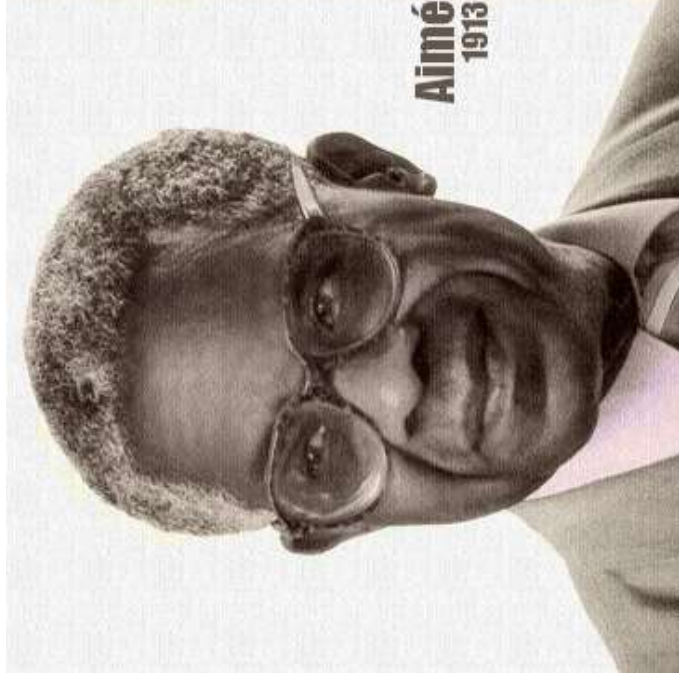


AIMÉ CÉSAIRE



Family life

- **full name** : Aimé Fernand David Césaire
- **nickname** : “*papa Césaire*” → means dad Césaire
- **date/place of birth** : the 26 of June 1913 in Basse-Pointe
- **date/ place/ age of death** : the 17 of April 2008 in Fort-de France at the age of 94
- **reason of death** : heart problems
- **jobs** : writer, french politician, poet, playwright, essayist, biographer



Aimé Césaire was part of a family of 7 children. He grew up with both parents. His grandfather was the first black teacher in Martinique.

His grandmother was one of the few Martinican women who could read and write. She taught him this art very early.

From 1919 to 1924, Aimé Césaire was at the elementary school, then obtained a scholarship for a high school. In September 1931, he arrived in Paris as a grant holder from the French government to enter hypokhâgne class at the high school Louis-le-Grand where he met Léopold Sédar Senghor.

Having passed the entrance examination to the upper normal school in 1935, Césaire began to write the “Cahier d'un retour au pays natal” there, which he completed in 1938. He prepared to leave the normal upper school in 1938 with a dissertation, “The South Theme in American Negro-American Literature”. Marrying in 1937 a Martinican student, Suzanne Roussi, Aimé Césaire, returned to Martinique in 1939, to teach, like his wife, at the Schoelcher high school. He had 6 children.

Political life

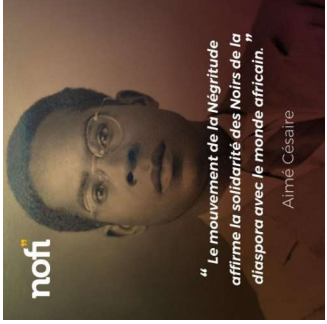


- from 1945 to 2001 : Mayor of Fort-de-France

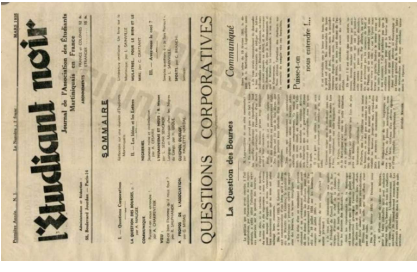
Opposing the French Communist Party on the issue of de-Stalinization, Aimé Césaire left the Communist Party in 1956, to found two years later the Martinique Progressive Party (PPM), within which he would claim the autonomy of Martinique. Aimé Césaire's cultural policy is embodied by the creation of the Municipal Cultural Action Service (SERMAC), which through popular arts workshops (dance, crafts, music) and the prestigious Festival de Fort-de-France, highlights hitherto scorned parts of Martinican culture.

- from 1945 to 1993 : deputy of Martinique
- from 1983 to 1986 : President of the Martinique regional council
- from 1945 to 1949 and from 1955 to 1970 : General councilor of Fort-de-France





Literary movement



He is the founder and major representative of the literary movement of **négritude** with Léopold Sédar Senghor.

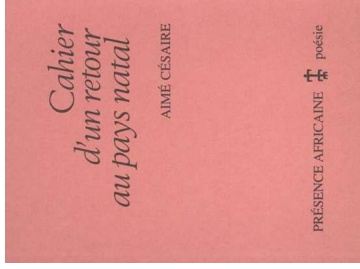
In contact with young Africans studying in Paris, Aimé Césaire and his Guyanese friend Léon Gontran Damas, whom he knows from Martinique, gradually discover a repressed part of their identity, the African component, victim of the cultural alienation characterizing colonial societies from Martinique and Guyana.

In September 1934, Césaire founded, with other Antillean-Guyanese and African students (including Léon Gontran Damas, the Guadeloupean Guy Tirolien, the Senegalese Léopold Sédar Senghor and Birago Diop), **“the black student”** newspaper. It is in the pages of this review that the term “Négritude” will appear for the first time. This concept, forged by Aimé Césaire in reaction to the cultural oppression of the French colonial system, aims to reject on the one hand the French project of cultural assimilation and to promote Africa and its culture, devalued by the racism resulting from the colonialist ideology.

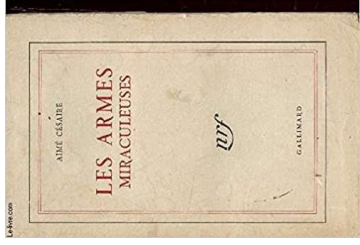
Built against the French colonial ideology of the time, the **“Négritude”** project is more cultural than political. It is, beyond a partisan and racial vision of the world, an active and concrete humanism, aimed at all the oppressed on the planet. Césaire declares in fact: "I am of the race of those who are oppressed".

Definition of “negritude” by Aimé Césaire : “ *The negritude is the simple recognition of being black, and the acceptance of this fact, of our black destiny, of our history and of our culture* ”

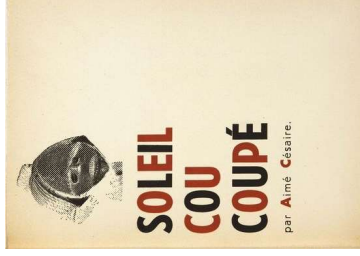
Some of his famous work



1939
“notebook of a return
to the native country”



1946
“miraculous
weapons”



1948
“sun neck cut”

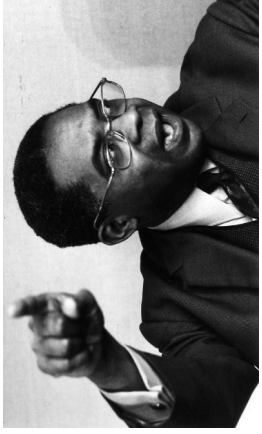


1960
“fittings”



1950
“discourse on
colonialism”

Known quotes



Aimé Césaire said once :

- "*Le crayon de Dieu lui-même n'est pas sans gomme.*"
→ means "the pencil of God himself is not without an eraser"
- "*Tous les hommes ont les mêmes droits... Mais du commun lot, il en est qui ont plus de pouvoirs que d'autres. Là est l'inégalité.*"
→ means "All men have the same rights ... But in common, there are some who have more power than others. Therein lies the inequality."
- "*La justice écoute aux portes de la beauté.*"
→ means "justice listens at the gates of beauty"
- "*La connaissance poétique est celle où l'homme éclabousse l'objet de toutes ses richesses mobilisées.*"
→ means "poetic knowledge is that in which man splashes the object with all his mobilized wealth."
- "*L'homme de culture doit être un inventeur d'âmes.*"
→ means "The man of culture must be an inventor of souls."

Summary

Aimé Césaire was an activist who wanted justice, respect for the Martinican people, recognition of black culture.

He fought racism with the help of several people of black skin color, from different origins.

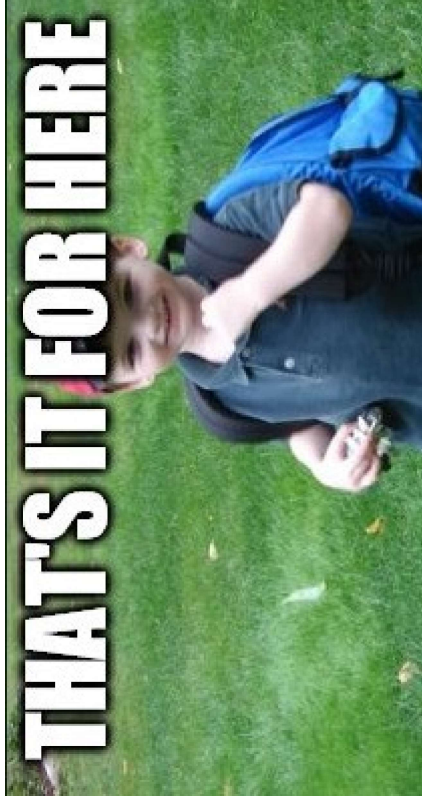
He conveyed his messages with the help of literature with the movement of “**negritude**”, politics through its various actions and debates and his Martinique progressive party.

He marked the history of Martinique but not only. He is well known , Africa, the United States, France of course etc ...

Figure in the history of Martinique, his name was given, in his tribute, to several streets (...) and to the airport of Martinique.



Thank you for listening to us carefully !



Goodbye !