

Angeles was founded. To three Spanish soldiers—Domínguez, Nieto, Verdugo—in 1784 was granted most of the vast acreage surrounding the new settlement.

Leading the life of colonial *hacendados*, the trio devoted their limitless fields to raising cattle, producing what was needed for their own homely existence, and occasionally bartering hides and tallow for foreign goods brought in by smugglers, whalers or Spanish ships.

This rustic life continued for a generation with little interruption; the original grantees aged and died, their lands being divided among numerous progeny. Meanwhile, Spanish rule gave way to Mexican, and the arm of Mexico, never strong in remote frontier colonies, began to wither. Traders and settlers from the States filtered in, and were suddenly catapulted to power by the guns of the Mexican War and the "Gold Rush."

With them came the decline of California's Spanish patriarchs. Land sharks, money lenders, adventurers—all made their inroads on the old families' holdings, even after the United States Federal Land Commission of 1851 recognized validity of the Spanish titles. Bankruptcy and ruin of the pioneers followed and a new era dawned. Large estates became real estate promotions. Now and then the bubbles burst, but people continued to come, towns were born and became cities—until today several million Californians live on the lands of Dominguez, Nieto, and Verdugo.

This story has been simply and popularly told by Mr. Robinson in his fascinating book. No encyclopedia burdened with detail, it presents a clear picture, definitely marking the outlines of Southern California's phenomenal growth.

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The Black Jacobins. Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution. By CYRIL LIONEL ROBERT JAMES. (New York: The Dial Press, 1938. Pp. 316. Bibliography. Index. \$3.75.)

This book explores ground surveyed by T. Lothrop Stoddard twenty-five years ago, but with the class struggle replacing race conflict as the point of reference. The author is British, Negro, and Marxist, and it is not surprising to find in his work frequent allusion to world revolution and British imperialism in East Africa, leading ultimately from history to prophecy. No more, he says, than French colonists of 1798 could recognize Toussaint L'Ouverture in the foreman of Bréda can British colonials of 1938 imagine the genius and leadership latent in the black masses surrounding them, but it will

appear when the man and the hour are met. The hour will be determined by proletarian revolution in Europe, as Haiti's hour was struck by the intervention of the masses in the French Revolution.

Meanwhile the Haitian Revolution can be made the basis of an interesting study of the dependence of the masses on leadership and the reciprocal dependence of leadership on the masses. Because of his personality and advantages, Toussaint L'Ouverture could lead his bewildered people to great achievements, but he could neither launch the revolution nor complete it, being, in the last analysis, too bourgeois to take his followers into his confidence or to perceive the final goal. Dessalines, unfit for L'Ouverture's rôle, nevertheless had the strength and perception required to complete the task because he was a true man of the people.

One cannot expect cold objectivity in a Negro Marxist dealing with this subject (and indeed the author makes it plain that he would not regard that quality as a virtue), but let no one be frightened away from a good book on that account. It may be doubted whether any man could write with complete detachment of so passionate an affair as the Haitian Revolution. None ever has. This work has more of clarity and insight (and one may also say, of fairness) than any that has come to the reviewer's notice.

The author's sympathies and frame of reference are evident, but he tells his story with more restraint than can generally be found in works on this subject by others less plainly labeled. His judgments on Haitian men and events (which are all that concerns us) are balanced and acute. He neither idolizes his heroes nor presents their foes as fiends, but instead exposes human motives in each case with discernment. Written with spirit, his account is vivid, but he does not dwell unduly on the horrors of a peculiarly atrocious struggle which have tempted others to mere sensationalism. He finds his way with skill through kaleidoscopic sequences of events in both Haiti and France, achieving clarity where complexities of class, color, and section have reduced others to vague confusion.

Mr. James uses footnotes sparingly, but such as appear indicate a considerable acquaintance with archival material. Some of his conclusions—notably the thesis that Toussaint L'Ouverture would never have come into conflict with France had not France herself betrayed the Revolution—may be open to question, but on the whole the book is an illuminating study, provocative if not definitive.

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