C. L. R. JAMES

EDITED AND INTRODUCED BY Christian Høgsbjerg

WORLD REVOLUTION 1917–1936

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

WORLD REVOLUTION

1917–1936

C. L. R. James in Trafalgar Square (1935).
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THE C. L. R. JAMES ARCHIVES recovers and reproduces for a contemporary audience the works of one of the great intellectual figures of the twentieth century, in all their rich texture, and will present, over and above historical works, new and current scholarly explorations of James's oeuvre.

Robert A. Hill, Series Editor

WORLD REVOLUTION
1917–1936

The Rise and Fall of the Communist International

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Cover art: Detail from a poster for a rally at which C. L. R. James spoke in London in 1967, organized by the International Socialists, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Artist unknown. Courtesy of Sean Wallis.

CONTENTS

Reviews of World Revolution

SELECTED REVIEWS OF THE ORIGINAL BRITISH EDITION

ABBREVIATIONS

ARAC	L'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants (the Republican Association of War Veterans) (France)
CGTU	Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire (United General Confederation of Labour) (France)
CI	Communist International
CP	Communist Party
CPG	Communist Party of Germany
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Communist International
GPU	Gosudarstvennoye Politicheskoye Upravlenie/State Political Directorate (Soviet Union)
NEP	New Economic Policy
POUM	Partido Obrero de Unification Marxista (Workers' Party of Marxist Unification) (Spain)
PSOP	Parti Socialiste Ouvrier et Paysan (Workers' and Peasants' Socialist Party) (France)
TU	trade union
UNC	Union Nationale des Combattants (National Union of War Veterans) (France)
YCL	Young Communist League

EDITOR'S NOTE

For this edition of *World Revolution*, being published on the centenary of the Russian Revolution, one aim has been to preserve as much as possible of the essential, original text as it appeared in the 1937 edition, while making the volume accessible to a new generation of readers. For the sake of readability, we have therefore corrected the dozen or so typographical mistakes that crept into the original edition, and also where possible brought the spelling of individuals and place-names in line with modern scholarship and usage, so, for example, "Bucharin" is now "Bukharin." Moreover, this edition (unlike the 1937 edition) uses numbered endnotes instead of footnotes and includes an index, which will hopefully aid readers. I have also added a list of abbreviations to define the acronyms that James uses. One necessary consequence of the changes made for this new edition, though, which should be noted at the outset, is that the pagination is different in this new edition from previous editions. This, regrettably, has meant that references to page numbers of the original edition in the text of *World Revolution* itself, and elsewhere—for example, in my introduction and in the contemporary reviews that are reproduced in this edition—no longer fit for this edition. To try to offset this and to avoid any potential confusion arising, I have placed the relevant new page numbers from this edition in brackets after references to earlier editions of the work throughout the text where necessary.

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There are many people who helped in various ways when it came to researching James's *World Revolution* by providing me with some of the miscellaneous material that I include in this volume. My research here initially began in earnest while working on my doctoral thesis on James's life and work in the 1930s in the Department of History at the University of York. Many of

the people whom I thank in my acknowledgments in *C. L. R. James in Imperial Britain* (Duke University Press, 2014), the monograph that resulted from my thesis, deserve thanks again here. However, for the sake of space, I shall just take the opportunity to specifically thank Talat Ahmed, Logie Barrow, Ian Birchall, Paul Blackledge, Paul Buhle, Ted Crawford, Daniel Evans, David Featherstone, Paul Flewers, David Goodway, Christopher Hall, Ron Heisler, David Howell, Staffan Lindhé, Kevin Morgan, Fergus Nicol, the late Sidney Robinson, Sean Wallis, Sam Weinstein, Kent Worcester, and the late James D. Young. Reg Wicks kindly gave me permission to reproduce the two reviews of *World Revolution* by his father, Harry, while I am also grateful to Henry and Maureen Rothstein for their kind consent for me to republish the review by Andrew Rothstein.

An earlier, shorter version of my introduction first appeared as "'A Kind of Bible of Trotskyism': Reflections on C. L. R. James's *World Revolution*" in *The C. L. R. James Journal* 19, nos. 1–2 (2013), and I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the editors of *The C. L. R. James Journal* for their assistance and support. My thanks also to the many librarians and archivists who assisted my research at various points, particularly at the British Library, the Glasgow Caledonian Archive of the Trotskyist Tradition, Hull History Centre, the Institute of Commonwealth Studies (London), the Marx Memorial Library (London), the National Archives (Kew), the University of Leeds, the University of Stirling, the Alma Jordan Library (University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad), and the Working Class Movement Library in Salford. Special thanks are owed to Robert A. Hill, the literary executor of the C. L. R. James Estate, not only for his support for this project but also for his characteristically astute comments on my introduction, which improved it immeasurably, and expert editorial guidance throughout. I also owe a debt of thanks to the team at Duke University Press for their support for this project, and I would like to especially acknowledge the anonymous readers, as well as Gisela Fosado, Lydia Rose Rappoport-Hankins, Danielle Houtz, Christine Dahlin, Liz Smith, and Amy Ruth Buchanan. As is customary, I am responsible for the argument within my introduction and for any errors in the text.

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As a coda, late in my research of *World Revolution* I finally acquired a rare copy of the original Secker and Warburg 1937 edition, which included personal handwritten inscriptions inside the front cover ("tom taylor. May 1937. Glasgow") and the back cover ("From isobell on 27th april 1937 on twenty-

fifth birthday"). Thomas Johnston Taylor (1912–2001), who received *World Revolution* the month it was published as a birthday gift from Isobel Wands (whom he would marry six years later in 1943), had been born and educated in Glasgow. At age three, Taylor had lost his father, who was killed fighting in France in the First World War, which perhaps led to him becoming a socialist and pacifist. In 1931 Taylor won a scholarship to study in Germany, where he joined the German Young Socialists and witnessed the violent rise of Hitler's Nazis. Returning to Glasgow, Taylor worked closely with James Maxton of the Independent Labour Party (ILP). At age twenty-two in 1934, Taylor was elected for the ILP to Glasgow City Council as the city's youngest councillor. The handwritten markings throughout Taylor's edition of *World Revolution* are in themselves fascinating, as they not only show how carefully the work was read but perhaps also give a firsthand glimpse into the kind of revelatory impression that James's work must have made on a young socialist reading it in 1937. For example, Taylor has a little bookmark highlighting the importance of the "United Front" in the chapter relating to Hitler's rise to power, and there are handwritten notes in the text, regarding, for example, James's details of the then little-known "ghastly famine" during Stalin's collectivization in the early 1930s (page 304 of this edition) and James's argument that "there were in 1935 well over five million men in concentration camps in the Soviet Union" (395–96). Taylor's knowledge of the German language meant that in 1938 he was persuaded by the ILP to visit Vienna, Austria, and carry out heroic but dangerous work undercover, successfully helping antifascists escape as political refugees. A Quaker and socialist who registered as a conscientious objector during the Second World War, Taylor subsequently joined the Labour Party and went on to have an illustrious conventional career, being appointed to the House of Lords by the Labour Party as Lord Taylor of Gryfe in 1968.[1] But perhaps most remarkably, Taylor's copy of *World Revolution* included a loose newspaper clipping headed only "Stalin's Birthday Honours," dating presumably from around Stalin's sixtieth birthday on December 22, 1939, and it seems to me fitting to reproduce this newspaper clipping here. There is no need for further comment—in a sense, the clipping speaks for itself—but that Taylor chose to preserve it inside *World Revolution* stands in its way as a fine testament to the essential truth of the argument underpinning James's work.

STALIN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, to mark Stalin's birthday, conferred on him the title of "Hero of Socialist Labour."

Stalin is also to receive the "Order of Lenin" for "exceptional services in organising the Bolshevik party, in creating the Soviet State, in building up Socialist society in the USSR, and in consolidating the friendship of the peoples of the Soviet Union."

Herr Hitler sent a telegram to Stalin in which he said: "I combine my best wishes for your personal prosperity and for a happy future for the peoples of the USSR and their friends."

Praise for Stalin's "foresight" in pursuing a new foreign policy of friendship for Germany, "thus defeating the encirclement plans of the Western Powers," was the theme of German press comments on the birthday.

Note

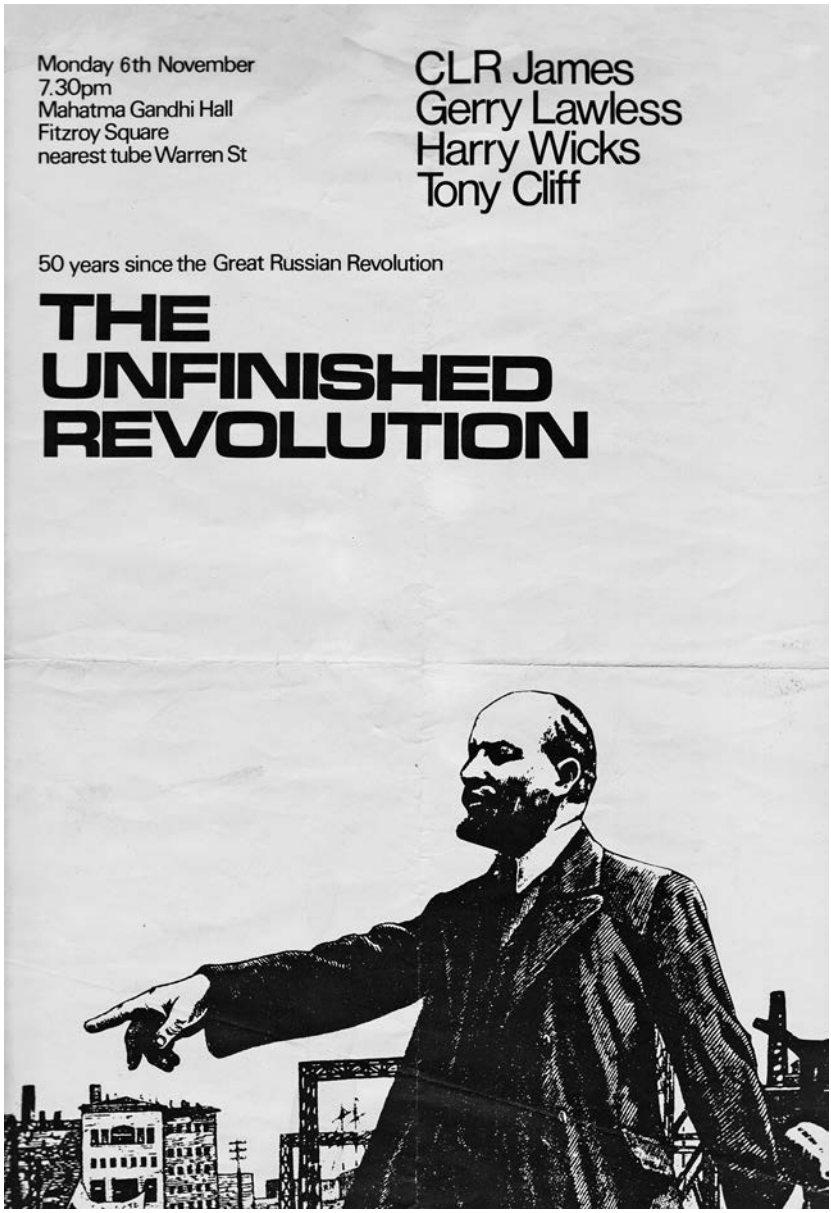
1. See Tam Dalyell, "Thomas Johnston Taylor—Lord Taylor of Gryfe, 27 April 1912–13 July 2001," *Independent*, July 17, 2001. Thomas Taylor contributed several articles to the ILP paper the *New Leader* during the 1930s. See, for example, Tom Taylor, "Labour's Rule in Glasgow," *New Leader*, August 27, 1937, and Tom Taylor, "After Austria, What?," *New Leader*, August 12, 1938.

INTRODUCTION | CHRISTIAN HØGSBJERG

In November 1967, the black Trinidadian Marxist historian C. L. R. James attended a rally at Mahatma Gandhi Hall in London to speak about "The Unfinished Revolution: 50 Years since the Great Russian Revolution," alongside Harry Wicks, a veteran British Trotskyist who had been a member of the British Communist Party in the 1920s, the Irish radical Gerry Lawless, and the Palestinian-born Marxist Tony Cliff, the leading figure in the International Socialists (IS).[1] One of those who heard James speak that month at another meeting organized to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, this time at Ruskin College, Oxford, was Christopher Hitchens, then a young IS member active in the Movement for Colonial Freedom. Hitchens later recalled that James "chose to speak on Vietnam, putting it squarely in the context of imperialism and the resistance to it, and his wonderfully sonorous voice was as enthralling to me as his very striking carriage and appearance." "He was getting on by then, but the nimbus of white hair only accentuated his hollow-cheeked, almost anthracite face . . . for me a little crackle of current was provided by the reflection that here stood a man who had, in real time . . . associated with Trotsky . . . [and] anti-colonial revolution, and . . . the very early stirrings of the American civil rights movement."[2]

Regarding the Vietnam War, by the fall of 1967 Hitchens noted "the fantastic web of official lying and bluff about the war had already been torn irreparably apart."

> James did not waste any phrases on the revelations of atrocities that were beginning to disturb even cold war liberals. He was a historian of imperialism, and he knew all he needed to know about free-fire zones and strategic hamlets. He understood them by analogy, from his rigorous study of the French in Haiti, the Spanish in Cuba, the British in South Africa and



Poster for a rally in London in 1967, organized by the International Socialists, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Artist unknown. Courtesy of Sean Wallis.

> the Italians in Ethiopia. Such conduct toward lesser peoples scarcely rated a raising of the voice. What was impressive about the Vietnamese, he said coolly, was the proven fact that they wouldn't put up with it any longer, and had taken the decision to endure anything. This was how history was made.

Listening to James—the author of, among other works, the classic history of the Haitian Revolution, *The Black Jacobins* (1938)—speak on the Russian Revolution and its relevance fifty years on was such an inspiration, Hitchens recalled, that he "first began to think that utopianism was too feeble and colourless a term for those few who have the courage to talk of a future we cannot yet fully imagine."[3]

At the London rally, while speaking about the Russian Revolution and its legacy alongside Harry Wicks, James's mind could not have helped but have been cast back to the struggles waged by the tiny early British Trotskyist movement during the tumultuous 1930s.[4] James, a recent recruit to that movement, having joined in spring 1934, had been helped by figures like Wicks write the work that would see the writer from colonial Trinidad emerge as one of the intellectual driving forces of British Trotskyism: *World Revolution, 1917–1936: The Rise and Fall of the Communist International*.[5] Published by Secker and Warburg in April 1937, James's *World Revolution* stands as a remarkable and in many ways pathbreaking contribution to Marxist literature, one of the very first histories ever written of the Communist International (Comintern).

World Revolution was all the more remarkable for having been written by James in less than a year. That he had managed to undertake the necessary research and writing in such a short space of time, and to produce a work displaying such mastery of the material, meant a lot to James himself. After completing the book, James would later recall, a recurring nightmare of his since he was a schoolboy in Trinidad—"the report would come. It would say that I was not trying. My father would be very angry and I would be upset for days"—finally left him for good.[6] In a speech given in 1983, James proudly recalled how in writing the book he had "applied the Marxist method to the world as a whole."

> There was Britain, there was France, there was China, there was Russia, but there was not much about Africa because in those days I had come from the Caribbean and was concerned to learn all that I could about historical method. Any historical method dealt with the world at large. That

> I had to do and I did it. I think I did it pretty well because when I came to tackle the Caribbean history, the history of the Haitian revolution . . . many of the things I learned to write [in] *World Revolution* still remain with me.[7]

The Historical Idea of World Revolution

The idea of "world revolution" is, historically, a comparatively modern one, originating with that great "citizen of the world" Thomas Paine, who on November 4, 1791, in London gave a toast to "The Revolution of the World."[8] Paine's toast came fittingly amid perhaps one of the most remarkable moments of internationalism in the age of bourgeois-democratic revolution, when in the aftermath of the great French Revolution of 1789—itself inspired by the American Revolution of 1776—black enslaved peoples in the prized French Caribbean slave colony of Saint-Domingue began their own uprising in August 1791. The young Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were alive during the next great moment of international revolution, when democratic revolution in France in 1830 once again inspired young radicals across Europe, and even the rulers of the British state felt threatened enough by the potential for revolution from below in this period to enact the Great Reform Act of 1832. In 1847, Marx and Engels would become members of the Communist League, an organization for which they famously penned their classic *Manifesto of the Communist Party.* The old motto of the Communist League was changed from "All Men are Brothers" to "Proletarians of all Countries, Unite!"[9]

The Communist Manifesto was published just before the outbreak of the next great wave of international democratic revolutions that broke out across Europe in 1848, a struggle into which Marx and Engels threw themselves before ultimately being forced into exile in Britain amid the state repression that accompanied the victory of counterrevolutionary forces. In 1850, generalizing from the historic experience of 1848 as a revolutionary process across Europe, particularly the June 1848 rising of workers in Paris, which so shocked and terrified once-revolutionary French middle-class radicals, Marx and Engels distilled an important new lesson regarding the necessity for independent working-class politics and political organization in the struggle for socialism and democracy, exemplified in the formation of the International Working Men's Association (IWMA)—the "First International"—in 1864, in which Marx himself played a critical role. After the First Interna-

tional effectively succumbed to factionalism after the repression of the Paris Commune of 1871, the Second International was formed in Paris in July 1889 (the centenary of the outbreak of the French Revolution).

At the close of his "inaugural address" to the IWMA, Marx had praised recent concrete examples of workers' internationalism, including "the heroic resistance" by "the working classes of England" to the "criminal folly" of their rulers, whose natural sympathies inclined them toward intervening on the side of the slave-owning South during the American Civil War. Despite the fact that Lancashire cotton textile workers might have materially benefited in the short term from lining up behind the cotton textile "lords of capital" on this question, instead of supporting British imperialism they waged a tremendous mass agitation in the early 1860s in support of the North, which, according to Marx, "saved the rest of Europe from plunging headlong into an infamous crusade for the perpetuation and propagation of slavery on the other side of the Atlantic." Marx stressed the importance of workers challenging the "criminal designs" of their own capitalist class "playing upon national prejudices, and squandering in piratical wars the people's blood and treasure."[10]

C. L. R. James and Revolutionary Marxism in 1930s Britain

This is not the place to recount and detail James's political and intellectual evolution toward Marxism after making the "voyage in" from colonial Trinidad to imperial Britain in 1932 at the time of the Great Depression and witnessing the concomitant dangerous rise of fascism amid mass unemployment across continental Europe. Suffice it to say that as a teenager growing up in Trinidad C. L. R. James had heard talk of the danger of "Bolshevism" spreading to the island following a mass strike sparked by dockworkers in the capital of Port of Spain in 1919.[11] Soon after arriving in London in 1932 James would write a short story for the *Port of Spain Gazette* about a young colonial intellectual who journeys to London and then rebels at the gap between his expectations of the imperial metropole as the center of a great civilization and the harsh reality of mass unemployment and poverty in the city: "He now wears a red tie, has contributed to the *Daily Worker*, and the latest heard of him is that he contemplates speaking in Hyde Park on the evils of British Colonial Government."[12]

Why James did not himself ultimately follow the path of his protagonist in his 1932 story and end up supporting the Communist Party of Great

Britain (CPGB), but instead chose to become a Trotskyist, owed something to his decision to leave London only three months after first arriving in Britain. He would spend ten critical months with the family of his friend and compatriot, the great West Indian cricketer Learie Constantine, in Nelson, Lancashire. In Nelson, James saw socialist traditions of solidarity emerge in the face of austerity, and a collectivist spirit embodied among a militant working-class community of cotton textile weavers taking mass strike action in September 1932; he was also able to satisfy a growing interest in wishing to understand the events of the Russian Revolution after he came across the first volume of Leon Trotsky's newly published *History of the Russian Revolution*.[13] Then, in London in the summer of 1933, after devouring all three volumes of Trotsky's *History*, James felt inspired to undertake a close study of Marxism and the Russian Revolution. After reading Trotsky, the "prophet outcast"[14] now in exile from the land of the October Revolution, James recalled that "it was then necessary to read the relevant volumes of Stalin. And, of course, I had to read Lenin in order to trace back the quarrel. And thereby I reached volume one of *Das Kapital* and *The 18th Brumaire* of Marx himself. . . . I realised the Stalinists were the greatest liars and corrupters of history there ever were. No one convinced me of this. I convinced myself. But having come to this conclusion, I wanted to meet some Trotskyists."[15]

Given the minuscule size of the Trotskyist movement—in Britain the first Trotskyist grouping, the Communist League, was formed when the twelve strong "Balham Group" of veteran CPGB members in South West London around figures like Reg Groves, Harry Wicks, and Hugo Dewar was expelled in 1932—it was no simple task. By the time James finally came across organized Trotskyists in Britain in spring 1934—after his return from a research trip to France—the Communist League had already split, and James found himself joining the minority led by Denzil Dean Harber who had been willing to follow Trotsky's tactical advice to join and "enter" the Independent Labour Party (ILP).[16] The ILP had deep historic roots in the British working-class movement, particularly in regions such as the north of England and Scotland—and with over 16,000 members was about five times the size of the small but slowly growing CPGB. It had broken away from Labour in 1932 in what Gidon Cohen notes was "the most important Left wing split in the history of the Labour Party."[17]

Living in Hampstead in London at this point, James would meet up with his new Trotskyist comrades at meetings held locally in the home of the distinguished scientist Dr. Izrael Heiger and his partner, Esther. This little group

were all part of their local ILP branch in Finchley (in northwest London) and James recalled the group "had meetings almost every evening" that summer, mainly in the Heigers' garden.[18] Living with the Heigers at this time was a young Hungarian political exile, Hans Vajda, whom Esther had met in Austria and invited back to live with herself and Izrael.[19] James would still have memories of Vajda decades later, describing, in *Beyond a Boundary*, "a Hungarian refugee in London between the two wars—he was not twenty years old" as "one of the few who after a few hours of talk have left me as tired as if I had been put through a wringer."[20]

James's knowledge and understanding of revolutionary politics now grew in leaps and bounds. As he remembered, "I joined the Trotskyist movement and I learned Marxism in the Trotskyist movement."[21] James's sharp intellect, keen memory, and wide general knowledge and reading quickly made him stand out. One new participant, John Archer,[22] then a student at London University, remembered James giving a talk, "an original analysis of the social and economic inequalities in the Soviet Union."[23] Yet the group were not just about discussion and debate, but also activism and campaigning. As James recalled, "In the summer we held meetings along the side of the road. We put up something to stand on and we sold books and spoke."[24]

In 1934, James moved from Hampstead into a flat in central London, at 9 Heathcote Street, and soon meetings of the group were held there. One new recruit, Louise Cripps, a former English student at University College London, later recalled vividly one such meeting.[25] Cripps remembers that aside from herself, James, and Esther Heiger, there were five other comrades at this meeting, all relatively young. There was Arthur Ballard, a young carpenter;[26] Ajit Roy, a young Bengali law student; and Earle Birney, a Canadian doctoral student of English—the latter both at the London School of Economics.[27] There were also two young Oxford students who were "old friends," Jack Whittaker and Hilary Sumner-Boyd (an American "who had taken the pseudonym of Charles Sumner").[28]

> Not sitting at the table but standing in a corner or moving, from time to time, from one place or another around the room, was an Indian named [Bal Krishna] Gupta . . . a tall, somewhat plump ivory-faced man, very genial . . . a close friend of James. . . . He never seemed to take part in any of the sessions . . . but he was there often, almost daily. I was told by James that his father had a very large export business of jute in India and was a very wealthy man; that Gupta had a large allowance, but

because of a restriction visa could not take part in any political groups or meetings.[29]

James's connection with Bal Krishna Gupta, an economics student at London University (who helped James out financially during the writing of *World Revolution*), together with Ajit Roy, was to be significant for the future history of Trotskyism in India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). As Charles Wesley Ervin notes, Gupta had met James and, "like so many others, was dazzled." Gupta then gave a copy of Trotsky's *History* to his Bengali friend Ajit Roy, then a member of the CPGB and League Against Imperialism. Roy was impressed by reading Trotsky and inevitably introduced to James, soon becoming a leading Trotskyist in his own right. "I had rarely come across a finer political polemicist than C. L. R. James," Roy recalled. "His attacks on Stalinism were absolutely devastating."[30] After helping win Gupta and Roy to Trotskyism, James would go on to help train up what Ervin describes as "a cohort of Ceylonese students" in Britain during the 1930s.[31] Aside from its international makeup, what is noticeable about this little group at this stage is its relative youth and inexperience, typical of the Trotskyist movement at this time. However, there were exceptions, such as Ballard, whom James recalled as a "gifted intellectual with a proletarian base" of support, largely as a result of his previous record of activism in various campaigns through the CPGB's Young Communist League.[32] Birney, ostensibly in London to work on a doctoral thesis titled "Chaucer and English Irony," had arrived from Canada (where he had been won to Trotskyism) in late September 1934, and while only thirty, had the experience of working "underground" as a respected organizer for the Communist Party of the United States.[33]

In November 1934, an important meeting of Trotskyists inside the ILP took place, forming the Marxist Group, and vowing to try and transform the ILP into a "revolutionary party." The original entrists around Harber now had some sixty members around them, having been very successful in the eight months since joining, recruiting experienced ILP activists like Bert Matlow and Ernie Patterson (the latter was later a general secretary of the Construction Workers' Union and was remembered by Wicks as "a marvellous debater, very earthy working class speaker"), as well as impressive new members like James.[34] The group soon formalized relations with the international Trotskyist movement and agreed to publish a monthly *Bulletin of the Marxist Group*, a "duplicated pamphlet series, mostly of the writings of Trotsky and statements of the International Left Opposition."[35]

However, while the Trotskyists in the ILP themselves were steadily growing and had cause for optimism, by 1935, the ILP itself, though retaining strong bases of support in many localities, had shrunk to only around four thousand members.[36] As a leading ILP member, Fenner Brockway, himself noted, "The ILP experimented in many different directions, at one time approaching the Communist International, at another moving towards the Trotskyist position," while most of the rank-and-file members regretted ever abandoning the mass social democratic Labour Party.

As both the fortunes of the CPGB and the Labour Party recovered, Trotsky now felt that the "centrist" ILP, which vacillated between reform and revolution, had no real future and urged the Trotskyists to leave it in order to "enter" the Labour Party. The old Communist League "majority" of Wicks and Groves, having failed to grow outside the ILP, had by now already entered Labour and become the "Marxist League." In February 1935, Harber with a handful of other Marxist Group members followed Trotsky's advice and left the ILP, soon forming the "Bolshevik-Leninist Group in the Labour Party." The majority of the Marxist Group, increasingly now under James's leadership, decided to stay and try and continue to build inside the ILP, where they were slowly growing and making an impact at a national level.[37]

From our examination of just the first year of James's involvement in the British Trotskyist movement, we get some sense of the movement's small size and overwhelmingly (but not exclusively) lower middle-class composition, with a high proportion of university students. The cosmopolitan character of the Marxist Group is also quite striking, including as it did political refugees from Germany and Hungary, white South Africans, Indian and Canadian students, and James, the black Trinidadian journalist, working as a cricket reporter for the *Manchester Guardian*. Despite including a few former members of the CPGB, veteran trade union militants with an experience of working-class struggles dating back to syndicalism before the Great War, the Marxist Group's combined total experience of the British working-class movement was not great.

All of these factors meant that the political authority of the exiled Trotsky over the tiny Trotskyist movement cannot be overstated. Going by the success so far of the Marxist Group, Trotsky's initial judgment in suggesting "entry" to the ILP had been vindicated and for James and others to challenge Trotsky's new perspective about the necessity for his British supporters to now "enter" the Labour Party would not have been easy. In James's case this would have been doubly so, for his intellectual debt to Trotsky was

considerable, because of his indebtedness to Trotsky's writings not only on such critical questions as fascism and Stalinism, but also on the relevance of the Marxist theory of permanent revolution for anticolonial struggles in an age of socialist revolution.[38] However, staying and fighting for revolutionary politics inside the ILP remained an attractive prospect for James, who had been elected chair of Finchley ILP, not least because of one critical emerging issue in world politics: the Italian fascist dictator Mussolini's looming plans for war against the people of Ethiopia (then known as Abyssinia).

As a militant Pan-Africanist and powerful socialist orator, James would soon make his name as a leading anticolonial activist in Britain by helping form the International African Friends of Abyssinia to rally opposition to Mussolini's "civilising mission" in early 1935. The ILP as an organization was also happy to give James a national platform from which to speak, write, and campaign, something that the Labour Party would never have done. The Italian war against Ethiopia was analyzed by James in some of his very first public theoretical contributions as a Marxist: for example, in October 1935 in his article "ILP Abyssinian Policy" in *Controversy*, the discussion journal of the ILP, and in searing polemical articles analyzing European imperialism more broadly in the *New Leader*.[39] More critically, helped no doubt by the arguments and intervention of James himself, in October 1935, as Mussolini's war began, the ILP stood out on the British Left in calling for mass resistance to fascist Italy from below without calling for the intervention of British and French imperialism through League of Nations sanctions.

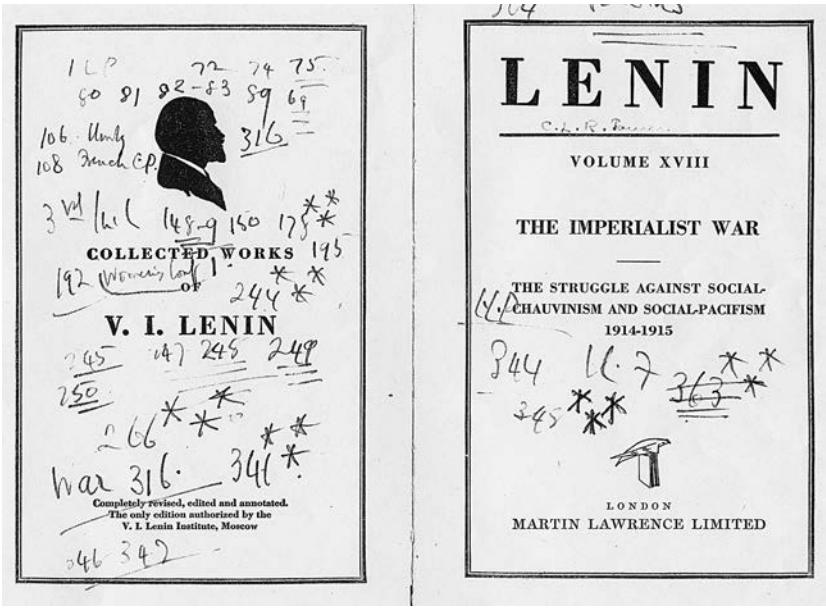
As the Italian drums of war had begun to beat in earnest, from July to August 1935, the Seventh Congress of the Comintern had met in Moscow. Communist parties like the CPGB made what James would describe as "not only a right, but an about turn" as they accepted the need to support the League of Nations—which, although it had been denounced as a "thieves' kitchen" by Lenin, the Soviet Union had joined in 1934—and the strategy of "collective security" to stop wars of aggression between two League members (such as Italy and Ethiopia) through the threat of sanctions.[40]

The Soviet Union's rulers felt everything had to be subordinated to the urgent priority of securing military alliances with the British and French governments against Nazi Germany, even if the resulting turn of the Communist parties in Europe to building the newfangled "Popular Front" against fascism for this purpose meant sidelining anti-imperialism and the idea of international independent working-class action from below.[41] James would later describe in *World Revolution* how the Comintern was thrown into chaos by this

"about turn," and, "following Stalin, missed the greatest opportunity in years of at best striking a powerful blow against the colonial policy of imperialism, and at worst rallying round itself the vanguard of the working-class movement in preparation for the coming war."[42]

The turn of the Comintern toward the Popular Front after Hitler's seizure of power in 1933 (and then the later abandonment of Ethiopia by the Soviet Union in 1935 when it put its own national interest first and sold oil to help fascist Italy's war machine) had thrown many black activists in Britain, particularly those who had once also been in or around the CPGB, such as the Barbadian cofounders of the Negro Welfare Association, Chris Braithwaite and Arnold Ward, into a state of confusion and disbelief.[43] In autumn 1933, George Padmore, James's boyhood friend from Trinidad who had risen to become a leading black Comintern official as editor of the *Negro Worker* (published by the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers, part of the Profintern), had seen which way the wind was blowing and accordingly resigned his post, and in 1935 he turned up at the door of James's London flat out of the blue. As James recalled, "As a Trotskyist, full-fledged by this time, the Kremlin betrayal was no surprise to me. But I listened with a great deal of sympathy to all that George had to say," and the slanderous accusations made against Padmore by the official Communists after he had broken from them gave James "a first-hand inside glimpse of Stalinism."[44] The allegiance of black radicals to Bolshevism—a phenomenon that had reached an early high point when the black Jamaican poet and socialist Claude McKay addressed the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922 and discussed black liberation with Trotsky in Moscow—was sharply tested amid this crisis.[45] Did "Bolshevism" mean loyalty to the current leadership of the Soviet Union and Communist International, or fidelity to the classical Marxist and Leninist principles of anti-imperialism and internationalism?

Many Pan-Africanist activists, who had once been inspired by the hope represented by the Russian Revolution as a blow to capitalism and imperialism, now began to gradually shift away from the revolutionary Left in bewilderment, anger, and despair. As James later noted of Padmore, "Stalinism never shook the confidence in him of black people as a whole; what was shaken was the confidence of blacks in Communism."[46] In March 1936, James's fine anti-imperialist play *Toussaint Louverture* had been produced in London, a production that symbolized Ethiopian resistance to Mussolini on the British stage. But while his inspirational invocation of the revolutionary



C. L. R. James's copy of the *Collected Works of V. I. Lenin*, vol. XVIII.
With permission from the C. L. R. James Estate.

"black Jacobins" of Haiti undoubtedly lifted the spirits of many black revolutionaries in London, James also must have sensed that a clear explicit theoretical explanation of the evolution of the Communist International was urgently required.

The Writing of *World Revolution*

After joining the organized Trotskyist movement in Britain in 1934, James had almost immediately become aware of the shortage of literature it had at its disposal. Though he was personally fortunate in that he was able to read some of Trotsky's writings in French, he recalls that, aside from Trotsky's masterful *History of the Russian Revolution*, "there were no books in English, only pamphlets."[47] James recalled how he "came to the conclusion that what was needed was a published book summarising the whole Trotskyist position."[48] The responsibility, he felt, should have been on a more experienced comrade's shoulders, but, as he later recalled, "no-one else wanted to write it."[49] One reason that James felt confident enough to write a whole new his-

tory of the Communist International might have been related to his reunion with his fellow Trinidadian, George Padmore, who had worked with leading members of the Soviet bureaucracy in Moscow, including Stalin himself.[50]

Through the course of his political activism, James had also met many others on the Left who would have given him important insights into the history of the international socialist movement. James had become friends with Nora Connolly O'Brien, the daughter of the legendary Irish socialist James Connolly (who had been murdered by the British in the Easter Rising of 1916), and James was invited to Dublin to address the Irish Citizen's Army in December 1935. In *World Revolution*, James would pay tribute to the martyred revolutionary James Connolly, suggesting "the discipline and organisation of his Irish Citizen Army was in its own way quite comparable to that of the Bolshevik Party."[51] In Scotland, James knew Nan Milton, the daughter of the great revolutionary socialist John Maclean, and he even planned at one point to help Milton cowrite a biography of her father.[52] One reason that *World Revolution* is such a lively volume is no doubt due to James allowing the experiences and opinions of a whole range of revolutionary activists he had met or known personally, who had visited Moscow or been at the heart of the Communist International at one point or another—such as Harry Wicks and George Padmore—to come through in the work.

James was also inadvertently helped in his researches by the amateurism of the CPGB. In 1935, the Comintern's turn toward the Popular Front meant that much CPGB literature dating from the previous "class against class" period of 1928–33 was now obsolete and thus redundant. As James remembered,

> Infected with the new virus [the Popular Front], the Communist Party bookshop dug down in its basement and raked up all these old books, pamphlets, and documents which had not been sold and could not relieve themselves of the old doctrine. The Communist booksellers could have destroyed them. But . . . they placed these books out in front of their bookshop, selling them if need be by the dozen in order to get rid of them. . . . I got Number 1 of the *International Press Correspondence*, which contained articles by Lenin and Stalin to name two of the most important, denouncing what had become the new doctrine. I bought freely. . . . I was an unsuspicious buyer . . . [and it] ended in my having a collection of material published by the Stalinists such as no one else whom I knew had.[53]

In early 1936, Fenner Brockway, the editor of the *New Leader*, had introduced James to Fredric Warburg, of the new publishing firm Secker and Warburg.[54] Warburg asked if he would consider writing a book on "African Socialism," but as James recalled, "I tell him, 'No, that is not the book for me.' "[55] When James proposed instead a history of the Comintern, Warburg was skeptical, particularly given this was one history of the Communist International that few Communists in Britain would be rushing out to buy. To convince Warburg, James sat down and, using the material he had from his now-extensive collection of documents, wrote a twenty-thousand-word synopsis in a week that was "not only clear in analysis, but full of quotes."[56] For James to have found and convinced a sympathetic publisher such as Warburg was a vital breakthrough.

James's research for the writing of *World Revolution* was undertaken during a particularly intense period of political activity, for in spring 1936 he had embarked on a national speaking tour about Mussolini's war on Ethiopia with the ILP, which had enabled him to engage with socialists in not only England but also Ireland, Scotland, and South Wales.[57] Inside the ILP, the principled anti-imperialists around James had famously clashed in April 1936 at the annual conference in Keighley with the "Parliamentary Group" around James Maxton MP over the question of whether socialists should stand clearly in solidarity with Ethiopia against a war of colonial aggression or stand aside from a clash between two dictators—Mussolini and Haile Selassie, the emperor of Ethiopia.

For Trotsky, the ILP's debacle over their parliamentarians' appalling position on this question reinforced his earlier position that "the cause of the ILP seems to me to be hopeless," and he reiterated his belief that James and the other leaders of the Marxist Group "must seek ways of preparing a truly revolutionary party for the British proletariat" outside of it.[58] The Marxist Group under James's leadership, however, decided to stay and fight against the odds for revolutionary politics inside the ILP, and Harry Wicks, though not a Marxist Group member himself, would always praise the work carried out by this "tightly organised" grouping.[59]

On June 21, 1936, we find James in South Wales, and one member of the Newport ILP, Sidney Robinson, recorded in his diary that he "attended a Day School organised by the National Council of Labour Colleges [NCLC] at Stow Hill Labour Hall, Newport, the Lecturer being C. L. R. James, subject 'International and British Working Class Movements.' "[60] James was clearly thinking hard about his forthcoming book throughout this period, and in his introduction to the 1993 edition of *World Revolution*, Al Richard-

son noted how "oral tradition in South Wales still pointed to a house where James allegedly worked on this book while campaigning for the ILP."[61]

On June 24, 1936, James was able to write to Trotsky, then in Norway:

> Dear Comrade Trotsky,
>
> The obvious bankruptcy of the Comintern has had an effect in all quarters in England, although this effect has not penetrated to the masses as yet. After trying for nearly a year to get some publisher to take a book on the Rise and Fall of the Communist International, I have at last succeeded in getting a well-known firm of publishers, Secker and Warburg, to agree to publish a book on this subject. They have given me carte blanche, and at last all our material and our point of view will be put before the public in comprehensive form.
>
> The publication of the book is extremely important for us. . . . The CP here are terribly frightened at the prospect, for they, more than anyone else, know all that is to be said about their criminal policy during the last few years.
>
> Although I am dealing with the Comintern, yet I am devoting as much space to the development of the Soviet Union as to the strategy and tactics of the Comintern on the ground that it is impossible to understand either the one or the other without realising their basic unity.
>
> I told the publishers that I thought you would contribute an introduction. I hope you will, and I would like to bring the MS. to you sometime in August so that, if you have enough time, you can look at it for me and see that everything is in order. I am anxious about this because I have got the publishers' permission to print an appendix in which I shall castigate without mercy the Webbs, Maurice Dobb, Harold Laski, and all these Left-intellectuals who have been so constantly misleading the public about the Stalinist regime, especially in recent years . . .
>
> With comradely greetings,
> Yours fraternally,
>
> C. L. R. James.[62]

In late July 1936, James, together with Denzil Dean Harber, would attend the First International Conference for the Fourth International, held in France, as an elected delegate from Britain.[63] This was a rare opportunity

for James to develop his knowledge and understanding of the international Communist movement, given there were revolutionaries present from across Europe, including the fascist dictatorships of Germany and Austria. James recalled, "I would say a few words and speak, as I could speak in French," but he distinctly felt that others present "had come from the revolutionary movement, but we [in Britain] had not . . . what was happening in Britain was nothing." There were even one or two veteran Russian revolutionaries, members of the Left Opposition from the Soviet Union who were currently in Europe and "came in secretly" and "I remember them sitting there, and I spoke with them. It took some time, they smiled and said, 'Yes.' But I know now that they were saying, 'You are nothing but left wing Labour democrats.' "[64] James made friends with the veteran revolutionary Leon Lesoil, who had been a founding member of the Belgian Communist Party, until his expulsion for "Trotskyism" in 1927, and had been one of the leaders of the Belgian General Strike of 1932.[65] James also met Pierre Naville, a young French Trotskyist who would later translate James's *The Black Jacobins* into French.[66]

James's hoped-for meeting with Trotsky himself in August 1936 was, however, not to happen, no doubt due to the opening that month of the first Moscow Trial, "The Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre," which also explains why Trotsky was not able to find the time to read James's book *World Revolution* until 1939, let alone contribute an introduction. The Moscow Trials represented a tremendous new test for the tiny international Trotskyist movement. Though accusations by the Stalinist bureaucracy of their assisting "counter-revolution" through acts of "terrorism" inside the Soviet Union had already become customary, in August 1936, however, surviving leaders of the "Old Bolsheviks," including Zinoviev and Kamenev, apparently confessed to having conspired with Trotsky to assassinate Kirov in December 1934 and of now plotting to assassinate Stalin and other Soviet leaders to "restore capitalism." The Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) ordered the leaders of Western Communist parties on August 28, 1936, "to use the trial . . . for the political liquidation of Trotsky and Trotskyism as a fascist agency that, in capitalist countries masking itself with radical phrases disorganises the workers' movement."[67] On cue, leading British Communists like Robin Page Arnot now insisted that "the view that Trotskyism was a tendency within the working-class movement is now long out of date. Trotskyism is now revealed as an ancillary of fascism. . . . [T]he

ILP is in great danger of falling into the hands of Trotskyists, and becoming a wing of fascism."[68]

It was not just hardened Communists like Arnot who went along with the notion that Trotskyists were now dangerous quasi-fascist "wreckers" of socialism. Whole swathes of the British Left, including even the ILP leadership, refused to hold meetings about the Moscow Trials in order to not complicate discussions that had begun in early 1936 around potential unity with the CPGB (who aimed to construct a British "Popular Front" against fascism), leaving the Trotskyists more isolated than ever. More critically, by now the Spanish Civil War was also in full swing, and Harry Wicks recalled how that made matters even more difficult: "It was the feeling of frustration, the feeling of defeat, that the Trials gave one. I can remember vividly Reg Groves expressing it that the Moscow Trials 'represents curtains for us'—that was his phrase. . . . [I]t was most unpopular to defend Trotsky in the working class and even in Labour Party circles. There was great pro-Russian sentiment, particularly in the Spanish Civil War. There was Aid for Spain, Ambulances for Spain and Food for Spain. Nobody wanted to know the politics of what was happening in Spain."

The growing sense that the mounting atmosphere of hysteria and hatred created by Stalinist slander and terror represented a life-and-death question for the British Trotskyist movement led to members of the three main groups feeling, as Wicks put it, "we have got to get together, we have got to unify, to erect some defence."[69] On August 31, 1936, a meeting of two or three hundred Trotskyists and their sympathizers in Hyde Park called for an international investigation into the accusations made, demanding Trotsky win the right of political asylum in Norway, free from internment and fascist thugs.[70] On September 9, 1936, James joined Henry Sara and Wicks from the Marxist League at a meeting of the newly formed British Committee for the Defence of Leon Trotsky at Essex Hall in the Strand, London, the first of many such central London meetings.[71] Wicks in particular was very eager for a firm position to be taken with respect to the slander and vilification of Trotsky, whom he had met in Copenhagen in 1932 (as the sole "delegate" from Britain), because he knew from his own experience the Moscow Trial was based on lies. "I knew [Leon] Sedov [Trotsky's son] was not in Copenhagen—that it was a lie, and that the Bristol Hotel [allegedly a meeting place, but in fact a building that did not exist in 1932] was another lie . . . so I stood on firm ground and others did not."[72]

The British Trotskyists, though a small group, were significant enough to disrupt and intervene in public Communist meetings held to try and justify the Moscow Trials. Wicks remembers a packed meeting at this time in Conway Hall on Theobalds Road at which an Indian journalist, Raj Hansa, just as the meeting was about to start, leapt to his feet at the front of the hall. "Mr Chairman, would it be in order, before the commencement of this meeting, if we were to ask everybody to rise in honour of the old companion of Lenin, Zinoviev, who has been shot!" In the resulting "pandemonium," the Communists were forced to let Wicks, a former CPGB member, speak from the platform.[73] James remembers he "made it a habit to wreck the Stalinist meetings." "I used to go to their meetings," he recalled, "and take only two people with me and their meetings would break up, because I had the Stalinist statements in my pocket and I would have a lot of copies and give the chaps copies and say 'Now have a read.' " The official trial transcripts contradicted themselves, as was clear to anyone prepared to read them carefully. James, with his excellent memory and keen eye for detail, was able to remember and recall with ease relevant facts or quotes to expose any new Communist argument he came across.[74]

Amid this campaigning work and despite not securing Trotsky's direct assistance, James succeeded in finishing writing in the winter of 1936 with the help of his comrades in the Trotskyist movement. As James later recalled, "My room was one third full with newspapers, clipped or to be clipped, and periodically some of my friends in the Trotskyist movement would come in and clip and organise."[75] As Louise Cripps of the Marxist Group recalled, "When he was writing *World Revolution*, we all did our best to help him by looking up sources, by finding clippings that would be useful."[76] James also seemed to have been helped by Earle Birney, who in 1936 had returned to Canada (where he later would become Canada's poet laureate), and especially by Wicks, who not only had seen the likes of Kautsky, Bukharin, Radek, and Trotsky in action himself but also had a rich collection of unpublished and original documents from his training at the International Lenin School in Moscow in the late 1920s. "No less important," Wicks once recalled of his helping James at this time, "I commented on each chapter as he drafted it."[77] As James noted in his preface to *World Revolution*, "I would like to thank Harry Wicks of London and those who, in Canada, and, particularly, South Africa, read the manuscript, pointed out errors, and gave valuable advice."[78] James remembers "writing the book with great speed, never once having to go to the British Museum or to any other collection of books."[79] Wicks recalled

how James "laboured through an enormous literature, working from a small room in Gray's Inn Road, heated by the smallest of gas fires. Working as his typist and secretary was Dorothy Pizer, the companion of George Padmore."[80]

With such help, James was able to make excellent use of some rare primary source material—in English, French, and German—relating to the early years of the Communist International, such as the secret 1924 ECCI conference report "The Lessons of the German Events" as well as files of *International Press Correspondence*, which he had been able to acquire or had been passed his way by supporters.[81] He writes at one point how "many of the most important articles by Lenin, written after 1918, have to be tracked down in obscure publications or translated afresh" as "the present Soviet regime dare not publish them or, when it does so, truncates them."[82] It was also the case, as Al Richardson has noted, that "James was particularly open to theories of the sort dismissed at the time by Trotskyists as 'ultra-left,'" including "literature of the French and American non-Stalinist and non-Trotskyist left."[83] In part this came from the same sense of "fair play" that had once led James to read Stalin after reading Trotsky, and now led him to read left-wing critics of Trotsky. Perhaps it also owed something to the rather eclectic environment of the ILP, with its various traditions, including council communism and diverse other forms of non-Leninist socialism.[84]

Trotsky, in an attempt to overcome the vast chasm that existed between the gigantic tasks ahead and the puny state of the actual resources at the Trotskyist movement's disposal, had turned to some very centripetal organizational measures to try to build a stable revolutionary apparatus around him. Each national section of the Trotskyist movement was expected to participate in the discussion of the way forward for other sections and to be aware of the details of other sections' faction fights and splits. The Trotskyist movement also adopted a very elaborate and tight organizational structure, and at the First International Conference for the Fourth International in 1936 set up not just an "International Secretariat" but also a "General Council" and an International "Bureau." While this replicated the structures of the Comintern, unfortunately the Trotskyist movement was so weak it made any stability in terms of personnel very difficult, even leaving aside the additional difficulties posed by Stalinist infiltration, sabotage, and terror operating at the highest level. If the leadership of a revolutionary organization is constantly changing, it is harder for it to build up any real trust and "moral capital" with the rank-and-file members. As Tony Cliff, himself a Trotskyist at the time in Palestine, observed, "The structure of a political organisation

cannot rise very far above its real base . . . an overheavy structure under such conditions could only be an unnecessary burden."[85]

By the winter of 1936, James's Marxist Group were internally in something of a crisis, having been effectively forced out of the ILP, and were now planning to go it alone as an independent organization. This ran against the expressed wishes of the International Secretariat, who were even considering the option of refusing to recognize them as an official part of the international Trotskyist movement if they did not now follow the overwhelming majority of their British comrades into the Labour Party.[86] When James finished writing *World Revolution*, in January 1937, his decision to dedicate it to his comrades in "The Marxist Group" was political in more senses than one—a sign of loyalty to his comrades, even at the risk of upsetting the leadership of international Trotskyism.

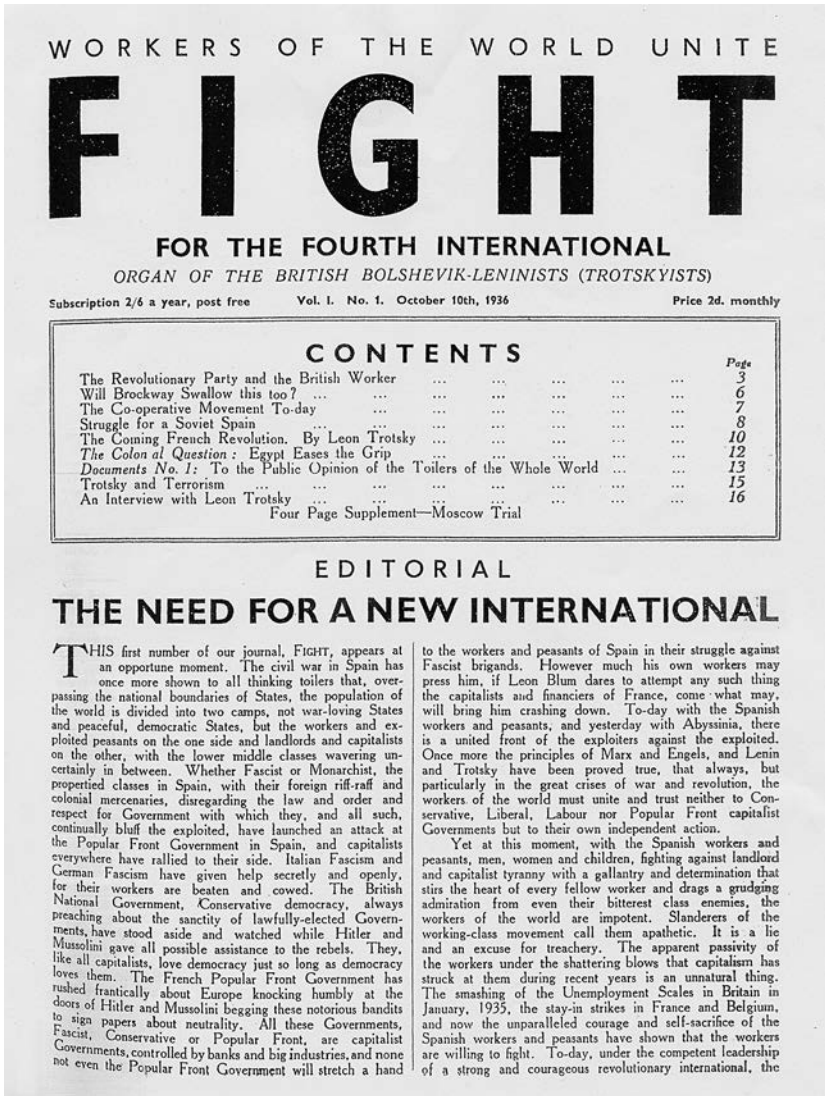
In late January 1937, a second Moscow Trial was announced, charging Trotsky, who had now taken refuge in Mexico, in absentia, for working for the military defeat of the Soviet Union, in formal agreement with Hitler and the emperor of Japan. Radek, Pyatakov, and sixteen others sat in the dock, apparently confessing to the charge of plotting with Trotsky to form an "Anti-Soviet Bloc."[87] The leaders of Western Communist parties dutifully followed new orders to intensify their "campaign in the press and among the masses against Trotsky and Trotskyism as a terrorist agency, a gang of wreckers, subversives, spies, and accomplices of the German Gestapo."[88] The British Committee for the Defence of Leon Trotsky in the midst of this growing atmosphere of hysteria and hatred called a meeting under the banner of "Justice for Leon Trotsky!" for February 10, 1937, in Memorial Hall in Farringdon, pessimistically expecting it to be the "usual suspects." Yet this London meeting was to be a memorable one, as more than six hundred people turned up, far above expectations and some, including Labour MP Ellen Wilkinson, even had to be turned away. As James recalled, "There was a tremendous contrast between that meeting and meetings we [the Marxist Group] held . . . a lot of Communist Party members came and listened. . . . It was a crisis for them."[89]

Even liberal papers like the *Manchester Guardian*, which was in general supportive of Stalin's program of collectivization and industrialization in the Soviet Union despite its brutal forced nature, were skeptical of what it called the "Stalinist persecution" represented by the latest Moscow Trial. This was met with fury by British Communist functionaries, and the ever loyal Robin Page Arnot seems to have even tenuously tried to explain the

Manchester Guardian's doubts about whether Trotsky and the other defendants truly represented what Arnot called "a 'Fifth Column' of fascism" as a result of C. L. R. James's (by now past) connection to the paper as a cricket reporter. As Arnot put it in March 1937, the paper's skeptical line was "not a particular bizarre outburst of romantic liberalism, defending 'the man in the dock' . . . the explanation is that on the staff of the *Manchester Guardian* there is a Trotskyist, and to his tender care the old newspaper of C. P. Scott entrusted its reputation."[90]

As chair of the Marxist Group and editor of its paper *Fight*, where he penned a fine essay on the Second Moscow Trial, James—"the *Manchester Guardian* Trotskyist"—ably and eloquently defended the organizer of the October Revolution and founder of the Red Army from the tirade of Stalinist slander during the Moscow Trials at numerous meetings in Britain.[91] James was in his element at such meetings, deconstructing the slanderous Stalinist myths and smears with indignation and humor. On February 14, 1937, he would debate the pro-Communist Labour MP and King's Councillor D. N. Pritt at a meeting of the Friends of the Soviet Union chaired by Victor Gollancz at the Friend's Meeting House on Euston Road.[92] Many veterans of the early British Trotskyist movement had warm memories of James's taking apart representatives of the CPGB in various debates. For Charlie van Gelderen, "James was probably the finest orator our movement has produced, at least in the English-speaking world, and the movement made full use of his talents." He paid tribute to James's "active role in combating the vicious Stalinist campaign against Trotsky and Trotskyism," noting "he was the one person feared by the Stalinists as being more than a match for people such as Communist party leaders Harry Pollitt and R. Palme Dutt."[93]

One can imagine it was rather hard for Communist speakers to make out that James, who had made his name opposing Italian fascism as the chair of the IAFA, was some sort of "Trotsky-Fascist." James was, after all, probably the most well-known black public intellectual in British politics and, like the Jewish Trotsky, seemed hardly the sort of person Hitler would want running the Soviet Union instead of Stalin. After seeing James in action, the CPGB agreed to only debate with Trotskyists as long as he was not the speaker. However, often the Trotskyists would set up such a debate with leading Communists, such as Andrew Rothstein (who wrote under the pseudonym "R. F. Andrews") and Pat Devine, only to send James along instead of the agreed speaker.



WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE

FIGHT

FOR THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

ORGAN OF THE BRITISH BOLSHEVIK-LENINISTS (TROTSKYISTS)

Subscription 2/6 a year, post free Vol. I. No. 1. October 10th, 1936 Price 2d. monthly

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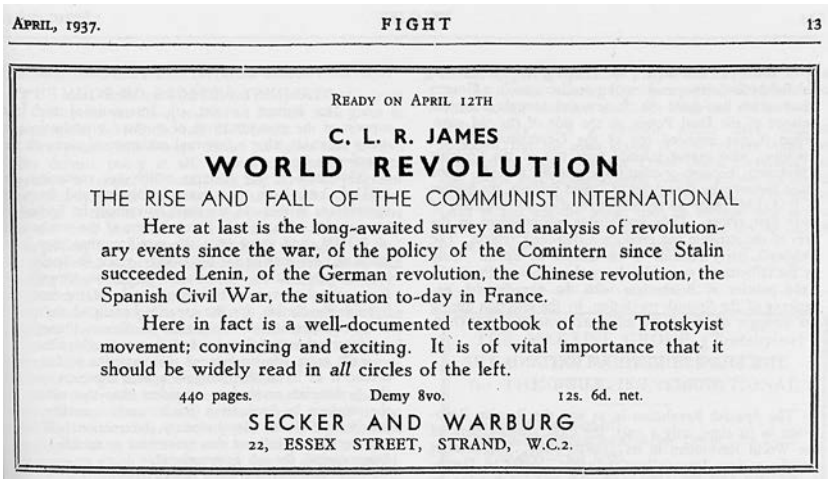
EDITORIAL

THE NEED FOR A NEW INTERNATIONAL

THIS first number of our journal, FIGHT, appears at an opportune moment. The civil war in Spain has once more shown to all thinking toilers that, overpassing the national boundaries of States, the population of the world is divided into two camps, not war-loving States and peaceful, democratic States, but the workers and exploited peasants on the one side and landlords and capitalists on the other, with the lower middle classes wavering uncertainly in between. Whether Fascist or Monarchist, the propertied classes in Spain, with their foreign riff-raff and colonial mercenaries, disregarding the law and order and respect for Government with which they, and all such, continually bluff the exploited, have launched an attack at the Popular Front Government in Spain, and capitalists everywhere have rallied to their side. Italian Fascism and German Fascism have given help secretly and openly, for their workers are beaten and cowed. The British National Government, Conservative democracy, always preaching about the sanctity of lawfully-elected Governments, have stood aside and watched while Hitler and Mussolini gave all possible assistance to the rebels. They, like all capitalists, love democracy just so long as democracy loves them. The French Popular Front Government has rushed frantically about Europe knocking humbly at the doors of Hitler and Mussolini begging these notorious bandits to sign papers about neutrality. All these Governments, Fascist, Conservative or Popular Front, are capitalist Governments, controlled by banks and big industries, and none not even the Popular Front Government will stretch a hand to the workers and peasants of Spain in their struggle against Fascist brigands. However much his own workers may press him, if Leon Blum dares to attempt any such thing the capitalists and financiers of France, come what may, will bring him crashing down. To-day with the Spanish workers and peasants, and yesterday with Abyssinia, there is a united front of the exploiters against the exploited. Once more the principles of Marx and Engels, and Lenin and Trotsky have been proved true, that always, but particularly in the great crises of war and revolution, the workers of the world must unite and trust neither to Conservative, Liberal, Labour nor Popular Front capitalist Governments but to their own independent action.

Yet at this moment, with the Spanish workers and peasants, men, women and children, fighting against landlord and capitalist tyranny with a gallantry and determination that stirs the heart of every fellow worker and drags a grudging admiration from even their bitterest class enemies, the workers of the world are impotent. Slanderers of the working-class movement call them apathetic. It is a lie and an excuse for treachery. The apparent passivity of the workers under the shattering blows that capitalism has struck at them during recent years is an unnatural thing. The smashing of the Unemployment Scales in Britain in January, 1935, the stay-in strikes in France and Belgium, and now the unparalleled courage and self-sacrifice of the Spanish workers and peasants have shown that the workers are willing to fight. To-day, under the competent leadership of a strong and courageous revolutionary international, the

The front cover of the first issue of *Fight* (October 1936).



Secker and Warburg's advertisement for *World Revolution* (in *Fight*, April 1937).

C. L. R. James's *World Revolution*

As a leading Trotskyist activist in Britain, James then found himself writing a history of the Communist International in odd moments of respite amid the turmoil of 1936—another great year of international revolutionary struggle, with the election of a Popular Front government in France, which triggered mass strikes and workers' occupations, and then the Spanish Revolution. That *World Revolution* appeared on April 12, 1937, during the torrent of lies against "Trotsky-Fascism" emanating from Stalin's Great Terror, reminds us that 1936 was not simply a great year of revolution but also a year of counter-revolution. As James would later recall, "They were very serious days." Citing the murder of Rudolf Klement—one of Trotsky's secretaries whom James had met in Paris on several occasions—after his abduction by Stalin's secret police in July 1938, James remembered that "there was a German boy very active in our movement. One day we found him at the bottom of the Seine."[94]

James's 440-page-long work fittingly aimed to analyze the past and present struggles of what he called the "international revolutionary movement against Capitalism" during "the most turbulent twenty years in all history."[95] The title *World Revolution, 1917–1936* emphasized two great revolutionary upheavals—in Russia in 1917 and in Spain in 1936—but aimed to demonstrate how and why one revolution ended in victory while the fate of the other revolutionary struggle was to go down to crushing defeat. In 1938, in his

own work, *The Communist International*, Franz Borkenau, a German Communist activist during the 1920s, testified to the pathbreaking nature of C. L. R. James's work when he called it "the one available general history of the Comintern." For Borkenau, *World Revolution* "was a study which reflects throughout the Trotskyist point of view. The early history of the Comintern is dealt with very summarily, and the later period is envisaged entirely to prove Stalin's 'betrayal' and the correctness of Trotsky's views."[96]

Borkenau's own work, *The Communist International*, was certainly wide-ranging and comprehensive in its coverage of various Communist parties and their struggles particularly in Europe—where he had had firsthand experience of the movement—but also internationally, for example, including a chapter on "The Comintern and the Colonial Peoples." And Borkenau was correct that James in *World Revolution* was certainly in a fundamental sense building on Leon Trotsky, who had not only done more than any Marxist since Marx himself to help develop the theory of permanent revolution in the aftermath of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917 but also had had to play alongside Lenin a critical role in shaping the early years of the Communist International itself, due to the shortage of other experienced and able Communists able to take such a lead. Before James, Trotsky had already advanced his own authoritative analysis of the decline of the Communist International under Zinoviev and Stalin's leadership after Lenin's death in numerous articles and works, perhaps most notably his 1928 draft statement in response to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, published in English for the first time in 1936 as *The Third International after Lenin*. This work of Trotsky had first been published in French in 1929, and James also made time to read fresh from the French edition of Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*, which, though written by June 1936, was not published in Britain until May 1937, one month after *World Revolution* came out. James himself acknowledged his debt to Trotsky in his preface to *World Revolution*, noting that "how much the book owes to the writings of Trotsky, the text can only partially show."[97]

James's Trotskyist framework of permanent revolution, however, ensured that the analysis in *World Revolution* was strikingly superior to that of Borkenau in the dialectical interplay of the national and international vis-à-vis developments in the Soviet Union and the Communist International. Borkenau posited a fundamental division between Tsarist Russia (and other "industrially backward countries" such as "Spain, South America, China") where revolutions were possibilities, with "highly developed modern indus-

trial countries" where at least some pretense of liberal parliamentary democracy existed and "all classes and groups are much too 'bourgeois' to make a proletarian revolution a practical proposition." For Borkenau, the history of the Communist International and the course of Soviet history were fundamentally not, as Trotsky and Trotskyists like James insisted, an "immense betrayal," but a realistic and pragmatic coming to terms with "the fact that international proletarian revolution after which the Bolsheviks originally hunted was a phantom."[98] The failure of the Communist International to spread revolution internationally out from Lenin's Moscow was for Borkenau an inevitability flowing from the objective circumstances.

For James, following Trotsky, the failure of the Communist International was rather a subjective matter, the failure of politics and political leadership. The necessity of a tightly organized and disciplined mass revolutionary party like Lenin's Bolsheviks for Trotsky had been demonstrated beyond all doubt by the successful October Revolution in Russia in 1917 (and then conversely in a negative fashion by the failure of "the German October" of 1923).[99] James in *World Revolution* therefore devoted time to an examination of what was so novel about "Leninism" and what Lenin, "one of the highest representatives of European culture," himself meant by socialism and how this contrasted with the "Marxism" and "socialism" of Stalin, who "in every respect except singlemindedness of purpose, was the very antithesis of his predecessor."[100] James's *World Revolution* was about defending the classical Marxist and Leninist tradition of revolutionary internationalism against the latest theoretical form of revisionist "national socialism," Joseph Stalin's newfangled concept of "Socialism in One Country," advanced in October 1924 and that fitted the mood of the new rising ruling Soviet bureaucracy after the failure of the German Revolution in 1923. As James put it in one critical passage, "we have devoted an apparently disproportionate amount of time to these two tendencies in the labour movement—Marxism and Revisionism, international and national socialism. The disproportion is only apparent. With the formation of the Third International and the adhesion to it of the revolutionary internationalists, Revisionism became openly and without shame the ruling doctrine of the Second International. But in 1924 Revisionism made its appearance in the Russian Bolshevik Party, for similar reasons to its appearance in the Second International and with the identical results."[101]

Having established how theoretically the tradition of "national socialism" had triumphed in Russia with the rise of a conservative bureaucracy led by Stalin, James now turned back to assert how this played out in practice with

respect to the international class struggle. This was done in a slightly problematic manner, leading to one major criticism of the work, made by Leon Trotsky in conversation with James himself when they met for discussions in Coyoacán, Mexico, in April 1939. Though Trotsky thought *World Revolution* was "a very good book," he felt it was marred by "a lack of dialectical approach, Anglo-Saxon empiricism, and formalism which is only the reverse of empiricism."[102]

More concretely, Trotsky argued that James made "his whole approach to the subject depend on one date—the appearance of Stalin's theory of socialism in a single country. . . . This makes the whole structure false."[103] While James headed his chapter "Stalin Kills the 1923 Revolution," Trotsky pointed out that "the German revolution had more influence on Stalin than Stalin on the German revolution."[104] After discussion of the lost German Revolution of 1918–23, James turned to how the "nationalist blundering of the central direction in Moscow" helped ensure the General Strike in Britain in 1926 went down to defeat before again (with slightly more justification here) making Stalin critical to "ruining" another revolution, this time in China during 1925–27.[105] James then turned to Stalin's brutal industrialization and forced collectivization programs in the Soviet Union from the late 1920s, which "seemed to promise a restoration of the proletariat to its rightful place in a Workers' State" but, because the whole notion of "Socialism in One Country" was an impossibility, "could not and did not emancipate the Russian proletariat, but resulted in a tightening of its chains."[106] James then switched back to the greatest disaster, which overcame the international working-class movement in this period, the triumph of Hitler's Nazis to power in Germany in 1933, in no small part as a result of the Communist International's catastrophist perspectives during its sectarian "class against class" period of 1928–33, "the egregious folly of Social Fascism" as a concept and its fundamental abandonment of the United Front tactic.[107]

In his discussion of the rise of Hitler's Nazis, James was helped by his German friend Charlie Lahr, an anarchist bookseller whom he had first met in London in 1933.[108] Born Karl Lahr in the Rhineland, he had chosen internment at London's Alexandra Palace to fighting for the Kaiser in the Great War, and though briefly a member of the CPGB on its formation in 1920, he left it over the suppression of the Kronstadt revolt and founded a bookshop, Lahr, located at 68 Red Lion Street. James later proudly recalled how Lahr's concrete knowledge had helped him to "penetrate more profoundly than usual not so much into the political arguments and conflicts but into the

"But, officer,—the man's a dangerous red!" The cartoonist David Low on the Popular Front and the defense of the Moscow Trials being organized by the Communist Party leader Harry Pollitt ("Our Harry") and the Comintern (in the *Evening Standard*, May 21, 1937). "Can it be a private nightmare of Low's or does the turn of recent events in Spain and Russia show the official Communist Party to be not as Red as of yore?" Courtesy of David Low / Solo Syndication.

actual feeling of the different social organisations in Germany before Hitler. I do not hesitate [in chapter 12, "After Hitler, Our Turn"] . . . in showing that the Communist International deliberately manoeuvred Hitler into power . . . there is a sense of journalism from day to day in the chapter which is the result of my constant seeking out Charlie as events happened from day to day."[109]

Trotsky was understandably less impressed with the specificities of this aspect of James's argument, noting that he "cannot agree that the policy of the International was only a materialisation of the commands of Moscow" in general, while the specific idea that by 1931 Stalin had a "plan" to "allow fascism to come into power is absurd . . . a deification of Stalin."[110]

After discussing the rise of Hitler, James then returned to the social and cultural consequences of Stalin's First Five-Year Plan and forced collectivization for the Soviet Union, what James called "the Great Retreat" under way, a section of the work that doubtless would have been revelatory for many of

James's readers at the time. The final two chapters counterposed the Communist International's new "Popular Front" perspective of building a broad democratic alliance against fascism—in essence for James to be summed up as "the revolution abandoned"—with the tradition of Leninism and the first four congresses of the Communist International, which were now embodied in the tiny isolated movement around Trotsky. As James concluded, the forging of a Fourth International represented "the only hope" of preserving the revolutionary internationalist tradition. A year after *World Revolution* was published, James himself would be delegated to attend the founding conference of the Fourth International in France in 1938, where he was elected to the fifteen-strong International Executive Committee.

Beyond Trotsky

James's general fidelity to Trotsky's general analysis explains the comments of James's authorized biographer, Paul Buhle, that *World Revolution* represents "James's least original major work."[111] Yet *World Revolution* was in two important ways strikingly original for a Trotskyist book of the period, implicitly challenging and questioning Trotsky himself and even beginning to see further than he did.[112] Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* had been written before the first of the Moscow Trials and before the eruption of the Spanish Civil War and so James's *World Revolution* was able to, more clearly than Trotsky did, expose the counterrevolutionary nature of Stalinism. Though Borkenau had argued James's study "reflects throughout the Trotskyist point of view," *World Revolution* actually showed James was already starting to react against what he felt were the limitations of both Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union and the Trotskyist movement as he had experienced it, and it is worth looking at how these feelings found expression in the work.

The first issue was the question of the character of the Soviet Union itself, the "Russian Question," about which James was as concerned as anyone else in the Trotskyist movement. On the face of it, Trotsky's pioneering analysis of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers' state run by a ruling parasitic caste of Stalinist bureaucrats described in *The Revolution Betrayed* was endorsed and expanded on by James. Indeed, some of the least "original" passages of *World Revolution* arguably come when James writes about the richer peasantry in the Soviet Union as the main danger that lay ahead. Though James stressed the growth of the "bureaucracy, welded by the combined fight against peasantry and proletariat" and now constituting "a distinct caste of

millions, through Stalin and the apparatus controlling all the organs of politics and economics," he can still write (following Trotsky in 1936) passages stating that the "greatest danger to Socialist Russia was Capitalism, not only on the outside, but the seeds of it inside—the peasantry" who still posed "the danger today."[113]

More critically, Trotsky's idea that state ownership of the means of production meant that the Soviet Union was somehow inherently "socialist" was deeply problematic in terms of Marxist theory. As George Padmore had noted in *How Britain Rules Africa* (1936), there were "state-built, state-owned and state-managed" railways in colonial West Africa but this was very far from "socialism." Indeed, as Padmore continued, it was imperialism or "state capitalism" as "the people, that is, the 25,000,000 Blacks don't derive any more advantages from these railways than if they were privately owned."[114] When in February 1937 Sir William Beveridge, the famous British administrator, researcher, and head of the London School of Economics, noted in *The Times* the probable necessity for state ownership of British industry in any future war, James himself, in an editorial for *Fight*, commented that what Beveridge had in mind was "not socialism . . . the ruling class in an emergency is willing to take over private property and administer it by the State in order to gain greater efficiency for war."[115]

Moreover, the idea that the rise of a blood-soaked dictatorship of Stalinist bureaucrats constituted "the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union" seemed disgustingly perverse to James. An article in the *Manchester Guardian* in February 1936 by Michael Polanyi, author of *USSR Economics* (1936) and the younger brother of Karl Polanyi, had suggested the Soviet Union "may not be the Socialism of the fathers or the prophets, but it works." As James, the *Manchester Guardian*'s former cricket correspondent, now countered in *World Revolution*, "It is not the Socialism of the prophets, it is not any kind of Socialism, and it does not work in any precise sense of that word."[116] Contrary to Marx's and Lenin's predictions, "far from withering away, the State is more omnipresent than ever." Stalin's "terrorist regime" for James was not only "a caricature of socialism" but also a "revolting tyranny," indeed a "political tyranny without parallel in Europe."[117]

Indeed, by the time he wrote *World Revolution* James was already showing an openness to those arguing the Soviet Union had become a state capitalist society.[118] According to Special Branch, the British secret police service, when James spoke in defense of Trotsky after the first Moscow Trial on September 9, 1936, "he compared the conditions of the British and

Russian workers, adding that a form of capitalism was creeping into the Soviet State."[119] One intriguing reference in *World Revolution* was to the classic work *The Secret of Hitler's Victory* by the now-forgotten but once legendary veteran Russian Marxist Peter Petroff and his German wife, Irma, which had been published in 1934 by Leonard and Virginia Woolf's Hogarth Press.[120] The Petroffs' Marxist analysis of the rise of the German Nazis made a passing reference in conclusion to "established state capitalism—as we see it today in Russia."[121] Another reference in *World Revolution* was to the German historian Arthur Rosenberg, who, with other leading members of the German Communist Party, had broken with orthodox Communism as supporters of Zinoviev in the late 1920s.[122] In 1934, an English translation of Rosenberg's *A History of Bolshevism: From Marx to the First Five Years' Plan* (1932) was published, the first serious academic treatment of the subject.[123] Rosenberg wrote of the USSR's "modernist civilization," which flowed from its "system of State Capitalism by means of which the governing bureaucracy contrives to maintain its hold."[124]

Yet perhaps the most significant influence on James's evolving thinking on the "Russian question" was that of Boris Souvarine. Born Boris Liefschitz in 1885 in Kiev, Souvarine had been a founding member of the French Communist Party and, having known Trotsky since meeting him in Paris during the Great War, spoke bravely against Stalin in Moscow. Though Trotsky had high hopes of Souvarine forming a viable French Trotskyist group, since 1929, Souvarine had broken off good relations with Trotsky, attacking Leninism and describing the Soviet Union as "state capitalist."[125] In his 1935 biography *Staline*, first published in Paris, Souvarine had maintained that "the Federation of Socialist Soviet Republics, the very name a four-fold contradiction of the reality, has long ago ceased to exist," and "Soviet state capitalism," "so-called Soviet society," rests "on its own method of exploitation of man by man."[126] James read *Staline* as part of his research for *World Revolution* and was clearly impressed, describing it as "a book with an anarchist bias against the dictatorship of the proletariat but irreproachably documented, very fair, and full of insight."[127]

While James's *World Revolution* on the face of it rejected such heretical theorizing, there are sections that clearly do point toward James's future as a leading Marxist theorist of the USSR as a state capitalist society.[128] Early on in *World Revolution*, James noted that, "for Marx and Engels, collective ownership did not mean Socialism. Everything depended on the development of the productive forces which this collective ownership would make

possible."[129] James quoted a telling passage from Engels's *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* detailing the circumstances in which a "deficient and restricted development of production" necessitated a class division between the exploited and exploiters, between those who are "exclusively bond slaves to labour" and "a class freed from directly productive labour, which looks after the general affairs of society; the direction of labour, State business, law, science, art, etc." Added Engels: "It is therefore the law of the division of labour that lies at the basis of the division into classes. But this does not prevent this division into classes from being carried out by means of violence and robbery, trickery and fraud. It does not prevent the ruling class, once having the upper hand, from consolidating its power at the expense of the working class, from turning their social leadership into an intensified exploitation of the masses."[130]

As James had noted, "An understanding of this elementary piece of Marxism would riddle the delusion that there is no exploitation of man by man" in the Soviet Union.[131] Indeed, "the fiction of workers' control, after twenty years of the revolution, is dead. But the bureaucracy fears the proletariat. It knows, none better, the temper of the people it so mercilessly cheats and exploits."[132] One who might have demurred on this point was actually Trotsky himself, who saw the Stalinist bureaucracy as a brutal oppressor, but not actually an exploiter of the Russian working class.[133] Yet for James, the first Five-Year Plan meant that "the remnants of workers control were wiped away."[134]

Such ideas were increasingly in the air on the far left during the 1930s, though in part this was because, at that time, as Trotsky himself had noted, the term "state capitalism" had "the advantage that nobody knows exactly what it means."[135] Such a charge of "state capitalism," however, was given extra credibility by the role the Soviet Union would play in the Spanish Civil War, which had begun in July 1936, and which James had seriously considered volunteering to fight in, just as he had planned to go and fight in Ethiopia against Mussolini.[136] James had concluded *World Revolution* with the discussion of "the Spanish Revolution."

> Bourgeois democracy is doomed in Spain. . . . [T]he choice lies between the capitalist Fascist dictatorship, or the Socialist Workers' State. If the workers are to win against Franco and his German and Italian allies . . . the war must be a revolutionary war by workers and peasants organised in Soviets or other workers' organisations. But the Soviet bureaucracy made the fight for a democratic Spain a condition of assistance; and the

bureaucracy and its agents, though active against Franco, are now preventing Spanish workers and peasants from doing the very things that created Soviet Russia.[137]

Indeed, James had made a prediction that "the day is near when the Stalinists will join reactionary governments in shooting revolutionary workers. They cannot avoid it."[138] In May 1937, a month after *World Revolution* had come out, James was tragically proved right as the Republican government with Communist support repressed the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification of Spain (POUM) and anarchists in Barcelona by force, imprisoning thousands and murdering dozens.[139] Incredibly, one of those briefly arrested in June 1937 in Barcelona, Charles Orr, an American socialist who was working for the POUM, had actually been reading James's *World Revolution* in the days before his arrest.[140]

James was therefore one obvious person to be asked by Fredric Warburg to write an introduction for *Red Spanish Notebook*, an eyewitness account of revolutionary Spain through the eyes of two surrealist poets who had gone to fight for the POUM but had left in February 1937, Mary Low and the Cuban Trotskyist Juan Breá. *Red Spanish Notebook*, which came out later in 1937, priced at 5 shillings, was marketed by Secker and Warburg as "the only study of the Spanish War written from the POUM viewpoint. Not only of political importance, but a brilliant piece of reportage recreating the atmosphere of the first six months."[141] In his introduction, James praised Low and Breá's achievement as having provided to the ordinary reader, "better than all the spate of books on Spain, some idea of the new society that is struggling so desperately to be born" as "worker's power emerged half-way from books" and became "a concrete alternative to the old slavery."[142]

George Orwell, who had just returned wounded from Spain having "touched and seen" both workers' power and then Stalinist counterrevolutionary terror in Barcelona while fighting with the POUM militia, reviewed *Red Spanish Notebook* in *Time and Tide* on October 9, 1937, praising the way in which "by a series of intimate day-to-day pictures . . . it shows you what human beings are like when they are trying to behave as human beings and not as cogs in the capitalist machine."[143] Indeed, on returning to London it seems Orwell had picked up a copy of James's *World Revolution*, and on July 8, 1937, had made inquiries as to how many copies it had sold, noting that "the people who read that book would be the kind likely to read a book on Spain written from the non-Communist standpoint."[144] According to

Louise Cripps, Orwell, presumably while working on what would become his classic *Homage to Catalonia* (1938) in the summer of 1937, visited James himself and was a "serious enquirer" into Trotskyism. "Since he was so vehemently against Stalin's regime in the Soviet Union, he read and approved the literature we had."[145] Indeed, in his review of *Red Spanish Notebook* Orwell had noted that "Mr. C. L. R. James, author of that very able book *World Revolution*, contributes an introduction."[146]

The experience of witnessing the counterrevolutionary role played by the Soviet Union and its agents in Spain led both Breá and Orwell to speculate about the nature of the Soviet Union itself. As Breá wondered in the conclusions to *Red Spanish Notebook*, "let us suppose that Russia is no longer a proletarian state but is making her first steps towards capitalism."[147] Orwell, in *Homage to Catalonia*, described the "socialism in one country" being built in Russia by Stalin as little more than "a planned state-capitalism with the grab-motive left intact."[148]

Coming as it did right in the middle of Stalin's Great Terror, the Spanish Civil War was to be of critical importance for the political evolution of not only James, but also his key intellectual collaborator during the 1940s, Raya Dunayevskaya, with whom he would later form the "State-Capitalist Tendency" (later the "Johnson-Forest Tendency") within American Trotskyism. As Peter Hudis has noted, the role of Stalinism during the Spanish Civil War "presented revolutionaries with what Dunayevskaya was later to call the 'absolute contradiction' of our age—the emergence of counter-revolution from *within* revolution." Trotsky's Russian-language secretary from 1937 to 1938, Dunayevskaya later recalled how she first became critical of Trotsky's 1936 analysis of the Soviet Union as a "degenerated workers' state" during this tumultuous period. "Out of the Spanish Civil War there emerged a new kind of revolutionary who posed questions, not only against Stalinism, but against Trotskyism, indeed against all *established* Marxisms."[149]

On September 3, 1938, at the founding conference of the Fourth International, "World Party of Socialist Revolution," held in the home of the French syndicalist and Communist Alfred Rosmer—a former member of the ECCI—in Périgny, a village near Paris, James intervened forcefully in the debate that took place about whether Trotskyists should call for the defense of the USSR in case of war. As he remembered later, together with some from the American and Polish contingent, "we were against the Trotskyist position on the defence of the USSR. We put forward our position and had it copied into the minutes, but we didn't press the issue. The Polish comrades

told us 'We are not going to vote for you . . . but we are sympathetic to you, James. You have the line, although we are not supporting it.' Nevertheless, we had a powerful influence on that conference."[150] By now James had sought out Souvarine himself in Paris and had begun to translate *Staline*. For the English edition (*Stalin: A Critical Survey of Bolshevism*, published in 1939), Souvarine wrote a new postscript, "The Counter-Revolution," in which he pondered the recent experience of Stalinist terror, a process in which "stains of blood become letters of fire, and dark places are illuminated by a sinister glow," and the extent to which Stalinism was now akin to fascism in Germany, both being "totalitarian" regimes with Stalin as "the Bolshevik Fuehrer."[151]

James's increasingly critical reading of the evolution of the Soviet Union and its bureaucratic ruling elite raised the obvious question of why Trotsky and the Left Opposition had not been able to realize the danger and threat Stalin as "head of the bureaucratic fungus" posed earlier—a danger and threat Lenin in his *Testament* had himself realized—and so put up a more effective fight against the rising Stalinist bureaucracy after 1923.[152] As James argued in *World Revolution*, after Lenin's final incapacitation, "[Stalin] bureaucratised the party more and more, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Bucharin helping. What must not be forgotten is that this struggle went on in a narrow circle, so small had the governing group become, even after Lenin. The masses played little part, and Trotsky either could not or dared not bring the masses into it, as Lenin would infallibly have done sooner rather than later."[153]

Partly for James this was a matter to do with the personal political and theoretical weaknesses of Trotsky, who "seems to have accepted with too much fatalism this emergence of bureaucratic corruption [in the Soviet Union] in a period of revolutionary ebb."[154] Trotsky saw it as historically inevitable that a period of reaction would follow the revolutionary heights of 1917, insisting in his 1939 discussion with James that the defeat of the Left Opposition in Russia must be explained "by the dialectic of history, by the conflict of classes, that even a revolution produces a reaction."[155] Yet for James, as he would write in 1940, "nearly all" of Trotsky's mistakes "flowed from a constant incapacity to acknowledge, perhaps even to himself, the full depravity of Stalinism."[156] James clearly felt part of the problem lay with the nature of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and so there was therefore an inherent danger within classical Bolshevism, and with the party Lenin had built, which had transformed into a machine of bureaucratic corruption, allowing a tyrant like Stalin to wield unparalleled power. Running throughout *World Revolution* is a serious and sophisticated discussion of democratic

centralism, which again perhaps owes something to the impact of James's discussions with the likes of Souvarine.

James, of course, vigorously defended the necessity for a "Leninist" party—and would have had no time for Borkenau's (ever-fashionable) argument in *The Communist International* that the Stalinist dictatorship, with its bloated privileged and dictatorial bureaucratic elite, was somehow the inevitable result of "Leninism" in power, as "the latter developments are the logical result of the basic assumptions of Lenin and of the early history of the Russian revolutionary regime and the Communist International."[157] Following Trotsky, James had pointed to the concrete backward material conditions prevailing in Tsarist Russia before 1917 and then the destruction of the best elements of the tiny Russian working class during the Russian Civil War that historically explained the roots of the rising Stalinist bureaucracy. Stalin's Great Terror for James in *World Revolution* showed that "the Stalinists seek to kill Leninism."[158] Yet rather more heretically, James also found much of value in some of the warnings about where "Leninism" could lead that had been made by the young Leon Trotsky and also Rosa Luxemburg.

James, for example, discussed the charge of "substitutionism" made against "Leninism" by the young Trotsky out of his early fear of "the replacement of the dictatorship of the proletariat by the dictatorship over the proletariat, of the political rule of the class by the organisational rule over the class."[159] Trotsky himself had never returned to these earlier charges against Leninism after he joined Lenin's Bolsheviks in 1917. However, for James, "the whole history of the Russian Communist Party and of the whole Communist International from the moment Lenin lay hopelessly ill" up to the final triumph of Stalinist dictatorship proved Trotsky's "specific criticisms which he levelled against Lenin's principles as they worked out in practise cannot be dismissed, least of all today." Indeed, they "must have had [a] solid foundation." In an apparent implicit criticism of his leader, James noted that Trotsky "has since admitted that he was wrong; too generously, for the question is not so simple. . . . [T]here is more in this than simple wrong and right."[160]

In the context of the Marxist Group's own dispute with Trotsky's International Secretariat, we might see one reason why James was now interested in bringing up the young Trotsky's critique of "democratic centralism" to attack Stalin's "abuse of democratic centralism which Trotsky had always feared in any system which, like Lenin's, so openly glorified central control." James noted that after Lenin's last struggle to stop Stalin failed, "with the development of the bureaucracy the democracy dropped completely out

of centralism. From the Russian party it spread to the whole International. Centralism which helped to create the International helped to ruin it." James had quoted the young Trotsky: "During the last three to four years of intense party frictions, the life of very many committees has consisted of a series of coups d'état in the spirit of our court revolutions of the eighteenth century. Somewhere way up on top somebody is incarcerating, replacing, choking somebody else, somebody proclaims himself something—and as a result, the top of the committee house is adorned by a flag with the inscription, 'Orthodoxy, centralism, political struggle.' "[161]

Instead of building up a truly international revolutionary leadership composed of those able to think critically for themselves, it created "a body of leaders who looked always to Moscow and were incapable of independent appraisal and action." James seems determined to ensure that "centralism" would not ruin the Fourth International in the same way, perhaps speculating on what might happen once Trotsky himself was not available to offer clear guidance, but was also conscious that "there is no specific [solution] for this problem": "It will have to be fought out anew in each party as every emergency presents itself. But that can best be done only when there is a clear understanding of the issues involved. It is perhaps the greatest of the many bows that the revolutionary Ulysses will have to bend."[162]

For both New Leftists like Paul Buhle and orthodox Trotskyists like Al Richardson, this discussion of revolutionary leadership in *World Revolution* constitutes an organizational challenge to Leninism and Trotskyism. Certainly, James himself remembers that he soon ran into difficulties after joining up with the American Trotskyist movement because of this section. "When I began to attack the [orthodox] Trotskyist position [over Russia], some people in the United States said, 'When we read your book *World Revolution* we said that it won't be long before James is attacking the Trotskyist movement' . . . it was pointed out to me in a particular paragraph. I agreed with the interpretation."[163] As Buhle suggests of James's discussion of democratic centralism in *World Revolution*, "Trotsky himself was unlikely to accede to this formulation. . . . [H]e took criticism of himself badly and outright disagreements still worse."[164] Yet while Trotsky could indeed be arrogant and dogmatic at times, he appears to have been slightly more tolerant when it came to James at this stage. In a private letter to James P. Cannon on May 17, 1938, Trotsky regretted that he had not yet had time to read James's *World Revolution*, but had been told James had criticized him "very sharply from an organisational point of view."

> I suppose that this criticism at that time was a theoretical justification of his own policy towards the Independent Labour Party, but that is not of importance. I suppose that he now considers his own criticism as a hindrance to friendly collaboration with us. . . . [I]t is very important to convince James that his criticisms are not considered by any one of us as an item of hostility or as an obstacle to friendly collaboration in the future. It would be very bad if under the influence of this fact and some others he finished with a rupture from us.[165]

Moreover, James's discussion of Leninism in *World Revolution* surely stands as a considered contribution to the question of revolutionary organization, and one rooted within the tradition of classical Bolshevism. In 1938, when James was described as Trotsky's "lieutenant" by one British Communist, few readers would have thought the label inappropriate.[166] While there was not quite a meeting of minds over democratic centralism and the historical experience of classical Bolshevism, Trotsky acknowledged to James that "it is very important to bring up these questions periodically."[167]

Reception and Impact

As a delegate to the 1938 founding conference of the Fourth International, James received a letter from Trotsky. In the letter Trotsky declared:

> To prevent the shipwreck and rotting-away of humanity the proletariat needs a perspicacious, honest and fearless leadership. No one can give this leadership except the Fourth International basing itself on the entire experience of past defeats and victories. Permit me, nevertheless, to cast a glance at the historic mission of the Fourth International not only with the eyes of a proletarian revolutionist but with the eyes of the artist which I am by profession. I have never separated these two spheres of my activity. My pen has never served me as a toy for my personal diversion or for that of the ruling classes. I have always forced myself to depict the sufferings, the hopes and struggles of the working classes because that is how I approach life, and therefore art, which is an inseparable part of it.[168]

Over a decade later, in 1949, James would develop Trotsky's theme, declaring "I have long believed that a very great revolutionary is a great artist, and that he develops ideas, programmes, etc., as Beethoven develops a movement."[169] It is only if one understands that Marxism asks a fundamental

question about human existence itself, that we can begin to understand not only how James, "the artist," became "a revolutionary," but also how, for James, the writing of passionate political and historical works about the struggles of the exploited and oppressed like *World Revolution* and *The Black Jacobins* more than satisfied his earlier ambitions to make a literary career for himself in Britain.

The publication of *World Revolution* meant, as Martin Upham noted, that James became "the first British Trotskyist to make a substantial theoretical contribution," and Wicks's review in *Fight* gives a sense of just how important the book was for the Trotskyist movement, describing it as "a book that every socialist should read and every revolutionary possess."[170] Indeed, Fredric Warburg famously recalled that *World Revolution* became "a kind of Bible of Trotskyism" in Britain.[171] Such a statement obviously stands in part as a testament to James's intellectual achievement here—as Secker and Warburg themselves declared in their promotional publicity, *World Revolution* was "the first comprehensive study of world history since 1917 from a Trotskyist viewpoint, with much new material on the development of Russia since Lenin's death."[172] "Here in fact is a well-documented textbook of the Trotskyist movement; convincing and exciting. It is of vital importance that it should be widely read in *all* circles of the left."[173]

Yet that Warburg should evoke the sense in which *World Revolution* became for at least some British Trotskyists a text with the authority akin to scripture for a religious believer should not surprise us either. Part of what held the early besieged and minuscule international Trotskyist movement together amid the dark clouds of reaction that gathered over Europe from the 1930s as the rise of fascism and Stalinist terror plunged the continent into what the great Belgian-Russian revolutionary novelist Victor Serge termed "Midnight in the Century," was the fact that an almost millenarian outlook developed in the Trotskyist movement. As Trotsky himself insisted throughout the 1930s, objectively the potentialities for mass working-class revolutionary action existed and would inevitably develop following the outbreak of a future interimperialist war, just as the Russian Revolution had erupted during the Great War. In June 1934, in *War and the Fourth International*, Trotsky wrote that "at the beginning of a new war . . . we cannot doubt for a single moment that this time the shift of the masses to the road of revolution will occur much faster, more decisively and relentlessly than during the first imperialist war. A new wave of insurrections can and must become victorious in the whole capitalist world."[174] The manner in which James decided to

conclude *World Revolution* was quite in keeping with Trotsky's perspective: "Cowards and cynics talk of an age of barbarism, as if mankind will destroy itself in the coming war for Hitler, for Mussolini, or for king and country. Let 80,000 civilians, one per cent of the population of Greater London, be massacred in war, and the revolution is on the order of the day, and the same applies to every other great European city."[175]

As Duncan Hallas once noted, "There was an element of near-messianism in Trotsky's conceptions at this time. In a desperately difficult situation, with fascism in the ascendant, defeat piled on defeat for the workers' movement and a new world war imminent, the banner of revolution had to be flown, the programme of communism reasserted, until the revolution itself transformed the situation."[176] The tiny size of the Trotskyist movement was not a decisive factor, given Trotsky's reminder that they were still larger in number than the genuinely internationalist and revolutionary left at the outbreak of the Great War. In the spring of 1935 Trotsky wrote an *Open Letter for the Fourth International,* claiming "genuinely revolutionary organisations, or at least groups, exist in all countries. They are closely bound together ideologically, and in part also organisationally. Even at present they represent a force incomparably more influential, homogeneous, and steeled than the 'Zimmerwald left,' which in the fall of 1915 took the initiative in preparing for the Third International."[177] The resulting "Zimmerwald mentality" among Trotskyists helps explain the confidence and optimism with which James concluded *World Revolution,* noting how "the energy and determination and courage of one man who has given his life to the movement" [Leon Trotsky] has ensured that "the ideological basis of the new International is so quickly ready" and, accordingly, in the looming war, "the will and courage of a few men will make history." As James put it in 1937 in *Fight,* in similarly slightly messianic fashion, "a few hundred[s] of us can face the future with enormous confidence. Once we get a strong nucleus we shall grow automatically."[178]

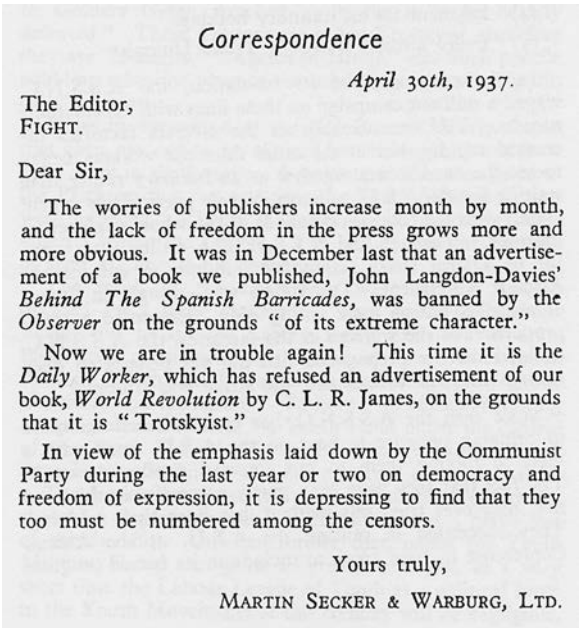
Such an overly optimistic perspective was one of the limitations of James's intellectual formation and training as a Marxist in the minuscule and persecuted Trotskyist movement. Indeed, James acknowledged many of the Trotskyist movement's limitations at the time: "The Trotskyists have committed serious errors. Our isolation, leading us to sectarianism, the polemical character of our propaganda and agitation, lack of contact with the mass movement, leading to bitter internal quarrels and splits, the imitation of Trotsky's faults by followers incapable of imitating his virtues, these and other grave errors no serious Bolshevik-Leninist would deny. But where was

there ever a movement which did not carry the defect of its virtues? Today our political line is a thousand times justified."[179]

Nonetheless, *World Revolution* should still be remembered and placed alongside Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* and Victor Serge's *Russia Twenty Years After*[180] (all first published in English in 1937) as part of a classic Marxist trilogy on the destiny and fate of the Russian Revolution. Those few scholars and historians of the day who were prepared to examine such matters seriously recognized the value of the work. As E. H. Carr, who would emerge as a respected historian of the Comintern in his own right, put it in 1937, *World Revolution* is "decidedly useful" as "in his analysis of the course of the Russian revolution and of the point at which it took the wrong turning, Mr. James displays commendable independence of judgment and desire to arrive at the truth."[181] Reviewing the work in the *Manchester Guardian*, the Scottish liberal journalist John Martin Douglas Pringle noted that

> Mr. James is always a lively critic. He writes throughout with passionate and lofty scorn for every living Communist, Liberal, and Social Democrat, and the utmost contempt for their ideas. But though fiercely partisan and inspired by all the fury of a doctrinaire misunderstood, his book is thorough and well documented. . . . [H]e makes a strong case for everything he so violently asserts, and many who read his book will feel there is a good deal to be said for "Trotskyism." Others will at least be delighted by the righteous rage which torments his heart and forms his literary style.[182]

James himself remembered it as "a piece of work which was recognised everywhere as worthwhile," and it even garnered positive reviews as far away as Australia and came to the notice of the conservative American journal *Foreign Affairs*.[183] There is no doubt it filled an important vacuum in the literature of the non-Stalinist Left in Britain. Fenner Brockway reviewed James's book in the *New Leader* and, while unsurprisingly finding faults with its Trotskyist "bias," still declared it "a great contribution to Socialist history and thought."[184] The veteran British socialist Raymond Postgate in the *New Statesman* described James's *World Revolution* as "unique of its kind" and "very badly needed," while the economic historian Hugh Lancelot Beales, reviewing the work in Postgate's new left-wing monthly *Fact*—a series to which James would soon contribute his volume *A History of Negro Revolt* in 1938—noted "we welcome Mr. James's illuminating essay . . . a careful, disciplined anti-Stalinist history of the course of the revolution since 1917."[185]



Correspondence

April 30th, 1937.

The Editor,
FIGHT.

Dear Sir,

The worries of publishers increase month by month, and the lack of freedom in the press grows more and more obvious. It was in December last that an advertisement of a book we published, John Langdon-Davies' *Behind The Spanish Barricades,* was banned by the *Observer* on the grounds "of its extreme character."

Now we are in trouble again! This time it is the *Daily Worker,* which has refused an advertisement of our book, *World Revolution* by C. L. R. James, on the grounds that it is "Trotskyist."

In view of the emphasis laid down by the Communist Party during the last year or two on democracy and freedom of expression, it is depressing to find that they too must be numbered among the censors.

Yours truly,

MARTIN SECKER & WARBURG, LTD.

Correspondence from Secker and Warburg concerning *World Revolution* (in *Fight,* June 1937).

Despite Communist denunciation, and despite the fact it was on sale for the not inconsiderable sum of 12s 6d, Warburg remembers it "sold moderately well."[186] Indeed, even some British Communists of the 1930s were intrigued enough to risk a brief look. Tom Kemp, who was later to break with the CPGB after 1956 and join the Trotskyist movement, recalled that, "back in the 1930s, worried about the Moscow Trials, I had a surreptitious look at *The Revolution Betrayed* or C. L. R. James's *World Revolution* in the public library, only to hastily put it away if a friend approached."[187] Outside Britain, the American Trotskyist movement published an edition through their Pioneer Press, but though the work had no real counterpart in the United States, it did not attract many readers on the American left.[188] Meanwhile, the British colonial customs authorities, with James now himself under surveillance as a threat to imperial "security," naturally moved to censor its sale across the British Empire, forbidding the import of a work that fervently denounced "the violence and plunder which is called British rule in India" into India itself.[189] However, as Al Richardson notes of *World Revolution,* "This

did not prevent it from being smuggled in and from exercising some influence. . . . G. Selvarajatnan, who later became leader of the great strike in the Madras textile mills, was converted to Trotskyism upon reading it, and [the Sri Lankan Trotskyist] Leslie Goonewardene's *Rise and Fall of the Comintern* [written under the pseudonym "K. Tilak"], published ten years afterwards in Bombay, was largely based on it."[190]

World Revolution Today

In June 1936, Trotsky had insisted that "the miserable collapse of the Third International" meant that "without the slightest exaggeration it may be said: The whole world situation is determined by *the crisis of the proletarian leadership*" and so what was now critically necessary was "the purposeful selection of the cadres of a new International."[191] After writing *World Revolution* and moving to the United States in 1938, however, over the next decade or so of activism inside the crisis-ridden Trotskyist movement and alongside thinkers like Raya Dunayevskaya and Grace Lee Boggs, James came to break fundamentally with this argument. In 1950, James and his co-thinkers published *State Capitalism and World Revolution*, which stressed how with "the new stage of world economy"—global state capitalism, East and West—"the crisis of the revolution" was no longer solving "the crisis of revolutionary leadership," which necessitated building alternative revolutionary parties to counter both social democracy and Stalinism, but rather overcoming "the crisis of the self-mobilization of the proletariat," "exactly the opposite."[192] As the preface to the second edition of *State Capitalism and World Revolution* (1956) put it, "What type of new organisation do we propose? We do not propose any. It is sufficient to say that in historical terms, the new organisations will come as Lilburne's Levellers Party came, as the sections and popular societies of Paris in 1793, as the Commune in 1871 and the Soviets in 1905, with not a single soul having any concrete ideas about them until they appeared in all their power and glory."[193]

Such a developing political perspective saw James and his co-thinkers break with the official Trotskyist movement in 1951, with the result that *World Revolution* found itself sitting awkwardly, literally orphaned, within the wider corpus of James's Marxism. During the 1960s, we even find James himself lacking (and unable to easily acquire) a personal copy of the work.[194] In his later years, however, in his unfinished autobiography, for example, James would look back on *World Revolution* with a degree of nostalgia.

> When I returned to England from the United States in 1953 I found anti-Stalinism well established and somewhat to my surprise I found that *World Revolution* was the book with which many young people were educating themselves on the anti-Stalinist politics that they wished to carry out. By then though I had broken with Trotskyism two years before, but that did not seem to trouble them. People continuously wanted copies of the book, despite the fact that I had repudiated much that was in it, and in 1970 Kraus Reprints photocopied the old edition exactly as it had been written. I re-read it and found that it contained an astonishing amount of material dealing with these periods, well organised, and, in 1970, more readable than it was in 1937.[195]

Part of the attraction of *World Revolution* for this younger generation of the New Left, one suspects, was because, as Paul Le Blanc has noted, "throughout, James demonstrates the utter incompatibility of the bureaucratic and authoritarian qualities of Stalinism with the revolutionary, democratic, scientific, and humanistic qualities of Marxism."[196] James's Trotskyism meant his Marxism was from the first thoroughly imbued with the spirit of "socialism from below," to use Hal Draper's term. As James wrote in his discussion of "Lenin and Socialism," "The creative capacity of the masses—he [Lenin] believed in it as no other leader of the workers ever did. That creative capacity had hitherto been seen only in revolution. The Soviet system based on the masses in the factories was to organise this creativeness not only for purpose of government but also for production, linking the two closer and closer together until ultimately the all-embracing nature of production by the whole of society rendered the State superfluous."[197]

Today, those interested in the history of the Communist International, from its founding in 1919 as a revolutionary body through to its transformation into a body at the service of Soviet foreign policy until its winding up by Stalin in 1943, can read powerful firsthand accounts and testimony, such as Victor Serge's classic *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* and Alfred Rosmer's *Lenin's Moscow*.[198] Readers also can today access comprehensive translations of the proceedings of the Comintern's first four congresses (1919–1922), thanks to the labors of John Riddell.[199] More definitive histories of the Comintern have since been written, most notably by Pierre Broué, and will no doubt continue to be written in the future, making use, for example, of the opening of the Comintern archives since the early 1990s. James's *World Revolution*, however, still stands out as not only one of the very first accounts

of the Comintern ever to be written, but more critically—as Duncan Hallas noted—one of the first accounts "written in English from a revolutionary socialist point of view."[200] As the Scottish socialist Hamish Henderson noted in 1988, *World Revolution* "is still one of the most concise expositions of the deformations and distortions that a principled Marxist revolutionary had to combat in the period when Stalin was consolidating his power."[201]

The rationale for this republication of C. L. R. James's *World Revolution* on the centenary of the Russian Revolution of 1917 is then clear, and the work deserves and demands to be recognized as a critical point of reference in the reflections and debates under way about the meaning and significance of that inspiring world-historical event for the twentieth century. There are surely few finer introductions to these questions for a new generation of activists than James's *World Revolution*, much of which retains all its full relevance and importance today.

Notes

1. Ian Birchall, *Tony Cliff: A Marxist for His Time* (London: Bookmarks, 2011), 280. See also Christian Høgsbjerg, "C. L. R. James and the British New Left," *Socialist History* 51 (2017).
2. Christopher Hitchens, *Hitch-22: A Memoir* (London: Atlantic, 2010), 90.
3. Christopher Hitchens, "Minority Report," *Nation*, July 3, 1989, 7; C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (London: Penguin, 2001).
4. According to one observer, Ian Birchall, James apparently commented at one point in his speech, slightly tongue-in-cheek, "At that time in the Trotskyist movement, I more or less was the Third World." Quoted in James D. Young, *The World of C. L. R. James: His Unfragmented Vision* (Glasgow: Clydeside, 1999), 259.
5. C. L. R. James, *World Revolution, 1917–1936: The Rise and Fall of the Communist International* (Atlantic Heights, NJ: Humanities Press, 1994) [in citations to this edition, page numbers for the present volume follow in brackets].
6. Kent Worcester, *C. L. R. James: A Political Biography* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 45, 246.
7. C. L. R. James, "Speech to Hackney Black Alliance [October 1983]," in Gaverne Bennett and Christian Høgsbjerg (eds.), *Celebrating C. L. R. James in Hackney, London* (London: Redwords, 2015), 41.
8. Quoted in Peter Linebaugh, "Introduction" to Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man and Common Sense* (London: Verso, 2009), xxv.
9. Monty Johnstone, "Internationalism," in Tom Bottomore (ed.), *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 232.

10. Karl Marx, "Inaugural Address of the International Working Men's Association," in David Fernbach (ed.), *The First International and After: Political Writings of Karl Marx*, vol. 3 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), 81.

11. See Tony Martin, "Revolutionary Upheaval in Trinidad: Gleanings from British and American Sources," in *The Pan-African Connection: From Slavery to Garvey and Beyond* (Dover, MA: Majority Press, 1984), 47–58.

12. C. L. R. James, "Proconsuls, Beware: A Cautionary Tale," *Port of Spain Gazette*, September 11, 1932. For James's own impressions of London after arriving in 1932, see Nicholas Laughlin (ed.), *Letters from London: Seven Essays by C. L. R. James* (Oxford: Signal, 2003).

13. For evidence of James's emerging interest in the Russian Revolution in this period, see C. L. R. James, "Colourful Personality [Madame Zorina]," *Port of Spain Gazette*, December 13, 1935. For more on Zorina, see "A Russian Soprano," *West Australian*, October 27, 1931. I discuss the profound impact that his reading of Trotsky's *History* made on James in Christian Høgsbjerg, *C. L. R. James in Imperial Britain* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

14. The phrase "prophet outcast" comes from Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Outcast: Trotsky: 1929–1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). For James's review of this volume of Deutscher's classic biography of Trotsky, see C. L. R. James, "Indomitable Rebel," *New Society*, November 28, 1963.

15. David Widgery, "C. L. R. James," in David Widgery, *Preserving Disorder: Selected Essays 1968–88* (London: Pluto, 1989), 123. As James recalled, by the end of 1933 he "was already a long way towards becoming a Trotskyist." See C. L. R. James, "Writings from *The Nation*: Notes on the Life of George Padmore," in Anna Grimshaw (ed.), *The C. L. R. James Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 291. On James's reading, see also C. L. R. James, "Charlie Lahr" [1975], an unpublished manuscript in the possession of David Goodway.

16. Sam Bornstein and Al Richardson, *Against the Stream: A History of the Trotskyist Movement in Britain, 1924–1938* (London: Socialist Platform, 1986), 121, 137, 143, 150. See also Duncan Hallas, "Revolutionaries and the Labour Party," *International Socialism* 16 (1982): 15–16.

17. Gidon Cohen, *The Failure of a Dream: The Independent Labour Party from Disaffiliation to World War II* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2007), 15, 31.

18. Al Richardson, Clarence Chrysostom, and Anna Grimshaw, *C. L. R. James and British Trotskyism: An Interview* (London: Socialist Platform, 1987), 1. For a description of one of these meetings in 1934, see Louise Cripps, *C. L. R. James: Memories and Commentaries* (London: Cornwall, 1997), 11–12, 16.

19. Esther and Izrael Heiger were soon to separate, Esther declaring "I felt that there was no time for academics like Izrael in a world that was going to blow up any minute," and moving in with Vajda. Elspeth Cameron, *Earle Birney: A Life* (Toronto: Viking, 1994), 142–43.

20. C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (London: Hutchinson, 1969), 249. One "Hans V" wrote a humorous review of *The Intelligentsia of Great Britain* by Dmitry Mirsky (Hans V, "England's Intellectuals," *New International* [August 1935], 2, no. 5).
21. Richardson, Chrysostom, and Grimshaw, *C. L. R. James and British Trotskyism*, 2.
22. See John McIlroy, "John Archer (1909–2000)," *Revolutionary History* 8, no. 1 (2001).
23. Quoted in Anthony Bogues, *Caliban's Freedom: The Early Political Thought of C. L. R. James* (London: Pluto, 1997), 31.
24. Richardson, Chrysostom, and Grimshaw, *C. L. R. James and British Trotskyism*, 1. See also Bornstein and Richardson, *Against the Stream*, 168.
25. Cripps, *C. L. R. James*, 12. On James's address, see Høgsbjerg, *C. L. R. James in Imperial Britain*, 89.
26. For James's warm recollections of Arthur Ballard, see Richardson, Chrysostom, and Grimshaw, *C. L. R. James and British Trotskyism*, 2.
27. For more on Birney, who used the pseudonym "Earle Robertson," and his Trotskyist activism in Britain, see Cameron, *Earle Birney*.
28. For more on Hilary Sumner-Boyd (1910–76), see Bornstein and Richardson, *Against the Stream*, 120, 231. Charles Sumner (1811–74), an American political orator and senator from Massachusetts, was the leader of the antislavery forces in Massachusetts and a leader of the Radical Republicans in the United States Senate during the American Civil War. During Reconstruction, he fought to minimize the power of the ex-Confederates and to guarantee equal rights to the freedmen.
29. Cripps, *C. L. R. James*, 13–14.
30. Charles Wesley Ervin, *Tomorrow Is Ours: The Trotskyist Movement in India and Ceylon, 1935–48* (Colombo: Social Scientists Association, 2006), 89–90, 92, 152, 261. See also Charles Wesley Ervin, "Trotskyism in India; Part One: Origins through World War Two (1935–45)," *Revolutionary History* 1, no. 4 (1988–89). Gupta returned to India at the start of the Second World War to become a stockbroker, an important Trotskyist in Calcutta, and ultimately an MP. For more on Gupta, see the National Archives, Kew, London [TNA]: KV/2/1824/9a.
31. Ervin, *Tomorrow Is Ours*, 70, 251–52, 272, 276–78. See also George Jan Lerski, *Origins of Trotskyism in Ceylon: A Documentary History of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, 1935–1942* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 11.
32. Richardson, Chrysostom, and Grimshaw, *C. L. R. James and British Trotskyism*, 2. On Ballard's activism, see TNA: KV/2/1824/31a. Ballard would later review James's *The Black Jacobins*. See Arthur Ballard, "The Greatest Slave Revolt in History," *New Leader*, December 9, 1938.
33. Cameron, *Earle Birney.*
34. Other members of the Marxist Group at this stage included a German refugee, Frederick Marzillier; two South Africans, Ted Grant and Max Basch (Sid Frost); Arthur Cooper; Wally Graham; the Australian Dr. Ryan Lyndal Worrall; Max Nicholls; Roma Dewar; Sid Kemp; Hilda Lane; Joe Pawsey; John Robinson; Tony

Doncaster; and George Weston (Morris). See Bornstein and Richardson, *Against the Stream*, 167–68. See also Martin Upham, "The Marxist Group in the ILP (1933–1936)," http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/revhist/upham/04upham.html (accessed June 30, 2013); and Hallas, "Revolutionaries and the Labour Party," 17.

35. Robert Alexander, *International Trotskyism, 1929–1985: A Documented Analysis of the Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 443. As Archer remembered, an "inner group" led by Harber and Matlow consisted of a dozen comrades, including Archer himself, Stuart Kirby, James, Birney, May Matlow (Bert Matlow's partner), Margaret Johns, Esther Heiger, Ted Grant, and Hans Vajda. Cameron, *Earle Birney*, 133.

36. Cohen, *Failure of a Dream*, 31.

37. Bornstein and Richardson, *Against the Stream*, 128, 166, 196, 243.

38. For more on the early influence of Trotsky on James, see Høgsbjerg, *C. L. R. James in Imperial Britain*, 74–78.

39. For more on James's activism for the IAFA, see Høgsbjerg, *C. L. R. James in Imperial Britain*, 89–100.

40. C. L. R. James, "The Workers and Sanctions: Why the ILP and the Communists Take an Opposite View," *New Leader*, October 25, 1935.

41. Duncan Hallas, *The Comintern* (London: Bookmarks, 1985), 143. Hallas notes "a most significant feature of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern was the careful avoidance of anti-imperialist speeches, which had still featured prominently at the sixth." For more detail on some of the processes and shifts under way with the turn to the "Popular Front," see Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora, 1919–1939* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2013).

42. James, *World Revolution*, 386 [372].

43. On Braithwaite, see Christian Høgsbjerg, *Chris Braithwaite: Mariner, Renegade and Castaway* (London: Redwords, 2014).

44. C. L. R. James, "Notes on the Life of George Padmore [1960]," 21, 29. This is an unpublished manuscript, a copy of which can be found in the library of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London. For more on Padmore, see Leslie James, *George Padmore and Decolonization from Below: Pan-Africanism, the Cold War and the End of Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

45. There is now a substantial growing literature related to exploring the relationship of the Communist International to black liberation struggles and Pan-Africanism. See, for example, Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism*; and Holger Weiss, *Framing a Radical African Atlantic: African American Agency, West African Intellectuals and the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), both reviewed by Ken Olende in "The Comintern and the African Atlantic," *International Socialism* 145 (2015).

46. James, "Writings from *The Nation*," 292.

47. Richardson, Chrysostom, and Grimshaw, *C. L. R. James and British Trotskyism*, 1.
48. Martin Glaberman (ed.), *Marxism for Our Times: C. L. R. James on Revolutionary Organisation* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1999), 79.
49. Selwyn R. Cudjoe, "The Audacity of It All: C. L. R. James's Trinidadian Background," in Paget Henry and Paul Buhle (eds.), *C. L. R. James's Caribbean* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 46.
50. James, "Notes on the Life of George Padmore [1960]," 21, 29.
51. James, *World Revolution*, 102 [141]. On James's visit to Ireland during the 1930s, see Høgsbjerg, *C. L. R. James in Imperial Britain*, 100. See also J. R. Johnson [C. L. R. James], "Ireland and the Revolutionary Tradition of Easter Week," *Labor Action*, April 14, 1941.
52. For more on James and Nan Milton, see C. L. R. James, "Report on Activities in the Provinces" [1938], Appendix B.
53. James, "Charlie Lahr," 6–7. James's friend, the German anarchist bookseller Charlie Lahr, was also on hand to help James fill in any remaining gaps in his collection, "or point out to me a special copy with a useful article for exposing these scoundrels."
54. Fredric Warburg, *An Occupation for Gentlemen* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1959), 206, 211. Among the other writers recruited through the ILP by Warburg was George Orwell.
55. C. L. R. James, "Lectures on *The Black Jacobins*," *Small Axe* 8 (2000): 70.
56. Glaberman, *Marxism for Our Times*, 80.
57. See Bornstein and Richardson, *Against the Stream*, 177; and John Archer, "C. L. R. James in Britain, 1932–38," *Revolutionary History* 6, nos. 2–3 (1996): 61. On James in South Wales, see also C. L. R. James, "National Stay-In Strike? How the Miners Could Win an Increase—What I Learned in Wales," *New Leader*, November 1, 1935.
58. Leon Trotsky, "On Dictators and the Heights of Oslo: A Letter to an English Comrade," *New International* 3, no. 3 (June 1936). For more on the ILP conference, see the discussions in Cohen, *The Failure of a Dream*; and Bornstein and Richardson, *Against the Stream*.
59. Harry Wicks, *Keeping My Head: The Memoirs of a British Bolshevik* (London: Socialist Platform, 1992), 179.
60. Personal communication with the late Sidney Robinson (1914–2012), June 4, 2009. I am indebted to Christopher Hall for putting me in touch with Robinson.
61. Al Richardson, "Introduction to the Paperback Edition," in James, *World Revolution*, xii–xiii.
62. Trotsky Archives, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Bms Russ 13.1 (2068–69).
63. Alexander, *International Trotskyism*, 447. Bert Matlow (Marxist Group) and Charlie van Gelderen (Bolshevik-Leninist group) also attended from Britain as observers.
64. Richardson, Chrysostom, and Grimshaw, *C. L. R. James and British Trotskyism*, 9; Archer, "C. L. R. James and British Trotskyism, 1932–38," 64.

65. See "Leon Lesoil," *Revolutionary History* 7, no. 1 (1998): 69–73; David Cotterill (ed.), *The Serge-Trotsky Papers: Correspondence and Other Writings between Victor Serge and Leon Trotsky* (London: Pluto, 1994), 223. James later described Lesoil as "one of the finest men I ever knew . . . hard as steel, honest as the day, gentle and very kind." See Anna Grimshaw (ed.), *Special Delivery: The Letters of C. L. R. James to Constance Webb, 1939–1948* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 85. Lesoil died in a Nazi concentration camp in 1942.

66. On Pierre Naville, see Michael Löwy, *Morning Star: Surrealism, Marxism, Anarchism, Situationism, Utopia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 43–62.

67. Internal ECCI document quoted in William J. Chase, *Enemies within the Gate? The Comintern and Stalinist Repression, 1934–1939* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 158.

68. R. Page Arnot, "The Soviet Trial," *Labour Monthly* (October 1936): 617–18.

69. Socialist Platform, *Harry Wicks, 1905–1989: A Memorial* (London: Socialist Platform, 1989), 14–15.

70. "Trotsky and Terrorism: The Workers Must Demand an International Working-Class Investigation," *Fight* 1, no. 1 (October 1936): 15.

71. Bornstein and Richardson, *Against the Stream*, 231. For more on the British Committee for the Defence of Leon Trotsky, see the papers of Jock Haston, Hull History Centre, DJH/18.

72. Socialist Platform, *Harry Wicks*, 15. For an outstanding essay analyzing the Moscow Trials, see Brian Pearce, "The British Stalinists and the Moscow Trials," in Brian Pearce and Michael Woodhouse, *A History of Communism in Britain* (London: Bookmarks, 1995).

73. Socialist Platform, *Harry Wicks*, 17. It seems this meeting was organized by the Friends of the Soviet Union on September 29, 1936. According to a Special Branch report on that date, James attended and spoke for five minutes in the discussion. "He commented adversely on the trial and showed that his sympathies were with the prisoners." See TNA: KV/2/1824/12.

74. "The famous one was when they [the British Communists] held a meeting and I came there at nine o'clock. They were speaking when I came in. They knew what was up and the chairman spoke for ten minutes and said that they had a full discussion of the question and must draw the meeting to a close." Richardson, Chrysostom, and Grimshaw, *C. L. R. James and British Trotskyism*, 7.

75. C. L. R. James, "World Revolution," C. L. R. James Collection, Box 14, folder 309, Alma Jordan Library, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad.

76. Cripps, *C. L. R. James*, 178.

77. Wicks, *Keeping My Head*, ix, 123–24, 180; Socialist Platform, *Harry Wicks*, 14; and Richardson, "Introduction to the Paperback Edition," xiii.

78. James, *World Revolution*, xxvi [64].

79. James, "Charlie Lahr," 7–8.

80. Wicks, *Keeping My Head*, 180. James's flat on 9 Heathcote Street was located just off Gray's Inn Road. James spent part of the winter of 1936 in Brighton working on *World Revolution*. Pizer, a former CPGB member, wrote a review of James's *Black Jacobins* (Dorothy Pizer, "A Lesson in Revolution," *Controversy* [January 1939]: 28).

81. James, *World Revolution*, 179 [413n8]. Though James could obviously read French, it seems likely he would have had to rely on others for translations of any material in German or Russian.

82. James, *World Revolution*, 132 [410n3].

83. See Richardson, "Introduction to the Paperback Edition," xv; Bornstein and Richardson, *Against the Stream*, 256.

84. Cohen, *Failure of a Dream*, 111.

85. Tony Cliff, *Trotsky, 1927–1940: The Darker the Night the Brighter the Star* (London: Bookmarks, 1993), 301–3.

86. John Archer, "Britain: Entrism and the Labour Party, 1931–1937," *Revolutionary History* 8, no. 1 (2001): 260.

87. Deutscher, *Prophet Outcast*, 360.

88. Chase, *Enemies within the Gate?*, 192, 202–3.

89. Richardson, Chrysostom, and Grimshaw, *C. L. R. James and British Trotskyism*, 8; Alexander, *International Trotskyism*, 451; Bornstein and Richardson, *Against the Stream*, 231. According to Special Branch, about nine hundred people attended this meeting, and there was organized heckling of speakers by members of the Friends of the Soviet Union. TNA: KV/2/1824/5b.

90. R. Page Arnot, "The Trotskyist Trial," *Labour Monthly* (March 1937): 181.

91. See C. L. R. James, "The Second Moscow Trial," *Fight* (February/April/May 1937).

92. TNA: KV/2/1824/6a. On Pritt, see Bornstein and Richardson, *Against the Stream*, 217. For a report of a speech made by James at a meeting of the Marxist Group on March 11, 1937, see TNA: KV/2/1824/7b.

93. Charlie van Gelderen, "C. L. R. James—Thinker, Writer, Revolutionary," in Scott McLemee and Paul Le Blanc (eds.), *C. L. R. James and Revolutionary Marxism: Selected Writings of C. L. R. James, 1939–49* (Amherst, NJ: Humanity Books, 1994), 42. See also Bornstein and Richardson, *Against the Stream*, 232.

94. Widgery, "C. L. R. James," 123–24. For James's meetings with Klement in Paris, see Cripps, *C. L. R. James*, 51–53. In July 1938, Klement, a German political émigré who was still serving as a secretary of the Fourth International, was abducted by Stalin's secret police while in Paris and murdered, his horribly mutilated body later found in the River Seine. See Deutscher, *Prophet Outcast*, 407–8, and *Fight*, Second Series, 1/4 (August 1938).

95. James, *World Revolution*, xxv [63], 363 [353].

96. Franz Borkenau, *World Communism: A History of the Communist International* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1971), 430.

97. James, *World Revolution,* xxvi [64]. See also Leon Trotsky, *The Third International after Lenin* (New York: Pathfinder, 1970), and the two volumes of Leon Trotsky, *The First Five Years of the Communist International* (London: New Park, 1973).
98. Borkenau, *World Communism*, 419, 421–22.
99. Leon Trotsky, *The Lessons of October* (London: Bookmarks, 1987).
100. James, *World Revolution*, 143 [175].
101. James, *World Revolution*, 43–44 [93].
102. C. L. R. James, "Discussions with Trotsky," in *At the Rendezvous of History: Selected Writings of C. L. R. James*, vol. 3 (London: Allison and Busby, 1984), 60. See Appendix C.
103. James, "Discussions with Trotsky," 60.
104. James, "Discussions with Trotsky," 60–64. For a discussion on the views of Stalin with respect to Germany in 1923, see Tony Cliff, *Trotsky, 1923–1927: Fighting the Rising Stalinist Bureaucracy* (London: Bookmarks, 1991), 68–75. For scholarship in English on the German Revolution, see, for example, Pierre Broué, *The German Revolution, 1917–1923* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2006); Chris Harman, *The Lost Revolution: Germany, 1918 to 1923* (London: Bookmarks, 1997); Victor Serge, *Witness to the German Revolution* (London: Redwords, 2000); David Fernbach (ed.), *In the Steps of Rosa Luxemburg: Selected Writings of Paul Levi* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2012); and Ben Fowkes (ed.), *The German Left and the Weimar Republic: A Selection of Documents* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2015).
105. James, *World Revolution*, 228 [242]. On the Chinese Revolution, see the classic account by Harold Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1938). James helped Isaacs to get the book published with Secker and Warburg. The original edition carried an introduction by Trotsky.
106. James, *World Revolution*, 289 [293].
107. James, *World Revolution*, 309 [309–10].
108. David Goodway, "Charles Lahr," *London Magazine* (June–July 1977).
109. James, "Charlie Lahr," 8–12. See also the discussion in C. L. R. James, *Notes on Dialectics: Hegel, Marx, Lenin* (London: Allison and Busby, 1980), 38, 149.
110. James, "Discussions with Trotsky," 60–64.
111. Paul Buhle, *C. L. R. James: The Artist as Revolutionary* (London: Verso, 1993), 51.
112. This argument obviously builds in part on the discussion of the contradictions of *World Revolution* undertaken by others. See, for example, Bogues, *Caliban's Freedom*, 33–38.
113. James, *World Revolution*, 126 [162], 358 [349]. In 1940, James would note of Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* that "despite unceasing criticism of his methods and his conclusions from all quarters, the fact remains that over the years, there is simply no analysis of the Soviet Union worth bothering about except his own." C. L. R. James, "Trotsky's Place in History [1940]," in McLemee and Le Blanc, *C. L. R. James and Revolutionary Marxism*, 97.

114. George Padmore, *How Britain Rules Africa* (London: Wishart, 1936), 292.
115. "Editorial: A Call to Revolutionaries," *Fight* 1, no. 5 (April 1937).
116. James, *World Revolution*, 16–17 [71].
117. James, *World Revolution*, 301 [302], 409 [390], 411–12 [391–92].
118. As Al Richardson notes, "James was acquainted with the 'State Capitalist' theories about the USSR held by the French Communist group led by Henri Chazé." Richardson, "Introduction to the Paperback Edition," xv.
119. TNA: KV/2/1824/12. "Stalin, he said, was striving for National Socialism, while Trotsky was upholding International Socialism."
120. James, *World Revolution*, 345–46 [420nn31–33]. In 1907, Peter Petroff had arrived in Britain as a refugee from Russia and worked with John Maclean and other socialists up in Glasgow, learning English and relating to them in turn something of the history of the Russian revolutionary movement. Imprisoned during the Great War, Petroff maintained links with Trotsky and returned to Russia in 1918, joining the Soviet government. By the 1930s, after being sent to Germany as a special envoy and witnessing the disastrous role that Stalinism played at the time of the rise of Hitler, he had broken with the Communist International. See Harry McShane and Joan Smith, *Harry McShane: No Mean Fighter* (London: Pluto, 1978), 77–80, 89–90, 139, 151–52; Murdoch Rodgers and James J. Smyth, "Petroff, Peter (1884–1947)," in William Knox (ed.), *Scottish Labour Leaders 1918–39: A Biographical Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1984); Walter Kendall, *The Revolutionary Movement in Britain 1900–21: The Origins of British Communism* (London: Littlehampton, 1969); and Nan Milton, *John Maclean* (London: Pluto, 1979), 108–12.
121. Peter Petroff and Irma Petroff, *The Secret of Hitler's Victory* (London: Hogarth, 1934), 123. See also Philip Wallace, "G.C.A.T.T. and the Archaeology of British Trotskyism," *Critique* 37, no. 2 (May 2009): 276.
122. James, *World Revolution*, 168 [413n3], 175 [201], 178 [203], 185 [208]. For more on Rosenberg, see Francis L. Carsten, "Arthur Rosenberg: Ancient Historian into Leading Communist," *Journal of Contemporary History* 8, no. 1 (1973).
123. For discussion of how Rosenberg's thesis differs from that of James, see Joseph Carter, "History of the CI," *New International* 4, no. 2 (February 1938): 61–62. The only other comparable work was the exiled Russian historian Michael Florinsky's *World Revolution and the USSR* (1933), which James noted "though bourgeois in outlook, has grasped the essentials of Russian history since 1924." James, *World Revolution*, 374 [421].
124. Arthur Rosenberg, *A History of Bolshevism: From Marx to the First Five Years' Plan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), viii, 236–37. In 1938, in *Democracy and Socialism*, Rosenberg reiterated the fact that during the 1920s "the Russian Revolution grew inert and Moscow became the capital of a bureaucratic system of state capitalism." Arthur Rosenberg, *Democracy and Socialism: A Contribution to the Political History of the Past 150 Years* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1939), vii, 339, 348.
125. Archer, "C. L. R. James in Britain, 1932–38," 73; Deutscher, *Prophet Outcast*, 46.

126. Boris Souvarine, *Stalin: A Critical Survey of Bolshevism* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1940), 564, 570; Christopher Phelps, "C. L. R. James and the Theory of State Capitalism," in Nelson Lichtenstein (ed.), *American Capitalism: Social Thought and Political Economy in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 165.

127. James, *World Revolution*, 140 [411n9]. Trotsky was less impressed with Souvarine's *Staline*. While he admitted that "the factual and documentary side of Souvarine's work is the product of long and conscientious research" he felt "the historical philosophy of the author is striking in its vulgarity." Leon Trotsky, "Stalinism and Bolshevism" [August 29, 1937], in Leon Trotsky, *Writings, 1936–37* (New York: Pathfinder, 1978), 425. See also Al Richardson, "Foreword," in *What Became of the Revolution: Selected Writings of Boris Souvarine* (London: Socialist Platform, 2001). Privately, Trotsky was less generous, writing to Philip Rahv in 1936 that Souvarine was "completely devoid of theoretical capacity" and he felt "his biography of Stalin is the work of a journalist, the essential value of which is derived from his quotations." Quoted in Archer, "C. L. R. James in Britain, 1932–38," 73.

128. Phelps, "C. L. R. James and the Theory of State Capitalism," 159–60.

129. James, *World Revolution*, 28 [80].

130. Frederick Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1907), 78.

131. James, *World Revolution*, 27–28 [79]. The Seventeenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held in January 1934, the "Congress of the Victors," had declared "the victory of socialism in all branches of national economy had abolished the exploitation of man by man." Quoted in Hallas, *Comintern*, 139.

132. James, *World Revolution*, 371 [359].

133. Trotsky felt the Stalinist bureaucracy was a "temporary" phenomenon, and in 1939 declared "Might we not place ourselves in a ludicrous position if we fixed to the Bonapartist oligarchy the nomenclature of a new ruling class just a few years or even a few months prior to its inglorious downfall?" See Leon Trotsky, *In Defense of Marxism* (New York: Pathfinder, 1976), 14; and Alex Callinicos, *Trotskyism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 21.

134. James, *World Revolution*, 296 [298].

135. Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (New York: Pathfinder, 1989), 245. One former comrade of James's from the Marxist Group, the Australian doctor and philosopher of science Dr. Ryan Lyndal Worrall, in late 1939 would be the first Trotskyist in Britain to put forward a substantial and sophisticated state capitalist analysis of Russia, in the ILP journal *Left*. See R. L. Worrall, "U.S.S.R.: Proletarian or Capitalist State?" *Left* 39 (December 1939). On Worrall, see "A Tribute to Ryan Worrall (1903–1995)," *Revolutionary History* 6, nos. 2–3 (1996). See also Phelps, "C. L. R. James and the Theory of State Capitalism," 165–66, 331–32; and Marcel van der Linden, *Western Marxism and the Soviet Union: A Survey of Critical Theories and Debates since 1917* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2007), 57–60.

136. On James's contemplating the idea of going to fight in Spain, presumably as part of the ILP contingent that was open to nonmembers such as George Orwell, I am indebted to personal information from Sam Weinstein, February 2, 2008, confirmed by Robert Hill, February 3, 2008. For more on James and the Spanish Civil War, see Christian Høgsbjerg, " 'The Fever and the Fret': C. L. R. James, the Spanish Civil War and the Writing of *The Black Jacobins*," *Critique* 44, nos. 1–2 (2016).
137. James, *World Revolution*, 406 [388].
138. James, *World Revolution*, 389 [374].
139. Andy Durgan, "Marxism, War and Revolution: Trotsky and the P.O.U.M.," *Revolutionary History* 9, no. 2 (2006): 51.
140. Gerd-Rainer Horn (ed.), *Letters from Barcelona: An American Woman in Revolution and Civil War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 172. Orr was also reading Souvarine's *Staline*. He and his partner, Lois, were released after nine days and later returned to America where they became Trotskyist activists (and met James himself). Thanks to Daniel Evans for this reference.
141. See the advertisement in *Fight* 1, no. 11 (November 1937).
142. C. L. R. James, "Introduction," in Mary Low and Juan Breá, *Red Spanish Notebook: The First Six Months of the Revolution and the Civil War* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1937), v–vii. See Appendix A in this volume.
143. Peter Davison (ed.), *The Complete Works of George Orwell*, vol. 11 (London: Secker and Warburg, 1998), 87.
144. Davison, *Complete Works of George Orwell*, vol. 11, 38.
145. Cripps, *C. L. R. James*, 21.
146. Davison, *Complete Works of George Orwell*, vol. 11, 87. For more on Orwell and "literary Trotskyism," see John Newsinger, *Orwell's Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1999) and for more on Orwell and James, see Christian Høgsbjerg, "C. L. R. James, George Orwell and 'Literary Trotskyism,'" *George Orwell Studies* 1, no. 2 (2017).
147. Mary Low and Juan Breá, *Red Spanish Notebook: The First Six Months of the Revolution and the Civil War* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1937), 254–55. One friend of Low and Breá's who traveled with them in Spain was the French surrealist poet Benjamin Péret who would in 1946 also describe the Soviet Union as state capitalist. See Van der Linden, *Western Marxism and the Soviet Union*, 108–10. It is interesting to learn from Andy Durgan that "in the early 1950s, the POUM adopted a State Capitalist analysis of the USSR and Eastern Bloc." Durgan, "Marxism, War and Revolution," 60.
148. George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (London: Penguin, 1989), 83. As Orwell noted of the Soviet Union in 1939, "Is it Socialism, or is it a peculiarly vicious form of state capitalism? All the political controversies . . . for two years past really circle round this question." Quoted in John Newsinger, "Destroying the Myth: George Orwell and Soviet Communism," in Paul Flewers (ed.), *George Orwell: Enigmatic Socialist* (London: Socialist Platform, 2005), 138.

149. Raya Dunayevskaya, *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism* (Chicago: News and Letters Committee, 1992), x–xi.
150. Richardson, Chrysostom, and Grimshaw, *C. L. R. James and British Trotskyism*, 10. See also Deutscher, *Prophet Outcast*, 419–21.
151. Boris Souvarine, *Stalin: A Critical Survey of Bolshevism*, translated by C. L. R. James (New York: Longmans, Green, 1939).
152. James, *World Revolution*, 135 [169].
153. James, *World Revolution*, 147 [178–79].
154. James, *World Revolution*, 154 [184].
155. James, "Discussions with Trotsky," 55.
156. James, "Trotsky's Place in History," 103.
157. Borkenau, *Communist International*, 12.
158. James, *World Revolution*, 420 [399].
159. Trotsky had argued that Lenin's democratic centralism meant that "the organisation of the party substitutes itself for the party, the Central Committee substitutes itself for the organisation, and finally the dictator substitutes himself for the Central Committee." James, *World Revolution*, 51 [100].
160. James, *World Revolution*, 49–51 [99–100].
161. James, *World Revolution*, 50–52 [99–101].
162. James, *World Revolution*, 52–53 [101], 189 [212].
163. Richardson, Chrysostom, and Grimshaw, *C. L. R. James and British Trotskyism*, 9.
164. Buhle, *C. L. R. James*, 52.
165. Trotsky, *Writings, 1937–38*, 329. Trotsky also criticized Cannon for previously having "forgotten" to invite James over to the "Pan-American Conference" of Trotskyists after having agreed to do this.
166. "Six Questions to Trotskyists—and Their Answers," *Controversy* 18 (March 1938).
167. James, "Discussions with Trotsky," 62, 64.
168. Quoted in James D. Young, *Socialism since 1889: A Biographical History* (London: Pinter, 1988), 186.
169. James, *Notes on Dialectics*, 153.
170. Upham, "Marxist Group in the ILP (1933–1936)." See Harry Wicks, "World Revolution," *Fight* 1, no. 6 (May 1937); see also Carter, "History of the CI." Wicks's friendship with James was important for the attempted unification of the main British Trotskyist groups during this period, resulting in the formation of the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL) in 1938. As Wicks remembered, he was working with James "and I thought that all of us should be in that situation." Socialist Platform, *Harry Wicks*, 14. For a report of a meeting on March 4, 1938, at Essex Hall at which James and Wicks spoke on the Third Moscow Trial, see TNA: KV/2/1824/19a.
171. Warburg, *Occupation for Gentlemen*, 214–15.
172. *The Plebs* (May 1937).
173. *Fight* 1, no. 5 (April 1937).

174. Leon Trotsky, *Writings, 1933–34* (New York: Pathfinder, 1972), 329.
175. James, *World Revolution,* 420 [399].
176. Duncan Hallas, *Trotsky's Marxism* (London: Bookmarks, 1979), 95.
177. Leon Trotsky, *Writings, 1935–36* (New York: Pathfinder, 1970), 24.
178. James, *World Revolution*, 421 [399–400]; C. L. R. James, "The Struggle for the Fourth International," *Fight* 1, no. 11 (November 1937).
179. James, "Struggle for the Fourth International."
180. Victor Serge, *Russia Twenty Years After*, translated by Max Shachtman (New York: Hillman-Curl, 1937). Serge's work was first published under the title *Destiny of a Revolution*.
181. See *International Affairs* 16, no. 5 (September 1937). See the collected reviews in this edition.
182. J. D. M. P., "A West Indian 'Trotskyist,'" *Manchester Guardian*, June 1, 1937.
183. Worcester, *C. L. R. James*, 246; Robert Gale Woolbert, "Recent Books on International Relations," *Foreign Affairs* 16, no. 1 (October 1937): 177.
184. *New Leader*, April 16, 1937. For a discussion of Brockway's review, see Bornstein and Richardson, *Against the Stream*, 225.
185. Raymond Postgate, "Du Côté de Chez Trotsky," *New Statesman*, May 8, 1937; H. L. Beales, "Critics of Stalinism," *Fact* 3 (1937): 98. On Postgate, see Marc Mulholland, "How to Make a Revolution: The Historical and Political Writings of Raymond Postgate," *Socialist History* 49 (2016). On Beales, see Alexander Neil Hutton, "'A Repository, a Switchboard, a Dynamo': H. L. Beales, a Historian in a Mass Media Age," *Contemporary British History* 30, no. 3 (2016).
186. Warburg, *Occupation for Gentlemen*, 214–15. See also Ethel Mannin, *Comrade O Comrade: or, Low-Down on the Left* (London: Jarrolds, 1947), 5; and Bornstein and Richardson, *Against the Stream*, 219.
187. Terry Brotherstone and Geoff Pilling (eds.), *History, Economic History and the Future of Marxism: Essays in Memory of Tom Kemp* (London: Porcupine Press, 1996), 305. I am indebted to David Goodway for this reference.
188. Personal information, Paul Buhle, June 25, 2013. One reviewer of the American edition, George McLure, nonetheless noted that "despite its too obvious bias and its animus it deserves some serious attention" as it was "a close historical study of the theoretical differences within Marxist doctrine and the bitter struggle to which they have given rise within the organization and policies of the Soviet Union" and "does cast some light into a dark situation." McLure, "Proletariat v. the State," *New Republic*, August 25, 1937. For another review of the American edition, see W. D. Manning, "Russian Strife in Outline," *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* [New York] (n.d.). This is an unannotated newspaper cutting held in the C. L. R. James Collection [UWI], Box 8, folder 207.
189. James, *World Revolution*, 63 [109]; George Padmore, "Banned in India," *Tribune*, September 10, 1937, 13. Padmore also mentions that his own book *Africa and World*

Peace and another anti-imperialist work, Reginald Reynolds's *White Sahibs of India*, both like James's work published by Secker and Warburg in 1937, had also been banned from sale in India.

190. Bornstein and Richardson, *Against the Stream*, 264; Richardson, "Introduction to the Paperback Edition," xiii. *Rise and Fall of the Comintern* was published in Bombay in 1947 with a preface from James's friend and comrade Ajit Roy.

191. Trotsky, *Writings, 1935–36*, 111.

192. C. L. R. James, Raya Dunayevskaya, and Grace Lee Boggs, *State Capitalism and World Revolution* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1986), 58–59.

193. James, Dunayevskaya, and Boggs, *State Capitalism and World Revolution*, xxxiii.

194. As John Bracey recalls, "Shortly after C. L. R. arrived to teach at Northwestern University, we informed him that the library had a copy of his *World Revolution*. . . . C. L. R. had no copy of this major work of his and expressed a desire to obtain a copy. We offered to 'liberate' the copy from the library and give it to him. Our rationale: C. L. R. had created it; it was a product of his labor; and if anyone was entitled to a copy, it was C. L. R. He was horrified at our suggestion. He said that the bourgeoisie could accuse him of working for socialist revolution, but he would never let them accuse him of stealing." John Bracey, "Nello," in McLemee and Le Blanc, *C. L. R. James and Revolutionary Marxism*, 54.

195. C. L. R. James, "Notes for Autobiography," C. L. R. James Collection, Box 14, folder 309.

196. Paul Le Blanc, "Introduction: C. L. R. James and Revolutionary Marxism," in McLemee and Le Blanc, *C. L. R. James and Revolutionary Marxism*, 4.

197. James, *World Revolution*, 123 [159].

198. Victor Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary, 1901–1941* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2012); Alfred Rosmer, *Lenin's Moscow* (London: Bookmarks, 1987).

199. John Riddell's edited proceedings of "the Communist International in Lenin's time" have been published in several volumes with Pathfinder Press and, more recently, Brill.

200. Hallas, *Comintern*, 8. See Pierre Broué, *Histoire de l'Internationale communiste (1919–1943)* (Paris: Fayard, 1997).

201. Hamish Henderson, "Introduction," in Hamish Henderson (ed.), *Gramsci's Prison Letters* (London: Zwan, 1988), 19. Thanks to David Featherstone for this reference.