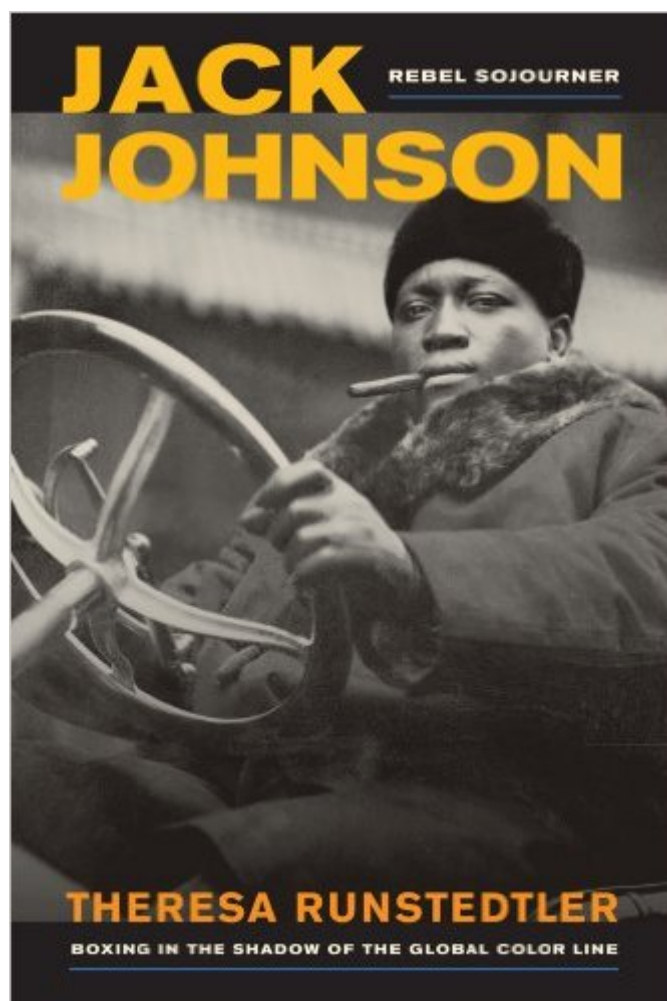


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# Jack Johnson, Rebel Sojourner: Boxing In The Shadow Of The Global Color Line



## Synopsis

In his day, Jack Johnson—born in Texas, the son of former slaves—was the most famous black man on the planet. As the first African American World Heavyweight Champion (1908–1915), he publicly challenged white supremacy at home and abroad, enjoying the same audacious lifestyle of conspicuous consumption, masculine bravado, and interracial love wherever he traveled. Jack Johnson, Rebel Sojourner provides the first in-depth exploration of Johnson's battles against the color line in places as far-flung as Sydney, London, Cape Town, Paris, Havana, and Mexico City. In relating this dramatic story, Theresa Runstedtler constructs a global history of race, gender, and empire in the early twentieth century.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

On May 14, 1913, Jack Johnson, the world's first black heavyweight champion, was convicted by an all-white jury under the Mann Act and sentenced to 366 days in prison and a hefty, \$1,000 fine. Born of the white slavery hysteria of the early 20th-Century, the Mann Act sought to prohibit the transportation of women across state lines "for the purposes of prostitution or debauchery, and for any other immoral purpose." But while intended to defy the forces of prostitution, the vaguely-worded law criminalized many forms of consensual sexual activity, resulting in political blackmail and bullying. The first person to be ensnared by this controversial legislation was Johnson whose interracial, romantic encounters not only encroached too closely on America's rigid color line but also its unbendable sexual frontier. The brash and formidable pugilist, who punched his way to

the top of the boxing world, shattering white-hopes and swelling the white man's burden along the way, could not dodge the jab of trumped-up charges against him. Despite the fact that the activities leading to his arrest occurred prior to the passage of what otherwise became known as the White-Slave Traffic Act, Johnson was nonetheless found guilty of violating the law. One month later, he was a transatlantic fugitive on the run. For the next seven years, he journeyed throughout England, France, Russia, Spain, Argentina, Barbados, Cuba, and Mexico in an elusive search for a place where he could escape the constraints of racial prejudice. With edifying and engaging prose, Theresa Runstedtler chronicles these years Johnson spent in exile, analyzing the racial skirmishes the bombastic prizefighter confronted as he discovered Jim Crow in its borderless, global variety.

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