First published in 1938 as the dark clouds of fascism amassed over Europe, CLR James’ classic study *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, described the efforts of enslaved Africans to found a Black Republic – Haiti – at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Yet it was written with another historical struggle on the horizon: the coming decolonization of Africa. Given the multiple historical coordinates of book, *The Black Jacobins* – and CLR James himself – offers us any number of lessons on the writing of history and the historian in society. This talk will explore some of these lessons, especially as they pertain to the writing of Black history during our current perilous times.