Review of Horne, Gerald, Red Seas: Ferdinand Smith and Radical Black Sailors in the United States and Jamaica. H-HOAC, H-Net Reviews. January, 2008. “The situation in the Sailors International Union/Sailors Union of the Pacific was arguably worse. Local democracy, job control, and anti-bureaucracy for the top leadership and numerous activists, steeped in the IWW tradition, meant in both theory and practice (and, of course, there were undoubtedly exceptions) the exclusion of African-American seamen from union ships. In the United States, as in South Africa (which under apartheid also had some very militant, democratic, white exclusionary unions), racial exclusion always trumps everything else.” Red Seas. Ferdinand Smith and Radical Black Sailors in the United States and Jamaica. by Gerald Horne. 0 Ratings. Moreover, Red Seas uncovers the little-known experiences of black sailors and their contribution to the struggle for labor and civil rights, the history of the Communist Party and its black members, and the significant dimensions of Jamaican labor and political radicalism. During the heyday of the U.S. and international labor movements in the 1930s and 1940s, Ferdinand Smith, the Jamaican-born co-founder and second-in-command of the National Maritime Union (NMU), stands out as one of the most—if not the most—powerful black labor leaders in the United States.