruling elements' wanted them to live by. In other words, what is at issue here is a struggle between two modes of desire that of the bourgeoisie and that of the popular forces: the bourgeoisie for whom sports were 'mere entertainment', for whom

play served as 'recuperation' from the *real work of labour*, rather than as an *alternative life-activity in its own right*, for whom the aesthetic was a luxury or even, in the case of bourgeois aesthetes, for whom the 'fine arts' - split off from the popular arts - were the high culture used to cultivate individual sensibilities to mark off the differential value of bourgeois concerns, to be guarded from the *hoi polloi* . . .

And in his brilliant analysis of cricket a 'a dramatic spectacle . . . [which] belongs with the theatre, ballet, opera and the dance', James not only takes issue with the aestheticians, but he liberates the critical imagination from the closeted confines of the *aesthetic* as a separate realm from the realm of the real, and from the value categories of fine arts and non-fine arts." (From *CLR James: His Life and Work*)



Darcus Howe:

"I do not think that there could be a revolutionary movement in a Caribbean country without reference to Nello's work. You either have to reject it, accept it or modify it. But the one thing you cannot do is to ignore it . . .

The personal impact that Nello has made on me is the fact that he spent virtually all of his life in the political wilderness. If you are a Caribbean person, your success is judged by whether you are a prime minister or minister in government. And Nello would have been able to secure that with the greatest amount of ease. And to resist that temptation as he has resisted it means that his eyes are permanently fixed on the working class and his confidence in their revolutionary capacity is absolute. That is what I admire most about him . . . There are a lot of us who have followed his work and have been influenced by him in the last 25 years." (From *CLR James: His Life and Work*)



James and Grace Lee Boggs:

"From the moment that CLR James came to the United States via Europe in 1938, he was recognized by the leaders of the Trotskyite organization as a revolutionary intellectual who could inject new life into a radical movement bogged down in sectarian disputes around 'the Russian Question'. Born in Trinidad, that peculiar crossroads of Europe, the Western Hemisphere and Africa, he brought with him not only a tremendous knowledge of European civilization going back thousands of years but a passionate belief in the contribution that Black people *must* make to their own liberation and *can* make to the advancement of all humanity.

. . . Those of us who were so close to him in the '40s and early '50s will always remember him for introducing us to revolutionary ideas and politics on such a high level. We will honour him also for challenging us to grapple with the contradictions of our country and with the perspectives of an American revolution . . . We will treasure the lessons we learned from him and particularly the drive that he instilled in us to be always asking ourselves. 'What else do we have to do to go beyond?'" (From *CLR James: His Life and Work*)

Peppino Ortoleva:

"One of the best ways of distinguishing a truly profound thinker from others perhaps suggestive and intelligent but superficial is the fact that the former's writing are able to be read in different ways in different times, to give, to each question, a new answer. In other words, the profound thinker is worth rereading. CLR James is one of these thinkers."

Wilson Harris:

"CLR James is, I believe, a great West Indian of complex spirit. . . . a unique Marxist thinker whose dialectic is attuned, it seems to me, to necessity for individual originality as much as it is involved in analyses of historical process in the life of the people or the body politic.

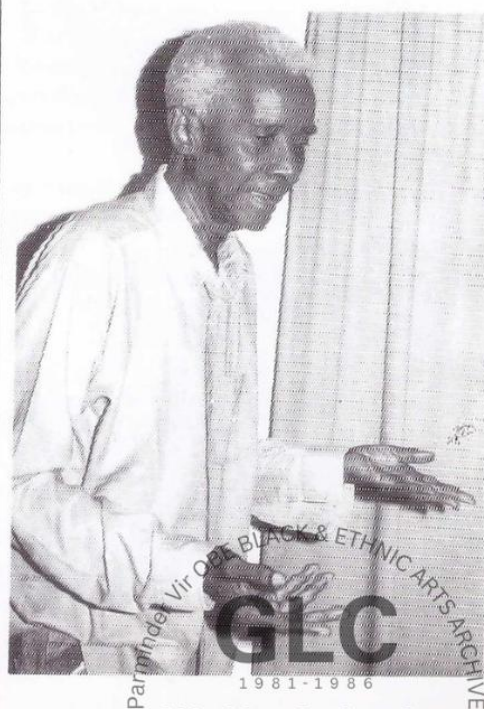
. . . I wonder in what degree the body of his work may lie within two extremities, namely, *The Black Jacobins*, on one hand, within which the freed slave of genius Toussaint confronts the fascinations of Napoleonic tyranny, and *Beyond a Boundary*, or the other, in which body-epic becomes a variable of the mind of theatre." (From *CLR James: His Life and Work*)

Angus Calder:

"He has been present at every stage of my adult intellectual development. . .

. . . One cannot understand the mature vision of this great master of twentieth-century thought unless one is prepared to take cricket seriously. James's writing in other genres and on other subjects make it plain enough to any literate person that he combines an acute aesthetic sense, a devotion to literature, fine arts and music, with an intransigent commitment to Marxist politics. . . .

No one else, alive or dead, has begun a new literature with a major novel, written a masterpiece about sport, pioneered a whole new school of historiography and assisted in important transitions in Marxist theory. For any one of these feats James would be revered by many admirers. But the



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contribution of James is bigger than all of them put together. Who else could have spied affinities between Shakespeare and the Mighty Sparrow, or spotted at once the consonance between Wilson Harris's fiction and the philosophy of Heidegger? His own vision of life would rebuke us if we talked as if he had made his achievement all by himself, coming from nowhere. . . . CLR James's brilliance is the product of a remarkable culture, which also begat Padmore, Constantine and Naipaul. Its flowering offers hope for the whole Caribbean." (*Third World Book Review*)

Farrukh Dhondy:

"CLR James is one of those rare individuals whom history proves right. It is more than a misjudgement to think of him as a black professor, as a black historian, or indeed as the premier intellectual product of the West Indies. To think of him as such is to circumscribe and to limit the achievements of one of the marxist thinkers of our time who has kept the thread of the marxist science weaving through the international concerns of a lifetime." (*Race Today*)

Tim Hector:

"The genius of CLR James lies not so much in his definitely remarkable intellect, but the application of that intellect to the creative possibilities inherent in the working class in developed and under-developed countries. CLR James then is one of the Caribbean's outstanding contributions to the realisation of a truly human culture." (*Vanguard*, reprinted from *Outlet*)

Martin Glaberman:

"What *Notes on Dialectics* attempts is what no marxist has attempted in this century. It presents dialectics, not as an academic exercise and not as a ritual justifying previously taken positions, but as a working tool that is both useful in understanding the world in which we live and necessary for marxists to function on in that world.

. . . It is difficult to think of a figure in the post-Second World War world who

has accomplished as much in the development of the theory and practice of marxism." (*Race and Class*)

Thomas Hodgkin:

"He combines Caribbean nationalism, Black radicalism, a once Trotskyist blend of revolutionary anti-imperialism, and the European classic tradition in an individual and potent mix." (*The Times Educational Supplement*)

LC Francis:

"CLR James is one of the most outstanding scholars the West Indies has so far produced." (*Jamaican Weekly Gleaner*)

Onye Wambu:

"CLR James is one of those rare phenomena, a man equally at home with literature, politics, sport, philosophy and of course history. He is one of those free-thinking figures who you feel would have been far more comfortable in an earlier age: perhaps the nineteenth century when it was still relatively possible for other thinkers such as Karl Marx to attain the sort of mastery over a wide range of disciplines that they achieved." (*Chic*)

Philip Howard:

"The Black Plato of our generation. . . .

It is not necessary to be persuaded by all James's prophecies and Marxist jargon to recognize a sage and a good man." (*The Times*)

Tariq Ali:

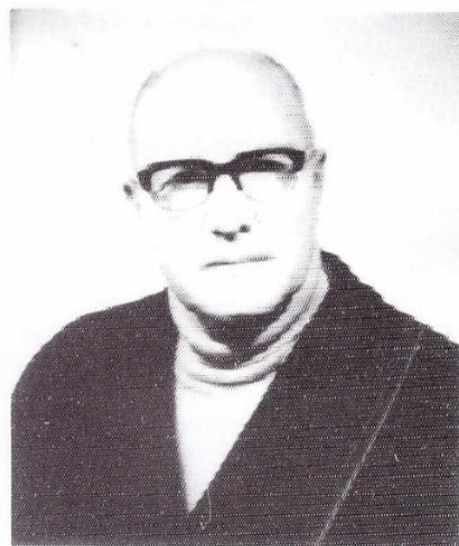
"*The Black Jacobins*. . . . is a book like none other." (*New Statesman*)

Clancy Sigal:

"[*Mariners, Renegades and Castaways*] is one of the most extraordinary and provocative essays I have read. It is a Marxist interpretation of Melville's *Moby Dick* that almost transcends Marxist dogma and becomes as exciting as the original novel. It is a sometimes wrong-headed, vital study, foaming with shrewdness and anger. . . . James brings the novel back to life with tremendous panache." (*Guardian*)

Paul Gilroy:

"Beneath and between the substantive content and the dazzling breadth of James's interests and competences there is a second text which cannot be suppressed. It presents the history of the revolutionary forces which CLR, rather than merely aligning himself to, has immersed himself in. . . . As a thinker, James is able to expand the notion of politics to take in a panorama of experience and creativity stretching from Port of Spain to Poland. As a writer he has poise, pace and no little humour." (*Race Today*)



JOHN ARCHER

Born in 1909 in Yorkshire. Joined the Independent Labour Party in 1934 and was a member of the Marxist Group within it in 1936 with James. Now a retired teacher he remains an activist. Has done extensive research on the Trotskyist Movement in Britain. His Doctoral thesis on Trotskyism in Britain in the 1930's was submitted in 1978.



GRACE LEE BOGGS

Born in New England, USA of Chinese emigrant parents. Philosopher and key figure with James in the Johnson-Forest Tendency. Theoretician and activist. Co-author with husband James Boggs of *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century* and *Conversations in Motion* with Freddy and Lyman Paine.

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CONTRIBUTORS AND ORGANISERS



MARTIN GLABERMAN
Detroit Auto Worker. Labour organiser and activist. Long time collaborator with CLR James. Chairman of Facing Reality, publisher of *Correspondence* and many of James' works. Now editor of *Speak Out* and a lecturer.



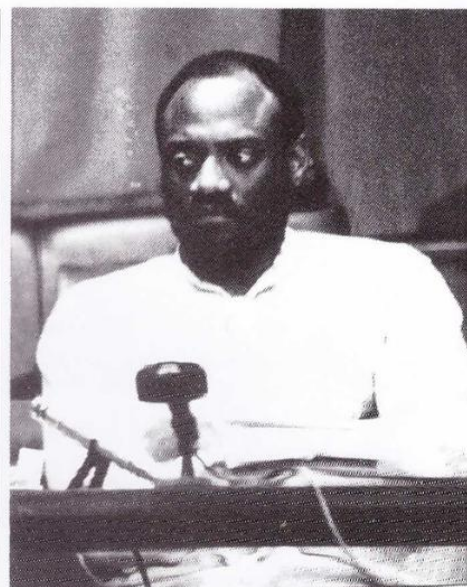
ANNA GRIMSHAW
Born in Lancashire and read anthropology at Cambridge. She then spent two years in the Himalayas studying the role of Buddhist nuns Tibetan religion. Since returning to England in 1980 she has been employed as a researcher by Granada Television and is currently assistant to CLR James.



WILSON HARRIS
Guyanese novelist, poet and critic. His novels include *Palace of the Peacock*, *The Far Journey of Oudin*, *The Whole Armour* and *The Secret Ladder*. Poetry - *Eternity to Season*, and a collection of critical essays *Tradition, the Writer and Society*. James has described Harris as one who 'obviously thinks that creative originality in literature is a sign, a portent, evidence of creative originality in politics, and in social life'. Wilson Harris has lived in England since 1959. He continues to write, and lectures in universities around the world.



LEILA HASSAN
Born in 1948 in Britain, lived in Zanzibar. Activist in the black movement in Britain in the '70's. Member of Race Today Collective since 1974 and became editor of *Race Today* in 1985.



DARCUS HOWE
Born in Trinidad in 1943. Radical political activist in Trinidad and Britain. Founder member of the Race Today Collective and editor of its journal *Race Today* until 1985. Journalist and Writer. He recently formed Bandung Productions which makes films and programmes for Channel Four Television.



TIM HECTOR
Leading radical figure in the Caribbean. Writer. Teacher. Leader of the Opposition Party in Antigua and Editor of its weekly paper *Outlet*. Former member of the West Indian Cricket Board. Constant target of harassment by ruling Party in Antigua, currently faces charges for his stand on Press Freedom.

**RIVERSIDE STUDIOS PRESENTS
A TALAWA PRODUCTION
C L R James's
'The Black Jacobins'
February 21 — March 15 1986**

In what will be a unique experience for British theatre, Talawa Theatre Company will be presenting **C L R James's** famous historical play **The Black Jacobins**, from February 21st to March 15th at Riverside Studios.

The Black Jacobins portrays the only truly successful slave revolt in history: the uprising inspired by Toussaint L'Ouverture and the savage revolution in Haiti which was triggered off by the French Revolution.

Norman Beaton as Toussaint L'Ouverture, **Trevor Laird**, **Mona Hammond** and **Brian Bovell** head the cast of over twenty. The play has been performed only once in Britain, 50 years ago, with Paul Robeson in the lead. It has, however, been successfully produced in Africa, the West Indies and the United States. For **Yvonne Brewster**, the play's director, the project is of vital significance:

"When a play of such historical authority, proven distinction, a play of elegance and vision exists, then it is right that not only the black community but the general theatre going public should have an opportunity of seeing it produced."

The Black Jacobins is to be presented as part of the Focus on **C L R James** Festival 'Man of the People', a major exhibition to be held concurrently at Riverside, on the life and works of this writer, philosopher, Marxist historian, Pan-Africanist and cricket writer, now in his 85th year.

Talawa Theatre Company was set up by **Yvonne Brewster** with the aim of using ancient mythologies and the political experience of our forebears to inform, enrich and further enlighten modern black British theatre. So with its first major production Talawa is now honoured to fulfill that commitment by presenting **C L R James's** classic work: **The Black Jacobins**.

The Black Experience is a London wide programme reflecting historical and contemporary black experience through a variety of art forms. It runs from February to end of March 1986 in mainstream community arts and black arts venues.

Talawa's production has been financially assisted by the GLC Race equality Unit.

Preview
21 — 25 February 8.00pm
no performance on Monday

Press
26 February 7.00pm

The play will run from
27 February
to 15 March 8.00pm
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Matinee performances
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A TALAWA THEATRE PRODUCTION

THE BLACK JACOBINS

Toussaint L'Ouverture & The San Domingo Revolution

a play By CLR James



Starring **Norman Beaton • Trevor Laird • Mona Hammond • Brian Bovell**

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CREATION FOR LIBERATION MANIFESTO

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We are aware that there has been a significant degeneration in cultural and artistic expression within British society. Creation For Liberation aims to establish a sound intellectual and cultural bridgehead to assist others to transcend and transform the bankruptcy of cultural and intellectual life here in Britain.

CREATION FOR LIBERATION aims to bring this about by the following means:

1. To organise artistic/cultural events that will fuel and fortify the radical approach being expressed by the artist.
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3. To record, publish and promote the creative talents of the artists.

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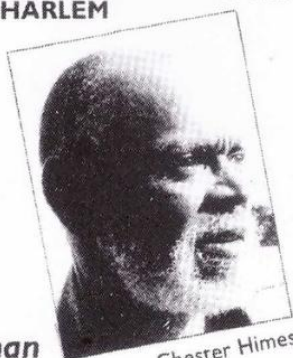
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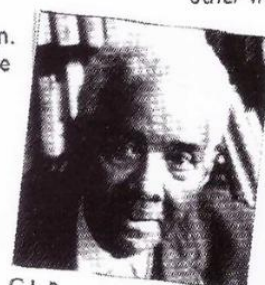


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