



Toussaint Louverture: The Story of the Only Successful Slave Revolt in History; A Play in Three Acts (The C. L. R. James Archives)

C. L. R. James

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In 1934 C. L. R. James, the widely known Trinidadian intellectual, writer, and political activist, wrote the play *Toussaint Louverture: The Story of the Only Successful Slave Revolt in History*, which was presumed lost until the rediscovery of a draft copy in 2005. The play's production, performed in 1936 at London's Westminster Theatre with a cast including the American star Paul Robeson, marked the first time black professional actors starred on the British stage in a play written by a black playwright. This edition includes the program, photographs, and reviews from that production, a contextual introduction and editorial notes on the play by Christian Høgsbjerg, and selected essays and letters by James and others. In *Toussaint Louverture*, James demonstrates the full tragedy and heroism of Louverture by showing how the Haitian revolutionary leader is caught in a dramatic conflict arising from the contradiction between the barbaric realities of New World slavery and the modern ideals of the Enlightenment. In his portrayal of the Haitian Revolution, James aspired to vindicate black accomplishments in the face of racism and to support the struggle for self-government in his native Caribbean. *Toussaint Louverture* is an indispensable companion work to *The Black Jacobins* (1938), James's classic account of Haiti's revolutionary struggle for liberation.

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