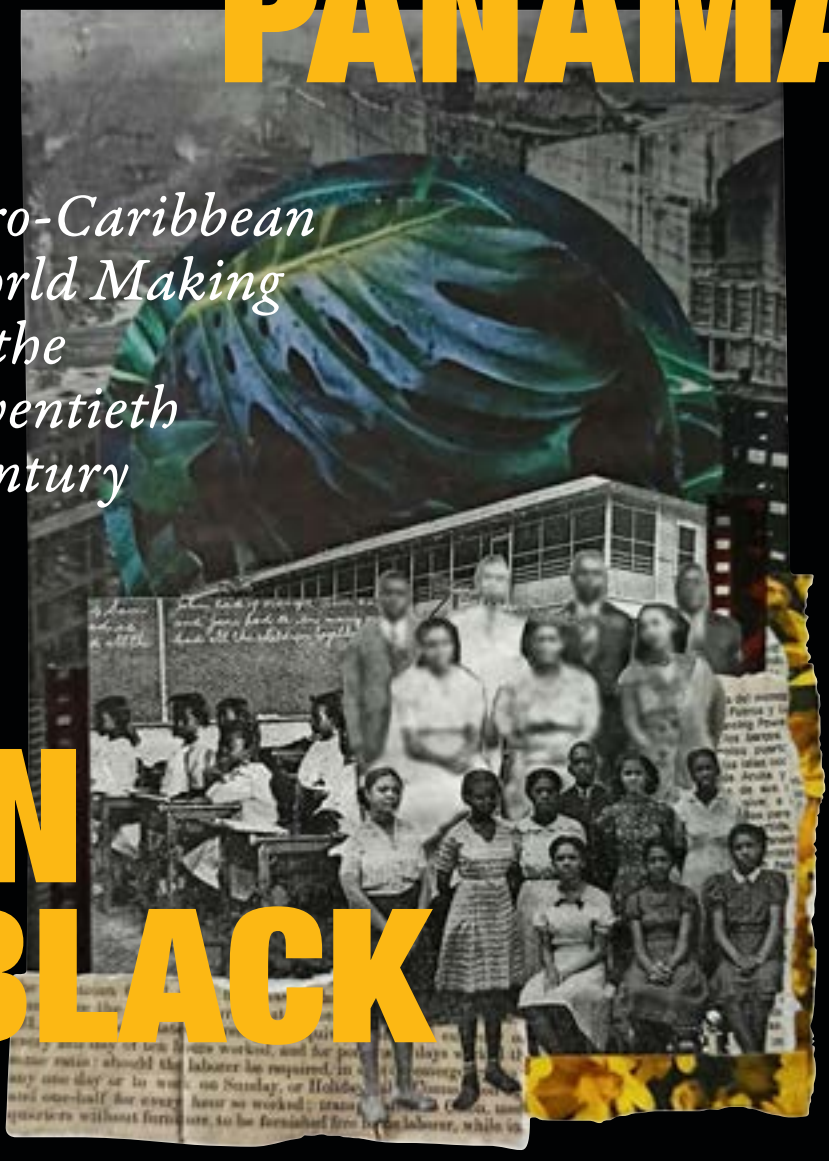
PANAMA IN BLACK

Afro-Caribbean World Making in the Twentieth Century



KAYSHA CORINEALDI

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For my mother and all the dreamers
who paved the way

Contents

Abbreviations

AFL	American Federation of Labor
CIO	Congress of International Organizations
CZCS	Canal Zone colored schools
CZCTA	Canal Zone Colored Teacher's Association
CZWU	Canal Zone Workers Union
GCEOC	Government and Civic Employees Organizing Committee
ISB	Internal Security Branch
LCN	Liga Cívica Nacional / National Civic League
PCAC	Panamanian Cultural Action Committee / Comité de Acción Cultural Panameño
PCWIEA	Panama Canal West Indian Employees Association
PPP	Panamá Para los Panameños / Panama for the Panamanians
SAMAAP	Sociedad de Amigos del Museo Afroantillano de Panamá / Society of Friends of the West Indian Museum of Panama
UNIA	Universal Negro Improvement Association
UPWA	United Public Workers of America

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Introduction

Legacies of Exclusion and Afro-Caribbean Diasporic World Making

On December 11, 1966, the staff of the *Panama Tribune* came together to celebrate the opening of Parque Young in Río Abajo, a working-class neighborhood in Panama City. The park was the first of its kind in Panama to honor the work of an Afro-Caribbean Panamanian. Its inauguration also came seven years after the death of Sidney Young, its namesake. Young, born in Jamaica and raised in Panama, created the *Tribune* in 1928. By the time of his death, the newsweekly held the title of the longest-running Black newsweekly in Central America. Figure Intro.1 features some of the key members of the *Tribune* team, including editors, office managers and assistants, columnists, and area representatives.

The presence of only one woman in this group, Claudina McIntosh (Sidney Young's adopted daughter), attests to the gendered hierarchy of the newsweekly. This hierarchy also affected other aspects of community formation and diasporic activism among Afro-Caribbean Panamanians within and outside Panama. Sidney Young's son, David Young, the tall young man to the right in the frame, was also in attendance. He traveled from New York, where he and his mother had relocated after 1959, joining thousands of other Afro-Caribbean Panamanians in this space. George Westerman, the director and chief editor of the *Tribune* following Young's death, also joined the commemoration. Westerman, born and raised in Panama, like many of those pictured, also had ancestors from the Anglophone Caribbean. I begin with this photograph because it offers one example of Afro-Caribbean diasporic world making spanning from the late 1920s to the late 1960s. This

FIGURE INTRO.1 Parque Young Inauguration, 1966. *Left to right*: George Thomas (sports columnist), Arthur G. Jacobs (associate editor), Otis Smith (office assistant), Victor T. Smith (assistant to the editor), Harold W. Williams (labor specialist), Lorenzo H. Rose (columnist), Hector Gadpaille (guest columnist), Claude L. Walter (Canal Zone representative), Claudina McIntosh (office manager), George Westerman (chief editor), and David Young. From George Westerman, *Los inmigrantes antillanos en Panamá* (Panama City: INAC, 1980), 121.

world making, grounded in histories of migration, gendered hierarchies, citizenship exclusion, and survival, linked the Caribbean, Central America, and the United States and necessitated networks that both claimed and went beyond imperial and nation-state borders. Those gathered to celebrate the inauguration of Parque Young not only posthumously honored a notable member of Panama's Afro-Caribbean community but also through their presence offered visual reminders of the extent, multigenerational nature, and materiality of this world making.

Crucial to how this diasporic world making played out in Panama is that it directly coincided with twentieth-century campaigns to define Panama as a space, idea, and nation. By the early 1920s competing narratives regarding who could claim Panama permeated the isthmian landscape. One such narrative called for a recognition that through their presence and activism Afro-Caribbean Panamanians could and would affirm Panama as the center of Afro-diasporic life and possibility in the circum-Caribbean world. Another

narrative privileged Panama as an inherently Iberian American space, specifically an anti-Black Hispanic space, where the "sons of the fatherland" held the responsibility of protecting both the republic and the Latin race. Still another narrative, and one that shared similarities with the Iberian American narrative through its specific exclusion of an othered group, highlighted the Panama Canal Zone as a new space in which to develop US empire making. In this introduction I discuss all these competing narratives and their implications for the late and post-1920s histories that I map in this study, highlighting how the call to demarcate Panama as a culturally Iberian nation in the Americas that required protection against "undesirable" Black foreigners was part of the republic's early legal structure. This anti-Black foreigner discourse evolved throughout the twentieth century with parallels that connected it to US empire building and nationalist campaigns throughout the hemisphere, yet it developed in distinct ways within the Panamanian context.

The worldview imagined and promoted by Afro-Caribbean Panamanians advanced in ways that made direct connections to the Panamanian isthmus, while also remaining attuned to inescapable imperial and hemispheric realities. My examination of this worldview begins with the late 1920s Black press in a xenophobic Panamanian milieu. It next explores the community networks created in the US-controlled Panama Canal Zone by Afro-Caribbeans born in this place. The narrative then probes the anticommunism and hemispheric democracy discourse engulfing the mid-twentieth-century Americas. Later it locates Afro-Caribbean Panamanian activism in the Civil Rights movement of 1960s New York and ends with public intellectual networks connecting Panama and the United States, with an eye to the broader Afro-Americas. Afro-Caribbean diasporic world making, I contend, unlike narratives centered on Iberian American traditions or US empire, demanded a more inclusive understanding of citizenship and belonging precisely because it forced honest yet uncomfortable discussions about the reach of anti-Blackness in nationalist, imperial, and hemispheric discourses throughout the twentieth century. This worldview necessitated a recognition of how the centrality and denigration of Black life and experience framed discourses of modernity in Panama and in many other parts of the hemisphere.

The diasporic world making championed by Afro-Caribbean Panamanians explicitly challenged a history of outsider vs. insider that had long shaped the experiences of African descendants, Indigenous peoples, and migrants of color in Panama and other parts of the Americas. This outsider-insider history, which in turn created perpetual outsiders, depended on Europeanized

elites segregating themselves from poor and working-class people of color and rendering Indigenous populations invisible or in need of assimilation. Such a project called for the promotion of cultural and linguistic homogeneity, the push for white European migration as the solution to alleged racial problems, and the scapegoating of migrants of color and their descendants during economic and political crises. Even more daunting about this project was the way in which it, in the words of Stuart Hall, normalized "dominant regimes of representation," demanding that Black and colonized people "see and experience ourselves as 'Other.'"[1]

This book centers Black people, not as afterthoughts or fetishized others, but as people who survived multiple forced and voluntary migrations, colonial and national expulsion campaigns, and brutal and discriminatory working conditions. It assesses how and why Afro-Caribbean Panamanians dared to invent new worlds, the challenges of this endeavor, and the multigenerational nature of this world making. Crucially, it focuses on the words, ideas, and actions of men and women who self-identified as members of a Black diaspora and pushes against a narrative of rescuing Black voices trapped in the shadows of mestizaje.[2]

The men and women I follow in this study refused invisibility and the isolation of being othered by creating diasporically oriented newspapers, businesses, community organizations, schools, churches, labor unions, and libraries, in addition to engaging in other forms of making community. It is precisely because they dared to openly and adamantly create their own worldviews that they faced systematic hostilities. Yet, Caribbean diasporic life, "through its transformation and difference," continued to typify major spaces throughout the isthmus.[3] In fact, through their twentieth-century writings, activism, and travel, Afro-Caribbean Panamanians engaged in a process of world making that connected them to a past and future of Afro-diasporic life within and beyond Panama. In this way they engaged in a macropractice of what Courtney Desiree Morris, in her study of the life of Pan-Africanist Madame Maymie Leona Turpeau de Mena, described as "diasporic self-making."[4] This self-making provided Afro-Caribbeans with multiple opportunities to define Blackness, to define Panama, and to define diaspora.

By creating these cultural and political spaces in the shadow of systemic hostilities, Afro-Caribbean Panamanians engaged in what Tiffany Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley have outlined as the "process and condition" of diaspora creation.[5] The "process" of diaspora required invention, but the "condition" of diaspora recognized that this ability to invent, renew, and

survive was tied to local and geopolitical conditions. Systemic discrimination based on race, gender, ancestry, sexuality, language, official and unofficial segregation, white supremacy, and the denial of citizenship formed part of the local and global "condition" surrounding Afro-Caribbean diasporic world making. Ignoring these realities was not possible, yet invention called for imagining a world not yet fully present. It required recognizing that they were "not merely inheritors of a culture [or a practice] but its makers."[6] This was the challenge and the promise of diasporic world making.

The condition of citizenship, understood through cultural, juridical, racial, and migrant frameworks, also affected this world making. In early twentieth-century Panama, Afro-Caribbeans created their own vernacular practices of citizenship, which acknowledged localized differences between Black migrants yet used language, empire, and culture to unite tens of thousands of men and women from throughout the circum-Caribbean. Vernacular citizenship entailed being a migrant and a citizen of Panama, being a subject and an afterthought of empire, and forming part of generational conversations regarding the promise of diaspora.[7] This practice of vernacular citizenship took place alongside juridical debates regarding access to state-specific citizenship rights. Panama, as in much of the Americas, assumed a birth-based (jus soli) juridical citizenship model, yet eugenicist discussions about racial purity and a discontent with the idea of the children of "undesirable" migrants becoming citizens challenged this birth-based model. Afro-Caribbeans, particularly those born and raised in Panama, sought to balance vernacular citizenship approaches with securing nation-state-specific citizenship access. Engaging with the thoughts and ideas of African descendants from other parts of the world, people who shared divergent citizenship conditions yet had to navigate similar racial hierarchies further added to this complex understanding of citizenship as an invention, a practice, and a right. Expanding notions of citizenship in this way, not limiting its access, formed a core part of the diasporic world making bourgeoning within Panama.

Unpacking and understanding the contours of Afro-Caribbean Panamanian diasporic world making demands urgency given that exclusionist narratives centered on anti-Blackness and xenophobic nationalism remain strong political and cultural ideologies around the world. The denationalization of thousands of Haitian descendants in the Dominican Republic via legislative changes initiated in 2004 and enshrined by a 2013 constitutional tribunal decision is but one poignant example. Dominican legislators used the same language of desirability, cultural homogeneity, and sovereign rights as their political peers in 1940s Panama. The struggle to reverse this policy in

the Dominican Republic continues.[8] In the case of Afro-Caribbean denationalization in Panama, twenty years would pass before exclusionist citizenship laws were fully eliminated. In the interim, those affected fought locally but thought globally, rejecting the white supremacist premise that their ethnic or racial backgrounds made them less deserving of full civic and political rights.

Paying attention to the work of Afro-Caribbean Panamanians as world builders, and not only as citizens or noncitizens of Panama, the United States, or various other parts of the Americas, also offers a distinct opportunity to understand activism, community, and diaspora formation from the ground up. The men and women at the core of this book engaged in what Michelle Stephens has described as a materialist approach to Black internationalism.[9] They brought together immediate needs for economic and political access, alongside a vision of the world made possible through Black activism and leadership. Claiming Panama as part of a Black diasporic world was one part of this process. Another included a forceful rejection, through localized activism, of the call to cede the very idea of the nation-state to proponents of anti-Blackness. Through this activism Afro-Caribbean Panamanians engaged in what I term *local internationalism*; that is, they created localized platforms for transformative change that affirmed the centrality of Afro-diasporic life in national and global politics. Through this focus on Afro-Caribbean Panamanians as producers of knowledge, as innovators, and as diasporic world makers, *Panama in Black* affirms the importance of moving away from discourses that present Black communities as merely reactionary and instead suggests that the thoughts, hopes, and expectations that emerge from these communities merit rigorous study.

Early Stages of Afro-Caribbean Diasporic World Making

When considering diasporic world making among Afro-Caribbean Panamanians, it is vital to understand the centrality of the Panamanian isthmus as a major hub of Black migration and Afro-diasporic activism. Sustained Afro-Caribbean migration to Panama began in the mid-nineteenth century.[10] Five thousand migrants made their way to Panama from the British- and French-ruled Caribbean for the building of the Panama railroad in the 1850s. More than fifty thousand followed during French attempts in the 1880s to build an interoceanic canal and as part of the banana cultivation industry dominated by the US-owned United Fruit Company. As noted by Velma

Newton and Olive Senior, many of those making these migrant journeys sought an alternative to unemployment, limited economic mobility, as a well as a postemancipation economy that kept them bound to plantations without any prospect of land ownership.[11] Migrants from Jamaica, the most populated British colony in the Caribbean, made up the majority of those recruited during these early construction and agricultural efforts. Railroad and interoceanic canal construction proved particularly dangerous, resulting in tens of thousands of deaths, but after the successful completion of the first and the failed attempts at the latter, thousands of Caribbean migrants chose to remain on the isthmus. In the cities of Colón, Panamá, and Bocas del Toro, they built schools, churches, and small businesses.

By the time of the US-financed Panama Canal building efforts in the first fifteen years of the twentieth century, a small but strong community of Afro-Caribbean migrants and their descendants already had an established presence on the isthmus. This presence would significantly expand during and after the construction period. Migrants also arrived during the first decade of Panama's existence as an independent nation and as the reality of US control of the canal area dawned on those who had envisioned an independent nation buttressed by the canal but *not* dependent on the priorities of US officials. In all, during the building of the canal (1904–14), between 150,000 and 200,000 Caribbean migrants made their way to Panama. This figure doubled the total Panamanian population at the time. Most migrants were from Barbados, followed by others from Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Martinique, and other parts of the British- and French-controlled Caribbean. As with previous migrants, many sought opportunity, were attracted by the prospect of earning enough money to both thrive and send back to their relatives, and, unlike earlier migrants, had heard of Panama before and to a certain extent knew what to expect. Many nonetheless died in the building of the canal; suffered grave injuries resulting in amputations, chronic respiratory problems, and blindness; and had to contend with a highly regimented system of segregation and discrimination.[12] The violence of this building effort marked entire generations. The canal itself, while becoming a bridge for the world, was also the site of death and loss.

Following the end of canal construction, almost half of those contracted as workers, in addition to the tens of thousands of others who made the journey on their own, opted to stay. Some also had children whom they raised in Panama. The lives and activism of this and subsequent generations, in the Panamanian Republic, in the US-controlled Canal Zone, and in the United States, frame the bulk of this book. As for early twentieth-century Panama,

by 1920, Afro-Caribbeans were the majority population of the province of Colón and had a significant presence in the provinces of Panamá and Bocas del Toro. Caribbean migrants also established roots in Panama by founding independent newspapers like the *Independent* and the *Workman*, in addition to editing West Indian sections in English-language dailies and creating private schools and academies open to all in the republic. They also established lodges and mutual aid associations, such as the Colón Federal Credit Union, the Panama Canal Lodge, and the Isthmian League of British West Indians. Members of this community also built dozens of Protestant churches that featured a wide array of social events and festivities. Some migrants opened small shops and businesses, among which food and bus services proved particularly popular. A small number of migrant professionals worked as dentists, teachers, seamstresses, pharmacists, lawyers, nurses, accountants, and engineers. Others made their mark as playwrights, musicians, athletes, and performers.[13]

Moreover, unlike other Afro-Caribbean migrant and migrant-descendant communities that emerged in other parts of Central America, those who made their home in Panama created a unique Afro-Caribbean world. Island-specific identifiers remained, as did class and skin color hierarchies, but the unprecedented nature of migration to Panama meant that people from far-off Caribbean islands actually met one another. In Panama they shared stories about their local governance structure, argued about which island made a particular dish the best, joined in leagues where they jointly identified as West Indian, and had an opportunity to collectively make note of the limits of British colonial rule. In fact, for those whose pleas to British consular officials in Colón and Panamá remained unaddressed, or for those informed that colonial citizenship could not be passed down to children born in Panama, the reality of this limit became paramount. Thus, finding recourses outside the boundaries of British imperial rule in ways that validated Anglophone Caribbean life and culture, while acknowledging the new world made possible in and through Panama, held tremendous appeal and promise.

This emergent view likewise propelled Afro-Caribbeans in early twentieth-century Panama to pursue local internationalist and diasporic projects that connected them to other Black people in the hemisphere. One such project included the creation of local branches of Marcus Garvey and Amy Ashwood's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) as early as December 1918, a year after the opening of the UNIA headquarters in New York City. By the mid-1920s Panama had one of the largest UNIA branches

outside the United States, and the UNIA main journalistic organ, the *Negro World*, circulated freely. Given the vast Caribbean migrant community of the isthmus, the popularity of the UNIA was not surprising. Many understood that postemancipation promises remained unfulfilled and acknowledged that access to capital appeared to determine power and independence. As migrants they especially appreciated the discourse of self-making and Negro pride that shaped the UNIA movement. An example of this self-making included a UNIA branch in Colón that operated a school and a bakery, owned several pieces of real estate, and hosted weekly organization meetings.[14] Some fissures would eventually appear between the parent UNIA and local branches. Marcus Garvey's arrest and conviction caused particularly heated debates and ruptures. Nevertheless, the appeal of forming part of a collective within and outside the isthmus, one grounded in a message of Black pride and Black innovation, proved especially attractive. In chapter 5, I discuss how the appeal of such a collective would also encourage the creation of a scholarship-granting organization in Brooklyn by Afro-Caribbean Panamanian women. The organization, through its activities and platforms, reflected the growing diversity of a Caribbean New York while also reasserting the centrality of the isthmus in the making of Afro-Caribbean diasporic worlds.

In the early 1920s the ideological power of the UNIA helped shape another diasporic and internationalist venture: the staging of the longest running labor strike in the history of Panama Canal operations, and the first such major strike in the history of the isthmus.[15] Beginning on February 24, 1920, and ending nine days later, between twelve thousand and sixteen thousand Afro-Caribbean workers joined the strike. The strikers were members of the predominantly white Detroit-based United Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and Railroad Shop Laborers. Barbadian-born William Preston Stoute, a teacher in the Canal Zone and vice president of the local union, with the assistance of Cuban-born and Panama-raised Eduardo Morales, a field clerk for the canal and one of the founding members of the first UNIA branches in Panama, led the strikers. Both men did so without any US United Brotherhood officials present on the isthmus. Prior to and during the strike, both men also used newspapers like the *Workman*, published by Barbadian-born Hubert N. Walrond, who also included his own pro-union editorials, to communicate with strike participants, canal officials, and any other parties interested in the strike. The strike was unsuccessful because of intense policing by canal officials, including the confiscation of telegrams sent by the United Brotherhood's Detroit headquarters. Due to this intercepted communication, local union leaders received no response to their request

for strike funds.[16] Future attempts at labor organizing by workers of color on the canal would routinely refer to the potentials and missed opportunities of this 1920 strike.

In all, by the late 1920s, the vast presence of the UNIA and attempts at international labor unionism, coupled with rich community networks created by Caribbean migrants as far back as the mid-nineteenth century, attested to the extent to which Panama had become the Caribbean and the Caribbean had been extended to Panama. To speak of Panama in the early 1920s without making note of the tens of thousands of Afro-Caribbeans who called the isthmus home was impossible. Not only had they proved pivotal in the construction of major transit technologies that effectively opened Panama to the world, they also added to the life of a young nation embarking on the project of writing its own foundational narratives. These narratives, however, rather than embracing Caribbean migrant life and an Afro-diasporic spirit, pitted the dream of an Iberian Panama against the apparent nightmare of a Black and increasingly English-speaking nation.

Creating the Myth of an Iberian Nation in the Americas

A campaign among Panama's political and intellectual elite to disrupt the vision of Panama as a Black English-speaking nation borrowed from and expanded on racial hierarchies of the nineteenth century. According to this narrative, African descendants, the largest population on the isthmus by the nineteenth century, while recognized as prospective members of the body politic, were increasingly isolated from the centers of political and economic power.[17] The abolition of slavery and the extension of male suffrage in 1851 by the Colombian Congress promised the full inclusion of Black men in Panama and other parts of Nueva Granada. Through efforts waged by the Liberal Party, a political party that in Panama was colloquially described as the Partido Liberal Negro (Black Liberal Party) because of its large Black membership, Panama by 1855 secured federation status, which ostensibly allowed men, regardless of class or race, to exercise greater local political power. Black Panamanians, especially arrabaleros, those living in Panamá outside the fortress-like communities created by their white peers, challenged the top-down decisions of the Liberal Party. This access to political power changed by 1886 with the inclusion of literacy and property requirements for male suffrage, a legislative move that disenfranchised most men in the country, especially those a generation or two removed from slavery. This Regeneración period (1886–1903) also marked the end of federalist auton-

omy and saw a rise in violent action against mostly Black popular (nonelite) sectors throughout Colombia.[18]

Despite this pushback, educated Black men, who formed part of a professional elite, remained active in the Liberal Party in Panama and, through a focus on clientelist politics, encouraged continued popular support of the party. Their goals included achieving independence from Colombia. Fear of a Haiti-like revolution in Panama, a fear shared by other Eurocentric elites in various parts of the nineteenth-century Americas, likely suppressed active support for a Black-led independence effort.[19] The province's white oligarchy, along with a few educated Black leaders, retained political and cultural power after 1885. They capitalized on the region's unique geography as a commercial transit zone to reassert control away from the centralized Colombian government. These men formed a long tradition among local elites who viewed the isthmus as their own "commercial imperium," a space where their "utopic imaginary" of a homogenous and civilized nation with ongoing links to Europe and the United States could materialize. French and eventual US attempts to build a canal, beginning in 1881 and 1904, respectively, were thus welcomed, as was the recruitment of workers, given the enormity of the project.[20]

In time, though, a disjuncture grew between the desire for a canal and concerns about the proper cultural and racial identity of the isthmus. By the 1880s, as large numbers of Afro-Caribbeans were recruited for the French canal building effort, commentary about Panama becoming a "new Jamaica" and epithets like "chombo" (undesirable Black foreigner) appeared in isthmian dailies.[21] This pejorative term would continue to inform anti-Black and xenophobic policies and prejudices into the twentieth century. Afro-Caribbean migrants also faced pervasive ill treatment at the hands of Colombian officials on the isthmus. This treatment included police and judicial misconduct targeting them as "foreigners," which resulted in violent assaults, false arrests, exorbitant fines, and prolonged jail sentences.[22] These attacks came at a time when Black people on the isthmus, regardless of place of birth, faced greater economic and political limitations. This antagonism, which played out throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, informed how elites, whether white or of color, engaged with groups they defined as outsiders to the nation. Following independence from Colombia in 1903 and the signing of the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty, which granted the United States the right to build the canal and control the ten-mile-wide area surrounding it, concern over Afro-Caribbean migrants, who constituted the majority of the construction workforce, grew in intensity. This

intensity led local elites to define Panama as neither a "new United States" nor a "new Jamaica" but as a quintessentially Iberian nation in culture and racial composition.

One way to drive this agenda included restricting the number of Black people in high-ranking political offices. The removal of Carlos A. Mendoza after less than a year into his presidency exemplified this agenda. Mendoza was a member of the Liberal Party and one of the writers of the 1903 Declaration of Independence from Colombia. He assumed the presidency in 1910, following the deaths of President José Domingo de Obaldía and first alternate José Agustín Arango. Those opposed to Mendoza appealed directly to Washington for intervention, citing Mendoza's African ancestry in their complaints. Given that Mendoza had opposed Article 136 of the 1904 Panamanian Constitution, which allowed for US intervention in Panama for the protection of the canal (an amendment that passed), US officials backed Mendoza's opponents. In October 1910, the Panamanian National Assembly voted Mendoza out of office, and thus ended the longest tenure of an African descendant president in Panama.[23]

Government campaigns to forge closer cultural ties with Spain also helped to facilitate the growing depiction of Panama as an Iberian or a Hispanic nation. These campaigns also sought to diminish all cultural and imperial connections to Colombia and the United States, an important mandate for a new nation whose very independence remained a topic of debate throughout the hemisphere. During the first two decades of the republic, government buildings were constructed in a neoclassical style, modeling those found on the Iberian Peninsula. Elites in Panamá copied this architecture. In 1913 President Belisario Porras approached Spanish King Alfonso XIII with the hope of building a statue of Vasco Núñez de Balboa, the first Spaniard to colonize the isthmus and the man whose name decorated Panama's currency starting in 1904. Porras hoped that Balboa's statue would rival the Statue of Liberty in New York in both size and symbolic resonance. Ten years later, with aid from the Spanish monarchy and select municipalities in Spain, a much smaller version of the statue was finally erected. This did not stop the frenzy to incorporate and embrace all things Spanish, from the construction of a bronze statue of Miguel Cervantes to a young cadre of writers, many financed by the government, linking places like Panamá Viejo to Spanish colonialism and pursuing advanced studies in Spain.[24] This version of the republic had no room for any African ancestry, Afro-diasporic experiences, or languages other than Spanish. Even the

country's vast Indigenous populations found little room in this imagined narrative of the nation.

The celebration of mestizaje as embraced in other Latin American nations did not arise in Panama until the 1930s. Still, it shared two key similarities with earlier twentieth-century developments of this ideology: The first was a heavy reliance on notions of Spanish nobility, Catholic divine right, and a spirit of adventure. Vasco Núñez de Balboa emerged as such a figure in the Panamanian context. The second was a focus on sexual unions between Spanish conquistadores and Indigenous women. The myth of a Spanish-Indigenous romance that led to the creation of a mixed-race Hispanic people (who apparently grew whiter with each generation) typified the Panamanian elite's approach to racial improvement via mestizaje. The total exclusion of Black people from this supposed mixing, as argued by Gerardo Maloney, further supported the discourse of a whitened mestizaje.[25]

This did not mean that all those who used or came under the category of mestizo promoted mestizaje as *blanqueamiento*, that is, mestizaje as the ultimate whitening of the Panamanian population. In this regard I avoid a "blanket conceit of blancophilia," or the glorification of whiteness, when discussing race and racism in Panama.[26] What I suggest instead is that the power of mestizaje as blanqueamiento rested in its normalization. Too many Panamanians readily embraced a category that excluded Indigenous and African descendant life. Instead mestizaje was always connected to white European (Iberian/Hispanic) ancestry, a negation of Blackness, and a mythologizing of an Indigenous past. This type of mestizaje became the desired outcome of cross-racial sexual relations and came to epitomize *panameñidad*, or a Panamanian essence.

Eugenics ideologies focused on white superiority, and the need to improve the populations of the "tropics" also shaped this approach to mestizaje. Panama could not become Spain, but through rigorous public hygiene campaigns, particularly in Colón and Panamá, as well as through the recruitment of white Europeans, the republic could attempt a *mejoramiento de la raza*. Panamanian elites, through their focus on hygiene, found ideological allies in US Zone officials equally obsessed with using science and architecture to "conquer the tropics." In tandem with these hygiene campaigns, a burgeoning *ruralismo* movement focused on the country's white and mestizo interior in Azuero and Chiriquí as the cultural bedrock of the country in contrast to the "foreign coastal cities" tainted by an imported Blackness.[27] As I argue throughout the book, panameñidad and its iterations, which included

"defending the Latin race," "upholding true Panamanians," "*panameñismo*," and "*ser panameño*," overtly or covertly reinforced the rhetoric of an Iberian-centered mestizaje predicated on cultural hierarchies and anti-Blackness.

Demarcating Race, Space, and Opportunity through and against the Canal Zone

Another factor shaping discussions of Panamanian national identity in the first decades of the twentieth century was the presence of the United States on the isthmus. In addition to financing the building of the Panama Canal and controlling the Canal Zone area, US officials adopted their own system of governance in the zone and excluded Panamanians from this process. The Canal Zone developed its own system of courts, a police force, commissaries (for food and basic goods), and schooling and recreational departments that made the area a self-sustained space. In no other independent country in the hemisphere did the United States enjoy such complete sovereignty. Although the canal and the zone were in Panamanian territory, the 1903 treaty, as interpreted and executed by US officials, provided the United States with complete control of this area. The treaty also outlined the annuities Panama would receive for the operation of the canal and affirmed the right of US intervention into Panamanian territory for the purposes of protecting the canal. A version of this clause, Article 136, also appeared in Panama's first constitution. Because the canal became the major waterway for transit and commerce on the isthmus, this doubled Panamanian dependency on the canal and the zone area.[28]

US officials also set about making the Canal Zone an extension of the United States, culturally and racially, upholding Jim Crow segregationist policies there. According to these policies, which were cemented by the end of canal construction, whites and workers of color were separated in terms of jobs, housing, schooling, and recreation. Race and citizenship also determined salaries. The "gold and silver rolls" system in the zone paid US citizens on par with jobs in the United States (the gold roll) and based non-US citizen salaries on those in the Caribbean basin (the silver roll). Under these criteria, a "gold" worker earned four times as much as a "silver" worker. Given that most Canal Zone "silver" workers were Afro-Caribbean migrants, the gold-silver system resulted in white US citizens earning much higher wages than Black non-US citizens.[29]

These hierarchies in the Canal Zone held significance, given that Afro-Caribbeans and their descendants represented more than 50 percent of

the population in the zone by the 1920s and would constitute the bulk of the canal and zone workforce throughout the twentieth century.[30] For this reason, privileging US citizenship, recruiting white workers from the mainland United States, and creating schooling and recreational outlets that trained white US citizens born or raised in the zone (Zonians) how to be American grew in importance.[31] This also explained why US citizenship was never extended to the children of Afro-Caribbean workers born in the zone. In US officials' efforts to maintain a white US citizenship stronghold in the zone, they also limited the recruitment of African American workers.[32] By segregating the largest group of workers in the area into the silver roll and by limiting most gold roll jobs to US citizens, US officials helped feed into the narrative that Afro-Caribbeans had special access to canal jobs and were the cause of lower wages. This rhetoric effectively removed any burden from US officials and instead presented Afro-Caribbeans as complicit in an imperialist project that subsumed Panamanians into the silver/nonwhite category, further "blackening" the Panamanian nation.

Also crucial in the development of this socioeconomic status quo was the creation of racially segregated towns within the Canal Zone. Seven gold (whites-only) towns, three on each the Pacific and Atlantic sides of the isthmus, and one at the midpoint of the zone, were erected. The largest such town was Balboa, on the Pacific side, which was also the central command post for the zone administration. The naming of the largest whites-only town as Balboa connected white US citizens and white Panamanian elites invested in the myth of Balboa, one that further supported their respective claims to the isthmus, one as an Iberian mestizo nation and the other as a conquering US empire. Five silver (nonwhite) towns were likewise constructed, three on the Pacific side and two on the Atlantic side.[33] La Boca, on the Pacific side of the isthmus, was the most populous of these. Chapters 2 and 3 expand on how La Boca became an important site for some of the educational and labor activism that emerged among Afro-Caribbean Panamanians in the 1930s and into the 1950s.

An almost total exclusion of Panamanians from whites-only zone areas, save for a few white elites, and frustration with US control over the isthmian transit economy also propelled critiques about the reach of the United States into Panamanian affairs. One issue that drew the ire of an increasingly vocal mestizo middle class, which unlike the white elite had no access to the nation's political machinery, involved the presence of Afro-Caribbeans in the republic's two major cities, Panamá and Colón. Recruiting Afro-Caribbeans to build the canal, they insisted, had been unfortunate but necessary. Having

to share the same spaces, especially in the nation's capital, with this group was unacceptable. Disrupting the growth of these communities became the goal of those opposed to US influence on the isthmus and the oligarchy that in their estimation had facilitated the country's dependence on US empire.

One group that emerged at the forefront of this agenda was Acción Comunal (Community Action). Created in 1923 by a cadre of young white and mestizo professionals, including graduates of the Instituto Nacional de Panamá, the nation's premier private secondary school, Acción Comunal combined the Iberian-focused enthusiasm of white elites with an added push to define Panama against foreign peoples and cultures. The group called for teaching children to love their country and flag, upholding the Spanish language as the country's sole language, and popularizing the use of balboas (rather than US dollars, although the balboa remained tied to the US dollar). They also addressed what they saw as the country's growing race problem, typified in the foreign populations of Colón and Panamá, by boycotting any stores or establishments that advertised in English or did not employ Panamanians. The membership of Acción Comunal remained small into the late 1920s, but the group went on to lead the nation's first ever political coup in 1931. Several Acción Comunal members also, by the early 1930s, secured high government positions, including the presidency. Arnulfo Arias, a white Panamanian and the leader of the 1931 coup, assumed the presidency in 1940 and led efforts to denationalize Afro-Caribbean Panamanians.[34] By the early 1920s, though, Acción Comunal signaled the beginning of an expanded antiforeigner and hypernationalist discourse that would focus on Afro-Caribbeans as the nation's most pressing problem.

The "West Indian Danger" in Prose and Law

In October 1926 the Panamanian National Assembly passed Law 13, which categorized "blacks from the Antilles or Guyanas whose original language was not Spanish" as "prohibited immigrants."[35] The law demonstrated the extent to which racist rhetoric targeting Afro-Caribbeans had found legitimacy in mid-1920s Panama. Manifestos such as Olmedo Alfaro's *El peligro antillano en la América Central: La defensa de la raza* (The West Indian danger in Central America: The defense of the race), published two years earlier by Panama's official national press, further attested to this legitimacy.[36] *El peligro antillano* mapped out three potent strains of anti–West Indian discourse, all couched in eugenicist language, which would be regurgitated in defense of Law 13 and similarly framed laws. These strains included

assertions that the "problem" with Afro-Caribbeans was cultural and not racial, that members of this group posed an unfair economic competition against honest Panamanian workers, and that Afro-Caribbeans embodied an undesirable and inferior type of Blackness.

According to the cultural incompatibility argument, because Afro-Caribbeans spoke English and practiced Protestantism, customs diametrically opposed to Castilian Spanish and the Catholic faith that characterized Panamanian and Iberian American tradition in general, these migrants and their offspring could never become authentic Panamanians.[37] For hypernationalists, proper patriotism required the shunning of "foreign elements." Yet, this shunning did not include white US citizens or white migrants from Europe. A glorification of whiteness united their assessments of these groups and trumped any presumed cultural incompatibility. This distorted patriotism refused to acknowledge that multilingualism and religious diversity were not alien to Panama but part of an ongoing, if criticized, reality. The decision to target Afro-Caribbeans on the basis of cultural incompatibility spoke more to fears of a whitened mestizo nation that might never be and less to what these cultural practices meant regarding Panamanian identity.

Another critique claimed that unfair economic competition by Afro-Caribbeans resulted in the displacement of Panamanian workers and that the Panamanian government, fearful of upsetting imperial interests, refused to repatriate these workers.[38] By the 1920s the Panama Canal was the largest employer in Panamá and Colón, and Afro-Caribbeans represented the bulk of this workforce. Yet, they did not set the terms for recruitment or compensation in this space. The US government, as noted by Michael Conniff, used a third-country labor structure, which underpaid migrant workers to reduce compensation for Panamanian workers while maintaining steady salaries for US citizens.[39] This created a highly discriminatory wage structure that benefited only those earning US-based wages, while allowing canal officials to cut costs. Alfaro and other cultural nationalists had reasons for their critiques. But rather than envision a working-class struggle that would unite Afro-Caribbeans and others seeking wage equality, perhaps using the experience of Afro-Caribbeans as strike organizers, they demonized Afro-Caribbeans as sinister economic competitors. Such hostility was not limited to an intellectual elite. Even the labor organizations that emerged in the 1920s focused on Afro-Caribbeans as the enemy or ignored their existence entirely.[40]

The last strain of this mid-1920s anti–West Indian discourse, the supposed incompatibility and undesirability of a certain type of Blackness,

served a dual purpose—to deflect possible accusations of racism and to present a narrative of acceptable African ancestry within an Iberian American mestizo imaginary. Rooted in this narrative was the myth of "kind" Spanish slave masters, who unlike their British and American counterparts imparted proper morals and values, via Catholicism, to their enslaved populations. For this reason, Black Panamanians from the colonial era adhered to the Catholic religion and were morally superior to Afro-Caribbeans. The number of Afro-Caribbeans in the republic's jails, hospitals, and madhouses purportedly proved this ranking.[41] This maligning of Afro-Caribbeans as criminals and deviants had roots in the nineteenth century and by the early twentieth century merged with racist views that they formed impediments to Panamanian modernity. Their failure or inability to "assimilate," via language, mannerism, or clientelist politics, as other African descendants had, provoked consternation. This pattern of pitting Black people of Caribbean ancestry (Afro-antillanos) and Black people with roots from the Spanish colonial era (Afro-coloniales) against one another, would continue throughout the twentieth century, with Black men replacing white men as key propagators of this message. This dichotomy threatened the idea of diasporic world making by dismissing the possibility of commonalities between Black people across nation-state borders or ethnic lines.

Texts such as *El peligro antillano* succeeded in presenting Afro-Caribbeans as the cultural, economic, racial, and social enemies of the Panamanian nation, a theme that Panamanian legislators found useful. Law 13 of 1926 for the first time listed Afro-Caribbeans as "prohibited immigrants," a status subjecting this group to additional surveillance, regulation, and removal. By specifying that only non-Spanish-speaking Black people would be excluded, the National Assembly upheld the mantras of cultural incompatibility and foreign Blackness. Addressing the "West Indian problem" was hence not about racism but about culture. Not all Black people would be excluded, only those whose ethnicity and social practices proved incompatible. Space could be made for Spanish-speaking Black migrants, but their numbers were so few that legislators did not need address the issue. With Law 13, Afro-Caribbeans, the largest migrant group in the country, joined Chinese, Syrian, and Turkish migrants, who since the earliest years of the republic had also been placed in this category.[42] Added to this group were Japanese and South Asian migrants. The law imposed a fine of $500 balboas/US dollars, an exorbitant amount for the time, or one year of forced labor to "prohibited immigrants" caught reentering the country.[43] While racist and xenophobic immigration laws were not new in the 1920s, what stood out about this moment was the ability to

coalesce all these laws in ways that benefited the dream of a whitened mestizo nation, to which Afro-Caribbeans were the most pressing obstacle.

Panamanian officials were not alone in their targeting of migrants. By 1926, Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Canada, and Venezuela also excluded various immigrants. The passage of anti–West Indian, anti-African, and anti-Asian legislation throughout Central America and parts of South and North America responded to exclusionist immigration policies buttressed by the internationalization of the eugenics movement throughout the hemisphere.[44] As noted by Lara Putnam, through the passage of exclusionist legislation, Latin American nations sought to cement their role as "collaborators in rather than targets of [a] U.S.-led project of eugenic exclusion."[45] A focus on Afro-Caribbeans as a unique Latin American problem, in addition to Asians and Africans as a shared hemispheric problem, affirmed this collaboration. The bureaucratization of travel through passports, visas, and quota systems allowed governments to regimentalize eugenics-inspired policies in the name of "protecting national interests."[46]

Implementation of Law 13 proved difficult given the dependence on Afro-Caribbean laborers by the United Fruit Company (in Bocas del Toro) and complaints by business owners and renters in Panamá and Colón.[47] This clash between business interests and immigration policies would not be unique to Panama. Cuba, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic, all countries with business sectors largely dependent on US capital, sought to appease both hypernationalists and capitalists during the early decades of the twentieth century.[48] In the case of Panama, the assembly passed Law 15, which allowed the immigration of "prohibited immigrants" for select agricultural and industrial work as long as qualified workers could not be found in the republic. Because of US-controlled immigration in the Canal Zone, the recruitment of workers to this area was never questioned. This particular feature of immigration policy distinguished Panama from its Central American and Caribbean neighbors. Law 15 also demanded that all industries operating in the republic gradually begin to replace most foreign workers with Panamanian workers, with the goal of a 75 percent Panamanian workforce in all industries by 1932. Enforcement proved challenging, but overall Law 15 responded to the demands raised by Acción Comunal members and proponents of an "Iberian-American mestizo Panama" regarding the need to retake the Panamanian economy.[49]

Not long after the passage of Law 15, the assembly passed Law 16, which clarified that "prohibited immigrants" included those born in or naturalized in countries other than those of "their origin."[50] *Origin* here demarcated

a perpetual racialized "other" incapable of belonging to the Panamanian family. Such a focus on origin held parallels to what Mai Ngai, in her study of US immigration policy, termed the creation of "impossible subjects," that is, the use of hereditarianism to exclude nonwhites as immigrants and full citizens.[51] In the specific case of Panama, this thinking motivated legislators to denationalize birth-based citizens as a means of policing the descendants of "undesirable" immigrants.

The existence of such a policy in Panama drove the urgency of continued diasporic world making among Afro-Caribbeans. In no other part of the Americas did Afro-Caribbean descendants find themselves both stateless and vital participants in nation-building processes. In and through the isthmus, they constructed new cultural, intellectual, and political formations that highlighted the intertwined nature of national, imperial, and diasporic frameworks. By centering Black life and possibilities around these frameworks, Afro-Caribbean Panamanians challenged geopolitical debates that presented African descendants as racialized others merely at the service of imperial and national structures.

Why Afro-Caribbean Diasporic World Making?

In examining competing claims to Panama alongside questions of diasporic world making, *Panama in Black* acknowledges the reach of the nation-state in the twentieth century, while recognizing how factors such as migration and diasporic possibilities routinely pushed the boundaries of this construct. Scholars of intra-Caribbean migration and migration to Central America in the first half of the twentieth century have noted the discrimination and exclusion migrants to Spanish-speaking republics faced. These scholars have pointed to continuous attempts by migrants to peacefully coexist or increasingly assimilate into their new national realities, often with mixed results.[52] This work pushes the scholarship further by eschewing the idea of a fixed national model in which Black migrants and those born in these republics either fought against or sought integration. Instead these men and women created many of the key components of what we assume to be "Costa Rican," "Panamanian," "Cuban," or "Dominican" nationality and culture. Their bodies, their words, and their ability to connect with people and places beyond the boundaries of the nation-state provided them with the very tools needed to map complex national belongings. The case of Panama is unique because early nation building, migration, and postmigration diaspora

networks all happened simultaneously. This reality made attempts to exclude Afro-Caribbean descendants both difficult but also especially appealing.

Indeed, Panama was a multilingual Afro-Caribbean nation even as proponents championed the isthmus as the heart of an Iberian-centric mestizo America. State officials could be punitive and exclusionary, and these actions did affect the day-to-day experiences of individuals. But officials could not completely eliminate the knowledge about the world and community that migration and diasporic networking made possible. Afro-Caribbean Panamanians knew about educational, labor, organizational, cultural, and economic ventures bringing together Black people in every part of the world. They drew inspiration from these ventures and founded their own newspapers, became trailblazing educators, and championed international labor organizing. They also demanded equality through civic associations, chastised state officials for failing at their duties, and made themselves indispensable in transnational and diplomatic conversations regarding the future of the Panamanian nation.

History, in other words, did not merely happen to Afro-Caribbean Panamanians. Their actions, silences, aspirations, and personal and professional losses shaped their responses to a plethora of unjust and discriminatory policies intended to strip them of their personhood and communal ambitions. Afro-Caribbean Panamanians knew that they were not alone in the world, even as governmental officials sought to police their presence; segregate them on the basis of race, ancestry, and nationality; and eventually strip them of citizenship rights to cement this message of exceptionality and exclusion.

So as not to entrench this discourse of exclusion, *Panama in Black* pays heed to Michel-Rolph Trouillot's affirmation that "in history, power begins at the source."[53] Thus, the records produced by Afro-Caribbean Panamanian journalists, teachers, lawyers, labor union leaders, and community organizers, not the writings or policy proposals of elected officials and financiers, receive central attention in this study. This is not to say that presidents, ambassadors, police and military officials, and business magnates from both Panama and the United States are not important players in this study. They are, but I mainly focus on how their actions or inactions coincide with the larger story of Afro-Caribbean diasporic world making. As such, writings from the Black press, yearbooks, petitions, radio addresses, and event programs receive as much attention as government decrees, presidential speeches, and the writings found in elite-owned national newspapers. *Panama in Black* is grounded in the assertion that if we are to take the making of an

Afro-Caribbean diasporic world seriously, we must begin with the full understanding of Afro-Caribbean descendants as producers of knowledge. Anything short of this enterprise risks the danger of superficially engaging with Black populations, whereby African diaspora histories are used as a complement or add-on to "existing historical traditions."[54]

In looking to teachers, journalists, community organizers, and other professional advocates, I also recognize that this discussion of knowledge production privileges the work of an emergent middle class. While this emergent class proved vital, working-class realities also informed this knowledge production. Most people from this community were the first in their families to obtain an elementary or secondary education, to practice a trade, to start their own business, to have steady income to support others, and to enjoy travel not bound to contract labor. These realities were only possible because of siblings, parents, grandparents, and adopted relatives who took on backbreaking labor and who sacrificed their time and sometimes their very lives. Women especially took on continuous care work, deferring their own needs for future generations. The recognition of this sacrifice shaped the worldview of the activists in this study. They understood that they owed a great debt to those who came before them. A 1960s Brooklyn organization, for example, would take on the title of Las Servidoras, or "those who serve," harkening back to an Afro-Caribbean newspaper founded in 1928 Panamá whose mantra was "service to the community." This work of service did not supplant the fact that poor and working-class Afro-Caribbeans had their own understandings of community sacrifice and spoke out against elitist postulations of diasporic world making.

Attention to the gendered nature of these class and generational demarcations is also an important part of this study. Afro-Caribbean women, unlike their male counterparts, had fewer opportunities to attain postelementary education, to travel on their own terms, and to eschew familial obligations. They likewise had to contend with universalized patriarchal standards that called on women to be subservient even as their labor within and outside the home allowed for the family's and community's overall class mobility. As noted by Black feminist scholars, Black women in the Americas continuously encountered demands to choose one nexus of oppression and identity or face relegation into silence. To produce knowledge, women had to challenge this hierarchization of oppression and identity, a process that proved daunting though not impossible.[55] Understanding these class tensions, gendered hierarchies, and generational expectations is crucial to a full assessment of how Afro-Caribbean Panamanians emerged as producers of knowledge.

Through this focus on Afro-Caribbean Panamanians as knowledge producers and world makers, I join scholars of African diaspora studies and Black internationalism who have called for greater studies placing the thoughts, words, and actions of globally minded African descendants at the center of our scholarly inquiry. Their findings hold especial cogency regarding transformation and mobility in African diaspora histories, the gendered nature of diaspora creation, and the importance of the print medium and bilingualism in the development of Black internationalist culture.[56] My attention to local internationalism foregrounds knowledge production at a local level as a necessary first step in understanding diasporic world making. What Afro-Caribbean Panamanians created in Colón, La Boca, and Brooklyn was site specific yet deeply informed by a knowledge of Black life AROUND THE WORLD.

Through an intentional Afro-Caribbean diasporic framework that begins in the Global South, in Panama, and examines diasporic links nurtured therein that emanated to other parts of the Americas, I expand on the hemispheric approach of scholars of Black transnationalism, Afro Latin American studies, and Afrolatinidades.[57] I also build on the work of Black scholars in Panama, who starting in the 1970s focused on highlighting the histories of Afro-Caribbeans within and outside the isthmus.[58] *Panama in Black* also acknowledges the unavoidable reality of US empire in Afro-Caribbean world making, and the extent to which working with or against US empire complicated attempts at Black internationalist solidarities. As chapter 5 explores, US citizenship in the hands of migrants also held the potential for other forms of Afro-diasporic solidarity.

Why Panama and the United States?

A close engagement with the diasporic world making undertaken by Afro-Caribbean Panamanians requires addressing US-Panamanian relations, in addition to exploring the history of Caribbean migration in both spaces. Scholarship on US-Panamanian relations has tended to focus either on Afro-Caribbean Panamanians as discreet communities or on geopolitical dynamics and power structures, but rarely both.[59] *Panama in Black* takes a closer look at the public intellectual and activist work of Afro-Caribbean Panamanians, asserting that these men and women were not simply bystanders or occasional subversives to imperial, neocolonial, and national policies but rather, active observers and participants in the making or supplanting of these policies.

Afro-Caribbean Panamanians stood at the forefront of developing, editing, and popularizing proposals later embraced by Panamanian and US officials, which made them crucial to nation building and imperial processes and also hypervisible during antiforeigner and anti-Black campaigns. Chapters 1 through 3 offer examples of these proposals, which included promoting English-language and bilingual English-Spanish language training, as well as fighting for worker equality in the Canal Zone. While their diasporic positionality made Afro-Caribbean Panamanians appealing ambassadors, they routinely had to contend with a long history of anti-Black exclusionist nationalism that continued to dominate daily life in the Americas. To these exclusions, they brought a unique brand of world making, one that drew from a long history of migration, community building, and activism.

Similarities in Caribbean migration patterns also connects Afro-Caribbean descendant experiences in twentieth-century Panama and the United States. In this introduction I have noted how Afro-Caribbean Panamanians forever transformed the Panamanian geographic, political, and cultural landscape in both the republic and the Canal Zone. Caribbean migrants and their descendants also led major civic, legislative, labor, and human rights campaigns in the twentieth-century United States. It is not surprising, then, that Afro-Caribbean Panamanians would look to spaces like Brooklyn to further their campaigns for a more inclusive vision of diasporic belonging in Panama and the United States. Indeed, migrants from Jamaica and Barbados, along with those from Haiti, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic that formed part of mid-twentieth-century New York, proved crucial in leading and supporting Black solidarity and civil rights campaigns there.[60]

No history of Caribbean or Afro-Latinx New York is complete without an understanding of how Afro-Caribbean Panamanians, with their direct experiences of US imperialism, bilingualism, and multiple migration histories, brought together disparate regional, diasporic, and national histories. From the individual pursuit of studies in the United States, to speaking on behalf of the Panamanian nation on a Brooklyn radio station, to creating organizations within the United States to support Black youth of migrant and nonmigrant backgrounds, Afro-Caribbean Panamanians connected New York spaces to the Panamanian isthmus and the broader Caribbean world.

Rather than Afro-Caribbean Panamanians being just another migrant wave to the United States that added Black diasporic consciousness, their experiences reveal a unique migratory and colonial history. This study is less about the geographic boundaries of Panama and the United States,

and more about how Afro-Caribbean Panamanians created, in the words of Katherine McKittrick, "alternative geographic formulations," which challenged discourses of erasure and displacement.[61] That they advanced these formulations with and without the protections of state-specific citizenship rights further adds to the complexity of their activist experiences.

Chapter Overview

I have divided the book into five chapters, each building around a particular moment, event, or policy that proved vital to the development of diasporic world making among Afro-Caribbean Panamanians. Chapter 1 explores debates over the meaning and ownership of Panama as revealed among Afro-Caribbean Panamanian newspaper publishers, journalists, and members of the reading public from the late 1920s to the late 1930s. In this chapter I focus on specific articulations of diaspora possibilities and their connections to ongoing attempts to define Panama. The creation of the *Panama Tribune*, an English-language newsweekly operated by Afro-Caribbean Panamanians, opens my discussion. This chapter provides the first ever detailed examination of the *Tribune*'s work and fills a crucial gap left by those studies that have ignored it as a key site of diasporic world making.[62] Through a review of editorials, letters to the editor, and reports on local and international policies targeting Black people, I demonstrate how the paper offered a key space in which to discuss community achievements and concerns, especially as an anti–West Indian discourse intensified on the isthmus. The *Tribune*, overall, positioned itself as, of, and from Panama, though through its coverage; it connected the isthmus and its diasporic formations with the global experiences of people of color.

The second chapter focuses on the use of citizenship policies and ideologies, by and against Afro-Caribbean Panamanians during the 1940s, as official and popular debates about who could claim Panamanian nationality grew in intensity. The chapter examines the rise of an Afro-Caribbean Panamanian activist core of lawyers, journalists, teachers, and aspiring politicians focused on challenging constitutional changes denationalizing Afro-Caribbean descendants, while also condemning segregationist policies in the Canal Zone. A wide array of neglected sources—letters, petitions, records from civic organizations, proposals initiated by teachers in the zone colored schools, and reports by labor leaders—reveal the breadth of the coalition against denationalization and segregation. Combined, these sources highlight the connected nature of activism in the republic and the

Canal Zone, as well as the bourgeoning tensions between nationalist and diasporic approaches. Uniting nationalist and diasporic approaches was a shared understanding of the isthmus as home, a recognition of the dangers of anti-Black rhetoric, and a desire for more inclusive visions of citizenship.

Chapter 3 connects mid-twentieth-century debates on communism, democracy, and hemispheric diplomacy to discussions of state-specific and internationalist understandings of home and belonging. Afro-Caribbean Panamanians who took on positions as national and international leaders in the 1950s strove to present Panama both as a partner in the fight to protect democracy and as a modern nation deserving of equal treatment from the United States. In this moment, community and labor leaders coalesced along an anti-imperialist discourse that focused on US inequities within and beyond the Canal Zone, and the potentials of a growing Panamanian nation. The policing of Afro-Caribbean Panamanians on the grounds of their alleged lack of assimilation and patriotism nonetheless continued. This policing belied a racist and exclusionist notion of nationalism predicated on Afro-Caribbean Panamanians being asked to renounce diasporic experiences, even as their membership in the nation faced constant scrutiny. Such stances negated activist agendas by this community anchored around establishing pluralistic understandings of identity, home, and belonging.

The book's fourth chapter further dissects the building of activist networks in 1950s Panama through campaigns for labor and citizenship justice against an exclusionist government hostile to Afro-Caribbean Panamanians in the Canal Zone. Government officials and nationalist newspapers questioned the patriotism of Afro-Caribbean Panamanians, who complained about the implementation of the Remón-Eisenhower Treaty and resisted the attempts to erase their activism in the struggle for labor and citizenship rights. In these hypernationalist narratives, Afro-Caribbeans living and working in the zone typified ungratefulness, dangers to a homogenous nation, and a lack of patriotic ethos. Afro-Caribbean Panamanians rejected calls for selfless sacrifice on behalf of the nation. The end to discriminatory citizenship laws at this point came too late for those unwilling or uninterested in "proving" their merit as Panamanians. They sought opportunities outside the isthmus to create their own forms of citizenship and belonging.

Chapter 5 follows Afro-Caribbean Panamanians who opted to leave Panama during the 1940s and 1950s and connects their migration to another phase of diasporic world making. These migrants' agency challenged attempts to rewrite and sanitize histories of activism and diasporic possibilities within the isthmus. This final chapter returns to many of the questions that

shape the book's first chapter: What does it mean to create diaspora? How does the label of *outsider* affect the ability to create and sustain community? And what is at stake in defining a particular space as the center of an Afro-Caribbean diasporic world? Unlike previous chapters, this final one closely follows select people to resituate conversations about diasporic possibilities with the intricacies of their day-to-day lives. Afro-Caribbean Panamanian women who created Las Servidoras, a scholarship-granting organization, in 1950s Brooklyn are at the core of the chapter. In New York, Las Servidoras connected with other members of the diaspora engaged in activist struggle. By taking on a leadership position, they also pushed against stereotypes of who had the capacity to lead, move, and become active global citizens.

The book ends by exploring the proceedings of the First US Conference of Panamanians, held in 1974 in the Poconos in Pennsylvania. The conference brought together several US-based organizations created by Panamanian migrants with the goal of exploring how Panamanians living abroad could continue engagement in political, economic, and social happenings on the isthmus. The conference, like the work of Las Servidoras, connected places like New York and Panama, but more so than Las Servidoras, it sought to capitalize on the professionalization of Afro-Caribbean Panamanians and other Panamanians living in the United States to explore the role of these groups in the future of Panama. Conference organizers expanded the legacy of diasporic world making begun by the *Tribune*, embraced by select citizenship and labor rights advocates, and continued by Las Servidoras. The meeting, especially when compared with the agendas of local and hemispherically oriented Black organizations in Panama during the 1970s and beyond, pointed to a disjuncture between US-based and isthmian-based understandings of Afro-Caribbean world making. This disjuncture in turn posed new questions regarding ongoing claims to Panama and the potentials of Afro-diasporic alliances and opportunities across the Americas.

A Note on Terminology and Scope

In this introduction and throughout the book, I privilege the terms Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean Panamanian. The men and women whose lives shape the bulk of this book used terms like *Negroes*, *Panamanian*, *Isthmian*, *West Indian*, *British West Indian*, *Black Panamanian*, and *West Indian Panamanian* to describe themselves and other members of their community. These terms appear throughout the book, but most of my assessments and conclusions utilize the terms Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean

Panamanian. In doing so I move away from historiography that only reserves the term *Caribbean* for the Spanish-speaking islands, calling the remainder of the area "the West Indies." This term also affirms the centrality of African descendants to the history of these spaces. My use of the term Afro-Caribbean Panamanian does not encompass all people of African descent on the isthmus. The history of Blackness in Panama, Central America, and the circum-Caribbean includes complex ethnic, regional, linguistic, and migratory histories. Afro-Caribbean Panamanians form one aspect of this rich history of race and diasporic formation.

In engaging with Afro-Caribbean diasporic world making as a counter to exclusionist Iberian/Hispanicized depictions of Panama and US imperial claims to the isthmus, my study does not incorporate the worldviews of other groups and communities who challenged these exclusionist platforms. In choosing to focus on Afro-Caribbeans, my aim is not to dismiss these coexisting worldviews, but to highlight what can be learned from one specific approach to creating community within and across national and imperial boundaries.

Notes

Introduction

1 S. Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 225.

2 Some of the scholarship critical of mestizaje narratives that I build on and push further include Euraque, "Threat of Blackness"; Appelbaum, *Race and Nation*; Múnera, *Fronteras imaginadas*; Hooker, "Beloved Enemies"; and Euraque, Gould, and Hale, *Memorias del mestizaje*.

3 S. Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 235.

4 Morris, "Becoming Creole, 171.

5 Patterson and Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations," 20.

6 Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, 2.

7 Putnam, "Citizenship from the Margins." Lok C. D. Siu, in her study of the Chinese diaspora in Panama, and Tao Leigh Goffe, in her examination of Afro-Asian intimacies, both point to similar practices of vernacular citizenship. Siu, *Memories of a Future*; Goffe, "Albums of Inclusion."

8 For more on the denationalization of Haitian descendants in the Dominican Republic and the work of activist communities, see Evangelista, "Reshaping National Imaginations"; Shoaff, "Right to a Haitian Name"; and Estrella, "Muertos Civiles."

9 Stephens, *Black Empire*, 5.

10 By the early nineteenth century, descendants of enslaved Africans, many born in Jamaica and other parts of the eastern Caribbean, alongside Afro-Caribbean migrants from the islands of San Andrés and Providence, had created small fishing and trading communities in Bocas del Toro, Panama. Here they joined Ngäbe and Buglé Indigenous communities that had long called this area home. Westerman, *Los inmigrantes antillanos*, 21; Crawford, "A Transnational World," 31–32; Araúz Monfante, *Bocas del Toro*, chap 5.

11 Senior, "Colon People"; Newton, *Silver Men*, chap. 8. For more on the building of the Panama railroad, including its connections to US expansionism, see García B., *La doctrina Monroe*. On the cross-national and cross-racial interactions that formed part of the railroad construction, see McGuiness, *Path of*

Empire. On the presence of the United Fruit Company in Panama (specifically in Bocas del Toro), see Bourgois, *Ethnicity at Work*. For more on the monopoly held by United Fruit in Central America, see Chomsky, *West Indian Workers*; Harpelle, "Bananas and Business"; and Colby, *Business of Empire*.

12 On the vital role played by Caribbean migrants in the building of the Panama Canal, see Newton, *Silver Men*, chaps. 4, 5, and 9; Conniff, *Black Labor*, chap. 3; Maloney, *El Canal de Panamá*; Greene, *Canal Builders*, chap. 3; and Senior, *Dying to Better Themselves*.

13 Westerman, *Los inmigrantes antillanos*, 109–23; Westerman, "Historical Notes on West Indians," 344; "News of the Churches," *Panama American*, May 26, 1928; "West Indians Originators of Panama's Now Immense Motor-Bus Service," *Panama Tribune*, December 30, 1928; Brown Valdés and Castillero Cortés, "El afroantillano en la sociedad," 97; Salabarría Patiño, *El Colón de ayer*, 178; O'Reggio, *Between Alienation and Citizenship*, 78–79. For a rich examination of the creation of lodges among Afro-Caribbean migrants in Panama, see Zenger, "West Indians in Panama," chap. 2.

14 Albert E. Bell, "Jingles," *Panama American*, May 26, 1928; Burnett, "Are We Slaves or Free Men?," 6, 67–69; Ewing, "Caribbean Labour Politics," 23–45, 33. For more on local branches of the UNIA in other parts of Central America and the Caribbean, see Garvey and Hill, *Marcus Garvey*; Harpelle, "Cross Currents in the Western Caribbean"; MacPherson, "Colonial Matriarchs"; McLeod, "Sin Dejar de Ser Cubanos"; Guridy, *Forging Diaspora*, chap. 2; Leeds, "Toward the 'Higher Type of Womanhood'"; and Sullivan, "'Forging Ahead' in Banes."

15 Labor strikes beginning during the railroad construction period were not uncommon, but none compared in terms of numbers and duration to the 1920 strike. For these earlier strike movements, joined in part by Afro-Caribbeans, see Martinez H., "Luchas populares en Colón," 86–96; and Salabarría Patiño, *La ciudad de Colón*, 139–41.

16 Conniff, *Black Labor*, 53–61; O'Reggio, *Between Alienation and Citizenship*, 56–60; Burnett, "Unity Is Strength," 39–64.

17 For more on the history of African descendants in Panama prior to and during the arrival of Afro-Caribbean migrants, see Fortune, *Obras selectas*; Castillero Calvo, *Los negros y mulatos*; and Lowe de Goodin, *Afrodescendientes en el Istmo*.

18 Navarro, *Dominio y sociedad*, 342–44; Lizcano, "La población negra," 32; Porras, *Papel histórico*, 381; Sanders, *Contentious Republicans*, chaps. 6 and 7; McGraw, *Work of Recognition*, chap. 6.

19 Pizzurno Gelós, *Memorias e imaginarios*, 15. On the fear of "another Haiti" in various parts of the Americas, see Geggus, "Sounds and Echoes of Freedom," 19–36.

20 Quoted terms from Pizzurno Gelós, *Memorias e imaginarios*, 13, 16; de la Rosa Sánchez, "El negro en Panamá," 264; Szok, *La Última Gaviota*, 7–8, 19–20; Lasso, *Erased*, 32, 49–50. Fernando Aparicio notes that for some members of the elite, such as Justo Arosemena, fears of US expansionism, particularly given what occurred with the building of the Panama railroad in the 1850s, tempered

their full support of a canal project. Control of commerce through the canal nonetheless was viewed as an important means of gaining independence from Colombia. Aparicio, *Liberalismo, federalismo y nación*, 20–22.

21 Newton, *Silver Men*, 151–52.

22 For a brief snapshot of some letters sent by Caribbean migrants to British consular officials detailing these abuses, see May McNeil, "Traducción de la correspondencia," 5–61.

23 Araúz Monfante, *El imperialismo y la oligarquía criolla*; McGuiness, *Path of Empire*, 191. In 1920, Tomás Gabriel Duque temporarily held the presidency. Pizzurno Gelós, *Memoria e imaginarios*, 152.

24 Szok, *La Última Gaviota*, 86–104.

25 Szok, *Wolf Tracks*, chap. 2; Maloney, "Los afropanameños y la cultura nacional," 410; Chirú Barrios, "Liturgia al héroe nacional," 71–99. For more on discourses of mestizaje and blanqueamiento in Latin America, particularly in Central America and the circum-Caribbean, see Múnera, *Fronteras imaginadas*; Hooker, "Beloved Enemies"; and Gudmundson and Wolfe, *Blacks and Blackness*.

26 Gudmundson and Wolfe, introduction, 16.

27 For more on the connections between Iberian culture, mestizaje, and the discourse of panameñidad, see Watson, *Politics of Race*, chaps. 1–2; and Sigler, Amen, and Dwyer, "Heterogenous Isthmus," 232–33. On eugenicist practices in Panama, see Pizzurno Gelós, *El discurso eugenésico*, 85–112. For more on the degree to which scientific racism shaped the construction of the Canal Zone, see Lasso, *Erased*. On the idea of "foreign coastal cities," especially in opposition to an idolized interior, see Pizzurno Gelós, *Memorias e imaginaros*, chap. 5.

28 Greene, *Canal Builders*, 22–25. For a rich analysis of how the very term *sovereignty* as it appeared in the 1903 treaty (the English and subsequent Spanish version) was interpreted by US and Panamanian officials, see King, *El problema de la soberanía*, chap. 3; and Zien, *Sovereign Acts*, 6–12. For a detailed examination of how US officials incrementally excluded Panamanian governance and commerce from the zone area between 1903 and 1915, see Lasso, *Erased*, chaps. 3–4.

29 The gold/silver system originated with the Panama railroad construction of the mid-nineteenth century and the actual use of gold and silver coins as wages for US citizens and non-US citizens. The system was also employed during the French canal construction efforts of the late 1890s, but skill not citizenship determined payment. During the start of canal construction by the United States in 1904, US officials kept the system's name (gold/silver) but paid in dollars and soon added citizenship and racial criteria to their wage policies. On the evolution of the gold/silver system and how it operated in the US canal-building efforts, see Westerman, "Gold vs. Silver Workers," 93–94; Donoghue, *Borderland on the Isthmus*, chap. 2; Zien, *Sovereign Acts*, chap. 2.

30 Corinealdi, "Envisioning Multiple Citizenships," 88–89.

31 Both Michael Donoghue and Katherine Zien offer a rich engagement with the Americanization of Zonians in the zone schools and other communal

spaces. Donoghue, *Borderland on the Isthmus*, chap. 2; Zien, *Sovereign Acts*, chap. 2.

32 As US citizens, African American workers would be paid in the "gold scale." For more on African Americans in the Panama Canal Zone, see P. C. Brown, "Panama Canal"; and Greene, *Canal Builders*, 99–107.

33 Donoghue, *Borderland on the Isthmus*, 27.

34 Conte-Porras, *Arnulfo Arias Madrid*, 67–78; Pearcy, "Panama's Generation of '31," 694–96, 699–702; Lasso, "Nationalism and Immigrant Labor," 556–57; García B., "Chiarismo vs. Acción Comunal."

35 "Ley 13 de 1926 (de 23 de Octubre)," *Gaceta Oficial* 4977 (October 28, 1926).

36 Alfaro, *El peligro*. Alfaro had no direct ties to national politics, but as a white Panamanian-Ecuadorian whose father was twice president of Ecuador, he had the opportunity to study, travel, and live around the world. By the mid-1920s he was back in Panama, contributing to national and international newspapers. Pérez Pimentel, "Olmedo Alfaro Paredes," 8–17. For a study exploring how Alfaro's text connected to hemisphere-wide white supremacist debates, see Milazzo, "White Supremacy, White Knowledge."

37 Alfaro, *El peligro*, 3, 7.

38 Alfaro, *El peligro*, 15–16.

39 Conniff, *Black Labor*, 5–6; R. A. Davis, "West Indian Workers," chap. 1.

40 R. A. Davis, "West Indian Workers," 144; Zumoff, "1925 Tenant's Strike," 537.

41 Alfaro, *El peligro*, 7, 16.

42 Prior to 1923, the term *Turks*, or *turcos*, was used to identify anyone migrating from the Ottoman Empire.

43 Durling Arango, *La inmigración prohibida*, 33–44. On the creation of hierarchies of immigrant undesirability in Panama and neighboring Colombia by the first decades of the twentieth century, see Lasso, "Race and Ethnicity in the Formation"; and Rhenals Doria and Flórez Bolívar, "Escogiendo entre los extranjeros 'indeseables.'"

44 I. Reid, *Negro Immigrant*, 63–66; Duncan, "El negro en Panamá," 71; Putnam, "Eventually Alien." For a careful study of the policies implemented against Caribbean migrants in Costa Rica, see Harpelle, *West Indians of Costa Rica*. On anti–West Indian policies in Guatemala, see Opie, *Black Labor Migration*. On the treatment of Caribbean migrants in Honduras, see Chambers, *Race, Nation, and West Indian Immigration*. On anti-Asian policies in the Americas, see E. Lee, "Yellow Peril"; Lee-Loy, "Antiphonal Announcement"; and A. P. Lee, *Mandarin Brazil*.

45 Putnam, "Eventually Alien," 295.

46 Putnam, "Eventually Alien," 291–92; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 9–10, 19, chap. 1.

47 Bourgois, *Ethnicity at Work*. On United Fruit in other parts of Central America and their involvement in national politics, see Purcell, *Banana Fallout*; Chomsky, *West Indian Workers*; and Harpelle, *West Indians of Costa Rica*, chaps. 1–4.

48 Franks, "Property Rights and the Commercialization"; Harpelle, "Bananas and Business"; Casey, *Empire's Guestworkers*.

49 "Ley 15 de 1927 (de 27 de Enero)," *Gaceta Oficial* 5058 (February 28, 1927).

50 "Ley 16 de 1927 (de 31 de Enero)," *Gaceta Oficial* 5058 (February 28, 1927).

51 Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 7–8, 25–27, chap. 1.

52 My study joins and expands the work of historians such as Ronald Harpelle, Lara Putnam, Jorge Giovannetti-Torres, and Richard Turits. Harpelle, *West Indians of Costa Rica*; Putnam, *Radical Moves*; Giovannetti-Torres, "Elusive Organization of 'Identity'"; Giovannetti-Torres, *Black British Migrants in Cuba*; Turits, "World Destroyed." The work of historians Aviva Chomsky, Barry Carr, Edward Paulino, Keith Tinker, Andrea Queeley, and Asia Leeds also informs this study. Chomsky, *West Indian Workers*; Chomsky, "Barbados or Canada"; Carr, "Identity, Class, and Nation"; Paulino, "Erasing the Kreyol"; Tinker, *Migration of Peoples*; Queeley, *Rescuing Our Roots*; Leeds, "Toward the 'Higher Type of Womanhood.'"

53 Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 29.

54 Vinson, "African (Black) Diaspora History," 13.

55 Hull, Scott, and Smith, *All the Women Are White*; Williams, "La mujer negra"; Gonzalez, "Racismo e seximo na cultura brasileira"; Boyce Davies, *Black Women, Writing, and Identity*; Carby, *Race Men*; Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; Barriteau, "Relevance of Black Feminist Scholarship"; Ransby, *Eslanda*; Alvarez and Caldwell, "Promoting Feminist Amefricanidade"; K. J. Brown, *Repeating Body*; K. M. Q. Hall, *Naming a Transnational Black Feminist*.

56 S. Hall, "Culture Identity and Diaspora"; Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*; Patterson and Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations"; U. Y. Taylor, *Veiled Garvey*; Edwards, *Practice of Diaspora*; Jason Parker, "Capital of the Caribbean"; Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx*; Guridy, *Forging Diaspora*; Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom*; Crawford, "Transnational World Fractured"; Nwankwo, "Bilingualism, Blackness, and Belonging"; Blain, Leeds, and Taylor, "Women, Gender Politics, and Pan-Africanism."

57 Bryce-Laporte, "Voluntary Immigration," 28–41; Andrews, *Afro-Latin America*; Nwankwo, *Black Cosmopolitanism*; Marable and Agard-Jones, *Transnational Blackness*; Moreno Vega, Alba, and Modestin, *Women Warriors*; Queeley, "El Puente"; Dixon and Burdick, *Comparative Perspectives*; Alvarez and Caldwell, "Promoting Feminist Amefricanidade"; García-Peña, *Borders of Dominicanidad*; Ariail, "Between the Boundaries"; Corinealdi, "Creating Transformative Education"; Fuente and Andrews, *Afro-Latin American Studies*; K. M. Q. Hall, *Naming a Transnational Black Feminist*.

58 For some seminal examples of this work, see Priestley and Maloney, "El grupo antillano"; Westerman, *Los inmigrantes antillanos*; Maloney, *El Canal de Panamá*; Williams, "La mujer negra"; Priestley, "Etnia, clase y cuestión nacional"; Russell, *Old Woman Remembers*; Lowe de Goodin, *De Barbados a Panamá*; Lowe de Goodin, "La fuerza laboral afroantillana"; Barrow and Priestley, *Piel*

oscura Panamá; Maloney, "Significado de la presencia y contribución"; and Lowe de Goodin, *Afrodescendientes en el Istmo*.

59 Scholars such as Michael Conniff and more recently Julie Greene, Michael Donoghue, Katherine Zien, and Marixa Lasso have offered rich studies on US policies and ideologies surrounding the Panama Canal Zone, with some attention given to the lives of Afro-Caribbean migrants and their descendants in this space. Rather than devote specific chapters or sections to Afro-Caribbean Panamanian experiences, this study affirms that any examinations of Panamanian nationalism or US empire making in Panama must seriously engage with how the lives, ideas, and work of members of this group fundamentally shaped the realities of the isthmus. Conniff, *Black Labor*; Greene, *Canal Builders*; Donoghue, *Borderland on the Isthmus*; Zien, *Sovereign Acts*; Lasso, *Erased*.

60 For more on the activism of Afro-Caribbeans and their descendants in early to mid-twentieth-century New York City, see James, *Holding Aloft the Banner*; Hoffnung-Garskof, "Migrations of Arturo Schomburg"; Hoffnung-Garskof, *Racial Migrations*; Stephens, *Black Empire*; Opie, "Eating, Dancing, and Courting"; Jiménez Román and Flores, *Afro-Latin@ Reader*; and Mirabal, *Suspect Freedoms*.

61 McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, xix.

62 Lara Putnam has also examined the work of the *Tribune*, albeit without the level of detail present in this book. See Putnam, *Radical Moves*, chap. 4; and Putnam, "Circum-Atlantic Print Circuits."

Chapter One: Panama as Diaspora

1 Sidney A. Young, "Making Our Bow," *Panama Tribune*, November 11, 1928.

2 S. Young, *Isthmian Echoes*, vii.

3 S. Young, *Isthmian Echoes*, 216.

4 This high literacy trend was initially a legacy of labor recruitment policies in the British Caribbean during the US-financed canal construction project, whereby those seeking to migrate increasingly had to prove financial soundness. Those able to migrate were quite often both financially sound and among the most educated in their places of birth. *Censo Demográfico*, 11, 115; McLean Petras, *Jamaican Labor Migration*, 143–46; Newton, *Silver Men*, 6–66; Frederick, *"Colón Man a Come,"* 29. After the canal construction, the Panamanian government, when not barring Anglophone Afro-Caribbean labor, also followed a finances-based migration requirement, and this too coincided with a growth in migration by the literate and most educated in the British Caribbean. Durling Arango, *La inmigración prohibida*, 44–46.

5 Sidney A. Young, "Panamanian Students in Jamaica," *Panama Tribune*, January 26, 1930.

6 Putnam, "Sidney Young," 3.

7 Sidney A. Young, "Sid Says Adios," *Panama American*, May 28, 1928.