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"CAPITAL OF THE CARIBBEAN": THE AFRICAN AMERICAN–WEST INDIAN "HARLEM NEXUS" AND THE TRANSNATIONAL DRIVE FOR BLACK FREEDOM, 1940–1948

by Jason Parker*

Great stories are often eclipsed by their most salient moments. The rich drama of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, for example, is well appreciated while in progress, but what most theatergoers remember about it afterward is, first and foremost, "Et tu, Brute?" Powerful moments like this overshadow other vital—albeit less quotable—features of the story. A similar dynamic obtains in the study of history. The sprawling violence of World War II tends to block out many of the stories hidden within the larger narrative of the conflict. Even momentous events, such as the 1940 Bases-for-Destroyers Deal in which Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill exchanged American warships for British-owned Western-Hemisphere bases, while recognized for their intrinsic importance, are folded into the broader tableau of Anglo-American diplomacy. Thus are some of its offshoots, some scarcely perceived, easily lost.

For many the bases deal is usually (and correctly) seen as an important milestone in the gradual retreat of the British Empire and the expansion of the new American regime. However, it is equally important as a milestone in the struggle of Caribbean peoples to secure independence from both. Moreover, the precise reasons also touch upon the American mainland, in particular African people on the mainland. What historian David Reynolds labels wartime "competitive co-operation" between the United States and Britain opened up new opportunities for those fighting the long battle for Caribbean independence. These opportunities ultimately grew out of the black community of New York City, a community burgeoning with southern African American and West Indian transplants who now found themselves neighbors in the urban North.

This in turn points to another important and overshadowed historical development. Just as the history of the Atlantic Alliance eclipses the full story of the Bases Deal, the "New Negro" Renaissance in Harlem in the 1920s similarly obscures the subsequent extent of transnational black activism in the diplomacy of Caribbean decolonization. The renaissance in Harlem was the fruit of the two parallel migrations that brought the black diaspora to New York City: African Americans from the southern United States, and West Indians from their home islands. At its apogee, fully one-quarter of Harlem's population was of West Indian origin, a diverse diasporan community that might be called the "Harlem

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"CAPITAL OF THE CARIBBEAN"

nexus." The designation is meant more figuratively than literally; outlying communities then growing from Brooklyn to New Jersey, not to mention organizations such as the NAACP located elsewhere in the city, meant that black New York did not end at 110th Street. Yet that neighborhood provided a spiritual home for important cultural and political developments, even if some participants in them "may have" resided outside Harlem proper. The importance of this transnational connection did not end with the renaissance; flying well under the geopolitical radar, it would continue to have an important impact into the 1940s and beyond.

A full understanding of this impact requires transcending conventional historiographical categories in order to illuminate points of contact between them. Much of the literature on U.S. African American urban history tends to focus on localized factors—regional institutions, city geography, economic and cultural particularities—and at most on select, narrowly defined national issues.¹ The literature on diplomatic history, on the other hand, traditionally leans in the other direction—favoring "macro" over "micro," and risking insufficient attention to subglobal actors. Emerging scholarly trends, however, challenge the habits and limits of both literatures. In the last two decades, historians of U.S. foreign relations have fruitfully examined the role of race in American diplomacy.² Beyond that subfield alone, the historical profession has begun the "transnational turn," a movement toward new modes of historical analysis that can reap undiscovered insights and connections from familiar narratives.³

This essay employs that approach in mapping the crossroads of African-diasporan and transnational-diplomatic history. During World War II, the Harlem nexus exerted an important gravity on the push for Caribbean reform. It did so via official channels—namely, its ties to the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration—as well as unofficial ones, particularly its support for West Indian activists. This essay examines aspects of these relations as they concerned Jamaica, the largest and most politically prominent island of the West Indies. One such aspect was the way in which New York interactions between West Indian immigrants and U.S. African Americans advanced the general cause of black freedom in the hemisphere. These connections provided a thematic liaison between Marcus Garvey's race-consciousness and the NAACP's litigious dissent. Nor did this current flow in only one direction; mainland actions influenced the first free elections in West Indian history. In addition, despite Roosevelt's reluctance to jeopardize the Democratic coalition by confronting racial injustice at home, Roosevelt was sympathetic to the racial dimension of the Bases Deal and to its repercussions in Harlem, to which the administration looked at times for guidance in shaping its stance on Caribbean reform.

Putting black New York at the core of this international story, *along with GIs, John Bull, and Nazi submarines*, reveals fascinating aspects of relations between metropole, hegemon, colony, and key nodes of the African diaspora in the Western Hemisphere. War, empire, race, and decolonization converged in Harlem in unexpected, and usually unappreciated, ways during World War II. This convergence forces a rethinking of its constituent parts, notably of the transnational black activism centered in urban North America. That activism, directly and indirectly, influenced American foreign policy, British colonial reform, and the Caribbean push for self-rule. It thus invites new consideration of the urban landscape as the staging ground for a black intellectual revolution that

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

transcended borders, just as it helped contemporary actors to concretize the global nature of the 20th century black freedom struggle.

BACKGROUND: THE OTHER GREAT MIGRATION

Generally ignored in prewar and wartime Atlantic relations, African Americans and West Indians in the urban U.S. North were building networks for promoting black freedom. These efforts grew from an often overlooked segment of pre-World War I immigration to the United States. By 1924, U.S. residents of West Indian birth or derivation numbered more than 300,000. Many became active in the public sphere of their new home. Their importance lay not only in their numbers, but in their concentration and contributions. The majority gravitated to New York City, to play the aforementioned vital role in Harlem's New Negro movement. Historian Winston James has demonstrated that West Indians "held aloft the banner of Ethiopia," advocating black unity and freedom in cooperation—and, at times, in competition—with their U.S.-born African American neighbors, who were themselves arriving in the urban North in large numbers.⁴ West Indian men and women of letters, and figures such as Garvey, stoked black consciousness and helped to set the political agenda for black America.

In New York City and beyond, the 1930s were a milestone in the global history of the African diaspora. The 1935 Italian invasion of Ethiopia had galvanized African people the world over, and African Americans, generations removed from the ancestral continent, followed the crisis.⁵ The episode was key to what historian Penny Von Eschen calls the "making of the politics of the African diaspora." Its legacies included the politicization of Britain's League of Coloured Peoples and both the 1937 founding in London of the International African Service Bureau under the leadership of Trinidadian George Padmore, and the 1937 founding in New York of a prototype of the Council on African Affairs.⁶

African Americans in the Western Hemisphere sustained a newly impassioned interest in the global dimensions of racial and colonial oppression. White supremacist imperial rule came under searing attack in the U.S. by black voices, many of which belonged to West Indians. Indeed, those of Caribbean stock figure so prominently in black radicalism that it is impossible to envision it without them; Marcus Garvey is far from the only example. Winston James has analyzed this cohort's role:

The Caribbean presence in radical[ism] in the U.S. was remarkable in . . . three important respects. First, it was out of proportion to the group's numerical weight within the black population. Second, Caribbeans founded and led not only black nationalist [groups] like the UNIA, but also important political currents on the revolutionary socialist left. Third, the migrants also provided some of the most distinguished black intellectuals at the time.⁷

Some of these individuals arrived as radicals; others were radicalized by mainland experience. In either case, the parallel migration that brought West Indians alongside southern African Americans to the urban American North guaranteed that black activism—even that which fell short of the full-scale revolutionary radicalism to which James

"CAPITAL OF THE CARIBBEAN"

refers—would encompass anticolonialism. When it did, the West Indian presence naturally gave the crisis in the Caribbean an immediacy that other areas of the colonial world lacked. This is not to underestimate other themes—sympathy for India, Anglophobia, and Afrophilia, for example—in black anticolonial discourse. Yet variations on all three were also present regarding the West Indies, with the added difference that West Indians themselves were standing on Harlem street corners to proclaim them.

It is significant, for example, that the first group to fuse nascent Jamaican nationalism with a demand for self-rule opened a branch in Harlem before it opened one in Kingston. The Rev. Ethelred Brown founded the Jamaican Progressive League (JPL) in New York City in 1936.⁸ Precursors to the league had functioned as fraternal clubs and Brown-invited nationalists, Garveyites, and others to join his push for colonial self-determination. The JPL was one of a dozen similar leagues founded by expatriates.⁹ These groups supported self-rule for Africa as well, but for obvious reasons the West Indies were closer to their hearts. In addition, the proliferation of such leagues illustrates the importance of New York City as what Ken Post calls the "more stimulating atmosphere [than that of the home colonies] for anti-colonial ferment," and as a seedbed for the cross-pollination of racial and political consciousness.¹⁰

This West Indian presence ensured that Harlem shook when the islands exploded. In the 1930s, the crushing poverty and labor conditions in the Caribbean reached critical proportions. The decline in world prices for West Indian commodities such as sugar meant that the Great Depression was the deep bottom of a long slide.¹¹ Islanders returning home from vanished jobs abroad weighed their privations on a scale of higher material expectations. Fueling agitation, "the emergence of the 'vociferous element,'" writes Ken Post, "was to be blamed on migrants returned from the USA, where [according to a Jamaican writer] they 'had acted as bell boys and had made bigger money and had also learnt to be race conscious.'"¹² The Ethiopian conflict fired that consciousness and fused the felt connections between U.S. African Americans and resident West Indians.¹³ This also fed millenarian movements emphasizing struggle and solidarity, such as Rastafarianism.¹⁴ In addition, the success of American unions caught the attention of West Indian labor leaders, who sought the ties and techniques of their mainland brethren.¹⁵ All of these amid the world economic crisis combined to produce social combustion. Beginning in 1934 in British Guiana and British Honduras, often violent social and labor unrest became an annual event. By 1939 labor disturbances had struck almost every colony in the British Caribbean, leaving each one in a state of constant tension at best and emergency at worst.

The dramatic story of the two riots has been well told elsewhere.¹⁶ It is worth noting here, by way of brief sketch, that what began as labor strikes in particular sectors spread throughout many others. In Jamaica, for example, disturbances in all corners of the island brought people to the streets and society to a full stop. As one labor leader recalled, "in May 1938, Jamaica was on the march. Not even dogs were left in their homes."¹⁷ In Trinidad the largest oil company paid shareholders a dividend of 35 percent in the same years that it lowered its workers' wages by roughly the same figure.¹⁸ Fury at this and related injustices spurred strikes in Fyzabad and the oilfields near it in the south. These turned violent and soon spread unrest into other sectors of the economy. Besides its cost in lives and property, the turmoil also brought hitherto suppressed racial dimensions of colonial society to the fore. The U.S. Consul in Barbados foresaw "the gradual submergence

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

of the white man as an economic, political, and social factor, in a tide of color."¹⁹ A mixture of colonial concession and imperial intimidation—including the dispatch of two Royal Navy warships—served to restore order. However, the political landscape and power balance, for both crown and subject, would never be the same.²⁰

By casting light on the failings of British administration, the riots raised fundamental questions about the long-term political future of the West Indies. The labor unrest harmonized with, and energized, incipient middle-class and intellectual movements for greater self-government and reform.²¹ Native, expatriate, and metropolitan voices now all called for change, including eventual self-government. Even among the most radical such voices, few saw self-government as a panacea. Most regarded it as an adjunct to the real issue—the dismal quality of colonial life—new attention to which was another important legacy of the riots.²² Viewed in the long term, however, the main legacy of the 1930s unrest was the way in which it reshaped the regional agenda, and provided an opening for activism—much of it orchestrated from New York City—for reform of the colonial Caribbean regime.

Indeed, the epidemic of labor unrest across the British Caribbean drew the Harlem nexus yet closer to events on the West Indian ground. The JPL carried the banner for labor justice as violence rocked the islands. After the 1938 riots in Jamaica, the U.S. embassy in London received indications that the Comintern was funneling money "for the purpose of exploiting the labor disputes" to West Indian agitators via New York.²³ The State Department had no proof of such a pipeline, but found that "communist-affiliated organizations," such as the National Negro Congress (NNC), were following the crisis and sending money to help the strikers. The renowned actor-singer Paul Robeson mentioned the riots to the *Daily Worker*, lamenting "those fellows [who] are being shot down in Jamaica today."²⁴ Max Yergan, affiliated with both the NNC and the Communist Party, and later with the Council on African Affairs, was reported to have founded an American–West Indian Defense Committee to formalize such aid.²⁵ The State Department also identified West Indian expatriates of radical persuasion, and many subsequently appeared in FBI reports.²⁶

For many of these islanders, expatriates, and sympathizers, the riots called into question the ultimate future of imperial rule. Unfortunately, a subsequent event soon further muddled the matter. Before the issues raised by the riots could be concretely addressed, they were eclipsed by the outbreak of war in the Old World. German victories in Europe pushed the future of the Caribbean colonies even further into flux. The fall of the Netherlands and France in the spring of 1940 raised the threat of their Caribbean possessions serving as enemy bases. Roosevelt perceived a "significant threat" to the hemisphere.²⁷ Among observers, especially West Indians in North America, these events sparked rumors of an imminent U.S. takeover of certain islands, starting with the French colonies.²⁸ West Indian nationalism, sparked by Ethiopia and stoked both by conflict in the islands and by activists in New York, was thus still inchoate when World War II cast a long shadow upon it.

"CAPITAL OF THE CARIBBEAN"

WINDS OF WAR, WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

In the West Indies as elsewhere on the imperial map, the war superimposed a global conflict upon a local one long simmering. There were, in effect, two wars going on in the region, and the mainland would come to influence them both. The first could be seen in the plumes of smoke that followed submarine attacks, in empty island pantries, and later in the construction of U.S. military bases. The second was subtler. It took place in the hearts and minds of its combatants, who were themselves often not even physically present in the islands during the war. The British war against the Nazis, by prompting the U.S. to broaden its regional role, helped to drive the colonists' war in the islands against the British. The headquarters for the latter was Harlem.

Two events in 1940 illustrate this connection. The first was the July meeting of Western Hemisphere nations at Havana, Cuba, prompted by the fall of France and the Netherlands to Nazi Germany earlier that spring. U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull and his Latin American counterparts met to address the crisis. The result of their meeting, the Havana Declaration, affirmed a hemispheric right to defend foreign-owned territories against Axis encroachment. Impressive in its unprecedented inter-American solidarity, the declaration was in another way a tired, familiar story: once again, the colonies were not consulted. As always before, Caribbean residents' fates had been decided over their heads.

Havana moved West Indians in the United States to act. Expatriates in the urban North understood, especially now that war had reached the English Channel, that the weakness of the metropolises gave them an opening. Activists, led by Wilfred A. Domingo and Richard B. Moore, organized the West Indies National Emergency Committee (WINEC) in New York.²⁹ The committee attempted to use the prospect of imminent crisis and U.S. expansion in the Caribbean to lobby for West Indian interests, including self-government. WINEC sent a delegate to Havana to press for Caribbean self-rule as a matter of both moral and racial interest. Moore later claimed that if not for WINEC's delegate, who had no official standing at the meeting, the United States would have "put it all over" [Latin] American delegates with the idea of taking the West Indies and treating the natives like sheep.³⁰ Domingo credited WINEC's Declaration of Rights of the Caribbean Peoples to Self-Determination with influencing the Havana Declaration, which "constitute[s] a substantial political gain for the colored race in the Western world. . . . This fact and its logical consequence, the possibility of creating new black nations in the Caribbean, should be of the highest significance to American Negroes."³¹

Advocates of Caribbean independence, however, acknowledged that the Declaration had two sharp edges. The idea of a concert of American powers "protecting" the islands rankled many. Moore warned that "in the name of justice and democracy, this Committee must firmly oppose any plan whereby the [American] Republics, at the behest of the United States, shall act as custodians, receivers, and bailiffs for European Empires now tottering, bankrupt, or definitely fascist."³² An expanded American-Caribbean empire was arguably a more realistic fear than Axis attack. Moore's claim about the U.S. agenda at Havana and about WINEC's influence on it overestimated his group's mission and misread U.S. designs, but it nonetheless suggested the West Indian determination to influence the devolution of imperial authority in the Caribbean.

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

Caribbean reformers knew that the greater U.S. presence could work for, as well as against, them. The Havana Declaration, as an implicit acknowledgment of imperial weakness, offered activists a potential weapon against the British, and was an opening through which the longer-term question of Caribbean freedom might be raised before the world. The declaration could be the thin wedge for a greater American presence in the region that could help to displace an empire without replacing it. Transnational black New York, free of the crown censorship with which radical elements were often met in the islands, furnished the crucial nucleus for this effort.

After Havana, WINEC changed its name to the West Indies National Council (WINC) in an attempt to broaden both its base and its agenda beyond the core membership of Domingo, Moore, and their immediate supporters. The revised WINC invited West Indian and African American fraternal groups to co-sign statements favoring Caribbean self-government. The name change also marked, according to FBI informers, refinement of the West Indian program for self-rule and Jamaica's assumption of the leadership of same.³³ This was important because WINC, while far from being a commanding influence on U.S. policy and Caribbean affairs, was equally far from being alone in its struggle. Domingo's organization was an attempt to unify under one common, West Indian banner the dozen-odd Progressive Leagues in New York, all of which had active and direct ties to the struggle in their respective home colonies.³⁴

These ties ran deeper than just emotional attachment. Their activities paralleled those of key colonial groups, in some cases sharing personnel. This was especially true of the JPL, which midwifed Norman Manley's People's National Party (PNP). The PNP would soon become the leading nationalist organization on the island, and the JPL acted as its mainland branch office. The JPL was also in some ways the parent of the more radical WINC; Domingo had served as vice-president of the league before forming the latter group in 1940. These and the other expatriate organizations used the forums of black New York to promote West Indian self-rule.³⁵

Mainland conversation about the struggle for black freedom, then, often had a West Indian accent. Just as Aimé Césaire had to leave for France before discovering *négritude*, British Caribbean people found their American sojourn a transformative experience. But while Césaire met fellow African issues of *la francophonie* in an entirely white metropole, West Indians encountered each other in a nation boasting a sizable native black population. Nor should it be overlooked that most immigrants made their way from black islands in the archipelago to black "islands" in the urban Northeast. These were among the only safe spots to land in an interwar America suffused with racial and nativist animus.

Again in contrast to their Afro-French counterparts, British West Indians did arrive in an broadly white milieu, but one that encompassed a jelling diasporan cohort in the urban North. U.S. African Americans in that cohort, particularly groups such as the NAACP and the NNC, had been paying attention to West Indian developments from well before Havana. Even without the expatriate presence, African American organizations in New York would have rallied for West Indian freedom, as they did for African. In the wake of the Italo-Ethiopian crisis and the labor unrest across the Caribbean, anti-imperialism had become central to African American thinking on diplomacy. The July 1940 Havana Declaration refocused this impulse on the West Indies, and subsequent events helped to sustain it through the rest of the year.

"CAPITAL OF THE CARIBBEAN"

In 1940 in the weeks after Havana, the situation in Europe grew dire. British appeals for U.S. aid took added urgency as the Battle of Britain raged. The diplomatic maneuvering that grew from this mix of British desperation, American hesitation, and colonial turmoil ended with the action that would fix American hegemony in the Caribbean. The Bases-for-Destroyers Deal took the form of an exchange of notes between the British and American governments on 2 September 1940. As a solution to political and military problems in that crisis summer, the deal was a stroke of genius. British trading of Atlantic base sites for antiquated American destroyers exchanged defense responsibilities the British could not meet for war materiel the Americans could not use. It also signaled the British government's quiet—not to say reluctant—endorsement of the Havana Declaration.³⁶ Like that document, the deal took little account of opinion in the affected territories. Once again, West Indians' future had been decided over their heads.

The announcement of the bases deal did little to assuage diasporan ambivalence about the expanding U.S. role in the Caribbean and, indeed, prompted considerable anxiety in the islands. "The West Indians," wrote the British Colonial Secretary in late 1940, "in spite of the financial benefits which will certainly accrue from the establishment of U.S. bases, are yet most apprehensive of the arrival of U.S. forces. This is due partly to a deep-seated loyalty and attachment to British traditions, and not less to the fear that American treatment of the Negro and coloured populations will follow the lines notorious in the southern U.S."³⁷ The Roosevelt administration, in its initial contacts with island governments, sought to soothe these fears. The means it chose for doing so was the second episode in 1940 to illustrate the Harlem nexus.

TRANSNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS: THE TAUSSIG MISSION AND THE AACC

After the bases deal, the Roosevelt administration realized that its newly leased areas in the Caribbean represented a strategic blind spot. Without many trade and diplomatic networks—which ran through London—in the islands themselves, U.S. officials knew precious little about the situation on the ground there, other than that the smoke had barely cleared from the labor unrest. On its face, the deal reflected the naked logic of American hegemony. In truth, it took place in a virtual intelligence vacuum.³⁸ To address this deficit, and simultaneously to begin neutralizing the American racial reputation, former American Molasses Company executive and New Dealer Charles Taussig urged Roosevelt to send him on a fact-finding tour of the islands in late 1940.³⁹ Taussig had a long-standing interest in and familiarity with the area. The Governor of Jamaica, Sir Arthur Richards, reported to London that Taussig was "most anxious to fall in with local government views and very open to receive advice. . . . I stressed the need of great care avoiding colour and racial friction. [Taussig] appreciated the need of discretion and stated that as far as possible their officers working on the preparation of the base would be selected with this view."⁴⁰

Unknown to Governor Richards, Taussig himself had been selected with this view. Taussig knew that American security interests, although the focus of his trip, were not the only ones in play. Also important were the racial and political dimensions that overlapped in what the Roosevelt administration would later call the "capital of the Caribbean"—

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

Harlem. Before leaving, Taussig consulted with African Americans conversant with the West Indian situation. These included, either directly or through friends, members of the African American professorate in Washington and Atlanta and contacts in black New York.⁴¹ Taussig's efforts would pay dividends on his tour, and would come to alter the scope of American policy.

In addition to his round of consultations with London-appointed governors, Taussig made a point of meeting with nonwhite West Indian leaders. The heads of the two main political parties, the PNP's Manley and Jamaican Labour Party (JLP) leader Alexander Bustamante, had risen to the public eye during the recent labor unrest. They had helped to stabilize island politics by adhering to British Labour Party practices, but their experiences made them suspicious of whites, British or American. Taussig might have come off as just another white imperialist. That he did not owed broadly to the nexus of African American and West Indian politics in New York City, and specifically to the intercession of Walter White, Executive Secretary of the NAACP and friend of Charles Taussig.⁴²

White was among the best-known African American public figures of the time. Von Eschen has shown the importance of African American groups such as the NAACP in the transnational "print-capitalism" of the diaspora.⁴³ When Taussig began his tour, he carried a second document as important as his letter of appointment from Roosevelt: a letter of introduction from Walter White. The letter, intended for Manley and other West Indian leaders, praised Taussig's feel for the Caribbean and its people "irrespective of race or color. . . . I urge you to talk frankly and freely with him."⁴⁴ Having his *bona fides* vouched for over Walter White's signature opened doors for Taussig. Manley and Bustamante understood that Taussig personified the coincidence of U.S. policy and African American–West Indian political interests during a window of great opportunity. Indeed, such was the reputation of Taussig and his African American "character witnesses" that some West Indians were shocked, upon meeting him, to discover that he was white. Taussig's consequent contacts with nonwhite West Indians allowed him to penetrate the official British line. This, in turn, emboldened him to recommend an activist anticolonial stance to Roosevelt.⁴⁵

British commentary following the Taussig mission underscored the significance of the cross-section of islanders with whom the American met. This suggests the importance of the mission's contacts in New York, which permitted a peek behind the colonial curtain and closed much of the intelligence gap. It shaped Roosevelt's decision to enact a policy fully conscious of its importance to West Indian independence, provided it was also sufficiently racially sensitive to prove American good faith in both New York and the Caribbean. Roosevelt himself was sensitive to the ways in which U.S. actions would be viewed. This owed partly to his own roots in New York, and partly to his experience with the occupation of Haiti, which he had overseen as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and which as President he had ended. Taussig wrote Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles that he had not suggested that Roosevelt defuse the race issue from on high, but the President had "very definite ideas on this" from his experience with Haiti, and decided to preempt any problems by a formal order to the military.⁴⁶

On 19 March 1941 Roosevelt instructed his navy and war secretaries to ensure that U.S. representatives be sensitive to local racial customs. "In acquiring bases, the U.S. faces again the handling of situations which many Americans refer to as the 'color

"CAPITAL OF THE CARIBBEAN"

line.' . . . Officers on duty in these [islands] must conform with the practice [there]."⁴⁷ Walter White, speaking on principle as well as for his West Indian compatriots, also made this point to Secretary Hull, in an inquiry about rumors that London had requested the U.S. not send African Americans to work on the bases.⁴⁸ Everyone knew the reputation of the U.S. in the area of race relations would precede it. Unlike the earlier episode in Haiti, however, the British West Indies had a vocal community inside the United States. How affairs would proceed was uncertain. Roosevelt understood that they could turn very sour—and Harlem turn very hot—if the racial issue was not neutralized.

The President thus followed his own and Taussig's inclinations in formulating his Caribbean policy. Taussig had recommended that the U.S. tacitly acknowledge its racial faults, redress them in its island presence, and cooperate with the British while competing with them for the allegiance of the West Indians. The effort began with the bases, and Taussig and the American officials discovered that, as expected, it was not only the islanders who were paying attention; black New Yorkers were watching as well. This link escaped the notice of neither Taussig nor Welles. As Taussig noted, "Even a casual investigation [shows] that there is definite campaign for [West Indian] self-government [whose] headquarters [are] in New York City."⁴⁹ Welles spelled out the domestic ramifications for the U.S. in a conversation at the British Embassy: "Conditions in the West Indies are likely to become difficult [in case of war], and the Negro population in New York [is] likely to become troublesome in that event."⁵⁰

In order to forestall this scenario, in early 1941 Taussig had suggested to Roosevelt that the U.S. take the lead in improving Caribbean social and economic conditions. This was to be pursued by a very public effort to form a joint U.S.-U.K. commission that would lead the way to improving the region's economy and the residents' standard of living. Roosevelt in April took Taussig's advice, proposing the creation of an Anglo-American Caribbean Commission (AACC). The commission was convened in 1942 to study such problems as food shortages and poverty, but the British Ambassador, Lord Halifax, may have hit the nail squarely later that year: "The interest of the U.S. [in Caribbean social conditions] is largely, I fancy, the possible reaction of their own African population."⁵¹ American efforts at reform, as Halifax perceived, were meant not only for the islands' welfare; they were also directed at the islands' sons and daughters, who were watching from New York, and who voted Democratic.

Although the AACC's efforts at facilitating large-scale reform ultimately fell short, the commission at least succeeded in its two short-term missions. The first was alleviating the food and supply crisis that struck the region during the Battle of the Atlantic, when submarine warfare nearly brought starvation to the islands. The second mission was, in a sense, public relations, and aimed to show the U.S. commitment to Caribbean reform, as well as to signal America's waxing and Britain's waning in the region. The latter point hardly comforted West Indians at home and in New York; U.S. annexation of the islands was a possibility that many suspected was already in progress. As late as July 1942, an expatriate group held a meeting in Harlem on the topic of "Will [the] United States Take Over the West Indies?"⁵² "Skeptics," as historian Tony Martin notes, "saw [the AACC] as an imperialist maneuver to fill the [Caribbean] with Allied propaganda to ensure loyalty during World War II."⁵³ At the same time, the mainland-based audience cannot be overlooked; for them as well as for islanders, the AACC was meant to serve as a symbol of

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

American good intentions, Caribbean change, and Harlem connections. Attesting to its credibility on the last point, the handbill for the July 1942 meeting asserted the high profile of its featured speakers, including prominent New York politician Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., by noting that they had "recently conferred in Washington [with the AACC] on conditions in the West Indies."

THE BREADTH—AND BOUNDARIES—OF SOLIDARITY

The convergence of diasporan and geopolitical interests in the Harlem crucible, channeled by Taussig, White, and other key figures into institutional offspring such as the AACC, did have its limits. Though united on the need for eventual freedom from imperial rule, U.S. African Americans and West Indians splintered along ideological, and even island, lines. African American leaders, such as Walter White, served as vital conduits for West Indian pressure on the Roosevelt administration, magnifying that pressure through the NAACP's intervention. But U.S. African Americans and West Indians often had different ideas about how exactly the push for West Indian freedom should proceed. Two episodes demarcate the extent of cooperation.

The first episode played out on the commission itself. Aware of the symbolic importance of the AACC in the islands and in New York, and of its consequent potential to backfire if an all-white body was seen deciding the destinies of nonwhites in the Caribbean, Taussig secured the appointment of two persons of color to the Caribbean Advisory Committee in the U.S. section of the commission. White had suggested black inclusion on the AACC itself, as well as on the original and subsequent Taussig trips to the region. Taussig now took most of his advice. The two individuals were Martin Travieso of Puerto Rico and William Hastie of Howard University Law School.⁵⁴ Roosevelt had named Hastie federal judge in the Virgin Islands in 1937, in reply to British appointment of West Indians to the colonial bench.⁵⁵ As an African American with Caribbean experience, Hastie was an obvious and appropriate choice. Although the request for a black presence on the AACC proper had not been met, the NAACP, with whom Hastie had a long affiliation, appeared to be satisfied.

Not so West Indians in the U.S. and the reaction to the appointment was sufficiently inflamed to bridge a widening ideological chasm in the community. WINC had leaned increasingly to the left over the course of 1942. Charles Petioni, a veteran of Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association, sought to stop what he saw as WINC's slide to communism, forming the American West Indian Association (AWIA) for that purpose.⁵⁶ The Hastie appointment galvanized the two factions, and they found common cause, jointly submitting a list of *West Indian* alternate candidates.⁵⁷ That Hastie knew the Caribbean, enjoyed indirect access to the U.S. President, and added a black voice to the AACC seems to have counted for little. True representation attached not broadly to race, but more narrowly to place of birth.⁵⁸

The expatriates failed to change Taussig's mind. Hastie not only remained, President Harry Truman would later appoint him a full commissioner on the AACC.⁵⁹ His appointment to the Advisory Committee suggests the influence and limits of race on U.S.-Caribbean affairs. Taussig no doubt congratulated himself for bringing non-Anglo-Americans on board, including Hastie, who had been endorsed by Walter White.⁶⁰ Since it

"CAPITAL OF THE CARIBBEAN"

was Hastie, White did not protest the naming of an African American instead of a black West Indian; a nonwhite had been included, meeting his original recommendation. Petioni, Domingo *in absentia*, and the New York Caribbeans were left with half of their request for a black islander fulfilled.

The second episode to mark off the limits of diasporan cooperation did so by drawing a line, not between U.S. and island-origin African Americans, but rather between political factions of both. By the summer of 1941, Domingo's writings in both New York and Kingston publications, which attacked British rule and American racial practices with equal socialist passion, had won Norman Manley's esteem, and the attention of British authorities. Manley offered Domingo a post in the PNP. Domingo accepted, and in June he left for Kingston.⁶¹ Upon his arrival, he was arrested and sent to a detention camp as a "subversive." Manley, Barbados's Grantley Adams, and others loudly protested. Tellingly, their protests also made their way to the U.S., through the consulates—and through black New York via Walter White. WINC put out word of its stance: Domingo's detention was "a blunder of the first magnitude . . . [and is] a West Indian Dreyfus case."⁶² More discreetly, White took up the cause as well. He wrote to Taussig that "the arrest is exceedingly unwise if not stupid as it is useless, and . . . will increase suspicion of . . . British war aims far more than would any speeches . . . by a dozen Domingos."⁶³

To the disappointment of White, Manley, and others, the State Department replied that since Domingo was a British subject, there was little Washington could do to secure his release. No diplomatic pressure was exerted.⁶⁴ This deferral to the British, however, revealed a subtle change in the dynamics of Caribbean relations. British authorities now confronted a colony that had the Americans' ear thanks to the latter's presence in the islands, and thanks to the African-American-Caribbean nexus in Harlem. Moreover, this community now had a link to the nascent AACC, through which pressure could be applied. U.S. officials saw this potential, and sought to check it. After Pearl Harbor, the administration released a statement that the British Embassy thought was aimed at India and the West Indies alike: "The U.S. government disapproves of attempt[s] to enlist a group of American citizens [in free movements] of like racial backgrounds on the theory that they are 'fellow nationals,' but does acknowledge sympathies of like ethnicity here and abroad."⁶⁵

Such sympathies, however, had their limits, even in an environment of exchange and familiarity like that linking New York City and the West Indies. Domingo's arrest commanded the interest of West Indian immigrants and African American leaders, who saw the twin causes of racial and island freedom personified in him. Yet Domingo was not the only West Indian corralled for "subversion." Indeed, he was not even the best known. Bustamante had been sent to a detention camp well before Domingo had and even before Taussig, with whom Bustamante was not allowed to meet, arrived in the fall of 1940. The contrasting reactions of Harlem to the detentions of Bustamante and Domingo are telling, and they suggest the limits of transnational black solidarity in the wartime Western Hemisphere.

As the head of one of the best-known labor unions in the British Empire, Bustamante had given colonial officials fits since 1938.⁶⁶ Swearing fealty to the crown in one speech, calling for the white man's blood in the next, Bustamante was equal parts threatening and baffling. His strongman charisma electrified the Jamaican masses, despite his lack of a clear

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

ideology.⁶⁷ Authorities took the side of caution when in September 1940—on the heels of the bases deal—he addressed a labor rally thusly: "We want our own government. . . . We want revolution and before whites destroy us we will destroy them. . . . This time it is race war!"⁶⁸ Bustamante was detained as a threat to public security, a status that the Governor intimated might last throughout the war.⁶⁹

Bustamante's arrest won enough attention that the Ministry of Information urged the Colonial Office to reconsider, fearing the affair would damage wartime propaganda emphasizing "progressive" British colonialism.⁷⁰ Bustamante boasted greater international celebrity than Domingo, although it is likely the latter was equally or better known in Harlem. While Bustamante made the black newspapers of greater New York, Domingo actually lived there, and moved among Harlem's overlapping expatriate and African American circles. This local visibility prompted more than 300 to protest Domingo's detention at a July 1941 rally.⁷¹ Still, if Bustamante was well-enough known outside of Jamaica to make the British fear that they had handed Nazi Minister of Information Frederick Goebbels a propaganda windfall, then African American activists, had they chosen to do so, would have had little trouble organizing local energies on his behalf. After all, they did as much during the war years for other figures, including some who were similarly anti-British and who had no Harlem connection whatsoever, such as leaders in the fight for Indian independence.⁷² In any case, from the diasporan-activist standpoint embodied by the NNC, NAACP, WINC, et al., Bustamante made an excellent potential martyr to the causes of racial justice and colonial freedom.

That, however, was precisely why black New York made Domingo a *cause célèbre* but chose not to do the same for Bustamante. Calls for the latter's release would have added force and consistency to the push for colonial reform, albeit at the cost of affiliating with a demagogue. But black New York did not rally to Bustamante because he was the main rival of Harlem favorite Manley. Here timing was key. The two Jamaican leaders had worked together off and on from 1938, but by late 1941 their relations were heading for a permanent break. When Bustamante was finally released in early 1942, he repudiated his ties to Manley and the PNP.⁷³ Black New York's support for Domingo came at a time when the Manley-Bustamante alliance was weakening; support for Bustamante as a colonial martyr might have redounded against Manley on a Jamaican political scene then in flux. White had made eloquent appeals to the world on such matters as the Atlantic Charter, arguing for its universality and potential for peoples of color.⁷⁴ However, like any good politician, he also hedged that universality in the service of a specific agenda. Transnational solidarity linking Harlem and the Caribbean in a general fashion, in short, was conditioned by factional politics that split according to ideology and interests.

The contours of this Harlem-Caribbean connection had a political impact well beyond the symbolism of the AACC representation and Domingo-detention episodes. Black New York also made a concrete contribution to reform of the colonial regime in the West Indies. In late 1943, partly in response to American pressure via the AACC and via Washington's promise of reforms for Puerto Rico, the British government proclaimed that Jamaica would receive a new constitution the following year. Regional eyes were trained on the new document, including those of expatriates and African American activists. The new constitution would be the first in West Indian history to grant universal suffrage. The resulting election campaign witnessed ever more pitched battles between Manley's and

"CAPITAL OF THE CARIBBEAN"

Bustamante's parties. The prize was no longer the mere title of "influential leader" but elected office in a government moving, albeit slowly, toward independence. The winner would lead the race for the eventual postcolonial premiership.

Harlem's hand in the contest was an important, if not ultimately decisive, factor. Black New York—along with black audiences in Boston, Chicago, and smaller venues—were prime sources of money and support for West Indian independence in general, and for Manley's PNP in particular. The JPL and WINC aimed their efforts there, and the NAACP cosponsored events with both organizations, and was itself a frequent financial contributor to them. Both funneled money to Manley's PNP in Jamaica, enabling it to compete with its numerically superior rival, the JLP under Bustamante. Bustamante's laboring black masses outnumbered Manley's white-collar and lighter-skinned support. Manley, however, used his contacts among African American elites in the U.S. to raise money in hopes of countering Bustamante. Beginning in 1943, Manley raised about \$1,000 a year through Harlem.⁷⁵ In addition, Harlem offered a forum free from crown censorship, one which permitted him to appear with African American supporters such as Paul Robeson. Manley's allies, moreover, used the New York press to lobby a world audience.⁷⁶ Monetary and moral support from the black mainland burnished Manley's credibility, and aided him in his competition with Bustamante in the first election under the new constitution.

In the end, these funds were not enough; Bustamante's party outpolled the PNP two to one in the 1944 election, and Manley himself failed to win a seat in the Jamaican Assembly.⁷⁷ His party's surprise defeat prompted reflection among West Indians and U.S. African Americans in New York, and by white Americans such as Taussig, who had secretly cheered for a PNP victory. The significance of the Jamaican election reached beyond that island alone. For one thing, it revealed to interested observers the full extent of transnational black ties in the hemisphere, and even connected it to communism. As one informant warned, "Adam Clayton Powell . . . who is reported to consort with communists, [is regarded] as a friend of West Indians."⁷⁸ For another, Manley's electoral defeat in no way damaged these ties. On the contrary, he and his Harlem allies organized another fundraising and publicity trip to the U.S. in October 1945.⁷⁹ Another New York event, during a follow-up trip in January 1946, was sponsored by the NAACP. Walter White's letter to members lauded Manley as "one of the most distinguished world figures of our time. . . . Of all the figures I have met, none impressed me more favorably than he."⁸⁰ White's endorsement and Manley's charisma fed each other, and kept the Harlem nexus alive.

The Jamaican election confirmed, to some degree, the most comprehensive official U.S. analysis of transnational black cooperation, and suggested conclusions extending beyond that event. This analysis took the form of a December 1944 report commissioned by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the wartime U.S. intelligence service. The top-secret report recapped WINC and other groups' actions from 1939, but reassured the Roosevelt administration of the limits of both hemispheric black solidarity and of race-based communist appeals. "In general, it cannot be said that the native organizations of West Indians in Harlem exercise any great influence in the Caribbean. Nor . . . are [they] fundamentally communist. Communist influence is appearing rapidly throughout . . . the Negro world, but this increase . . . does not seem to be the result of any large-scale missionary effort by Negro Communists in the Caribbean or in New York."⁸¹

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

This conclusion was correct as far as it went: Harlem West Indians were at least two degrees removed from power in the islands themselves. In addition, many groups were island specific, and their efforts thus diffuse. But the December 1944 analysis overlooked the real import of their presence and networks on the mainland. Thanks to their ties to black New York, activist groups raised money and attention from Americans like White and Taussig. Moreover, no "great influence" is a judgment call; Harlem, after all, sent the PNP the better part of its campaign funds in the first real election in Jamaican history.

That the PNP lost does not mean that this group was insignificant in the larger scheme of relations, especially since in spite of Manley's electoral defeat, the NAACP-PNP bond remained strong. Indeed, as postwar plans for an eventually independent, region wide West Indian federation began to crystallize, black New York retained a stake in this potentially momentous development. A 1947 conference at Montego Bay, Jamaica, sketched the preliminary design of such a regional union. Representatives of the diasporan and expatriate Left, notably Bindley Cyrus and Augustine Austin of the Caribbean Labour Congress, traveled to Montego Bay to offer their support for the project.⁸² Of higher profile back on the mainland, White convened a 1947 meeting of Manley and other leaders in New York to discuss the prospective Caribbean union.⁸³ Beyond the issue of federation, other prominent U.S. African Americans, including some who were increasingly pulling to the left of White's NAACP, followed Caribbean events; Powell and Robeson, to name two, visited Jamaica in 1948.⁸⁴ Actions like these helped to keep the African American–West Indian Harlem nexus alive beyond the hothouse years of the war; the nexus even endured, to a surprising degree, the Cold War repression that was soon to set in.

CONCLUSION: DIASPORA DIPLOMACY AND THE URBAN CRUCIBLE

The intersection of Atlantic geopolitics and hemispheric racial trends allows us to recast the World War II years not as an Axis-and-Allies, east-west story of war and power, but as a north-south narrative of race and freedom, with ramifications all around the world. Wielding relatively little in the way of formal political power, transnational Harlem nonetheless was able to provide needed financial, moral, and intellectual sustenance to advocates of West Indian freedom in the 1940s. This points to an ironic conclusion regarding American aspirations to be a beacon of freedom in the wartime world. Franklin Roosevelt deserves credit for enacting a Bases-for-Destroyers Deal that would protect the Caribbean from the Axis while widening American influence in the region. He also, through Taussig and mechanisms like the AACC, pushed for gradual reform of the colonial system. Roosevelt, like Woodrow Wilson before him, made anticolonial rhetoric central to U.S. foreign affairs. The tension this raised with European allies, who interpreted such rhetoric as a mix of ignorance and insult, was the price to pay for the admiration and allegiance of captive peoples in the growing competition with the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc.

Yet beneath this narrative of wartime relations lies another, at least for the Caribbean context. Those captive peoples, few of whom were white, knew of the American racial situation—in the West Indian case, from firsthand experience—and calibrated their admiration accordingly. They reserved that admiration for those in the U.S. who were

"CAPITAL OF THE CARIBBEAN"

suffering, but succeeding despite this situation, and who showed them solidarity rather than just sympathy—namely, for *African* Americans. While the Roosevelt administration pressed the British government for certain reforms within a larger context of wartime alliance, such lateral state-to-state efforts complemented the vertical African American support for West Indian reform from the bottom up. Put simply, black New York acted as both cashbox and soapbox for those fighting for the independence of the West Indies.

The existence of this diaspora diplomacy, with New York City as its indispensable locus, sheds new light on the roles of city, citizen, and race-based cooperation in one of the signal developments of the 20th century: the decline of white supremacy and imperial rule. In the case of Harlem and the Caribbean, this is not to say such transnational race-based activism necessarily predominated in this larger anticolonial, antiracist movement. Nor is it to say that the Caribbean and Harlem's most radical voices were the most significant within that activism. While notable in black freedom struggles around the hemisphere, such voices often had less impact than those of the labor, political, and religious leaders and organizations. But it is to suggest that the activist diaspora diplomacy, made possible by the Harlem nexus, was influential in ways most studies have missed. This is true whether those studies focus on the Roosevelt administration's foreign policy or on African American–West Indian relations in New York. In the former, geopolitics, strategy, and the imperatives of war were paramount. In the latter, the cooperation between figures such as Walter White, W. A. Domingo, and Norman Manley was crucial to larger efforts at reform, even if it was in some ways an exception to the tensions that often separated U.S. from island-born African Americans in New York both before and during the war.⁸⁵

Those tensions may help to explain why postwar cooperation between the two groups rarely reached the same depth that it had shown during the war. As U.S. African Americans sharpened the challenge to Jim Crow and West Indians concluded the march to independence in the 1950s and 1960s, each followed the other's progress and voiced symbolic support for it—but did little more, and nowhere near as much as during the 1940s. This drift apart was perhaps logical. The mainland and island branches of the diaspora remained spiritually committed to one another's battles. However, each branch evolved its tactics to meet the ultimately different concrete challenges—the race regimes of Jim Crow and John Bull—that underpinned the similar overarching enemy of white-supremacist-imperial rule. It is important, in short, to note not only the strength of these transnational ties, but also their limits.

To acknowledge the limits of this solidarity, however, takes nothing away from its vital role in the movement for black freedom in the Western Hemisphere, and ultimately beyond. Nor can this role itself be fully appreciated without attention to the urban landscape that gave it life. The twin great migrations—from the rural southern United States and the colonial British West Indies—that overlapped and intermingled in New York City profoundly shaped not only 20th century black culture, politics, and protest, but also the progress of Caribbean freedom within the broader matrix of Anglo-American diplomacy. The larger drama of world war overshadowed this transnational cause, even as that cause drew energy from the global conflict. This was especially true among those in Harlem who saw themselves fighting a global conflict of their own, and who ran, as an overlooked line from *Julius Caesar* puts it, "to the common pulpits, and [cried] out, 'Liberty, freedom, and enfranchisement!'"

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

NOTES

¹Examples include James Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago, 1989); Kimberley Phillips, *Alabama North: African-Americans, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland* (Urbana, IL, 1999); Christopher Silver and John Moeser, *Separate City: Black Communities in the Urban South* (Lexington, KY, 1995); and Richard W. Thomas, *Life for Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915–1945* (Bloomington, IN, 1992). See also Kenneth Goings and Raymond Mohl, eds., *The New African American Urban History* (Thousand Oaks, CA, 1996).

²Influential works include Carol Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1955* (New York, 2003); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: Race Relations and American Foreign Policy Since 1945* (Cambridge, MA, 2001); Alexander DeConde, *Ethnicity, Race, and American Foreign Policy: A History* (Boston, 1992); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ, 2000); Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War* (Albany, NY, 1986); Paul Gordon Lauren, *Power and Prejudice: The Politics and Diplomacy of Racial Discrimination* (Boulder, CO, 1988); Thomas Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation: The United States and White Rule in Africa, 1948–1968* (Columbia, MO, 1988); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1996); Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY, 1997).

³See, for example, the 2000 document by the Organization of American Historians, *The La Pietra Report: A Report to the Profession* (see website: www.oah.org/activities/lapietra/index.html).

⁴Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in America* (New York, 1996); Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants and the Harlem Community, 1900–1930* (Bloomington, IN, 1996).

⁵Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 40–43; Joseph Harris, *African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia, 1936–1941* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1994), 34–38; William R. Scott, *The Sons of Sheba's Race: African-Americans and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935–1941* (Bloomington, IN, 1993), 100–101.

⁶Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 11, 17. West Indians were prominent in all three groups.

⁷James, *Holding Aloft the Banner*, 184. James notes that West Indian immigrants and their descendants who have stoked radicalism and black consciousness in the U.S. are too many to list, but a sample would include (along with Garvey) Hubert Harrison, Wilfred A. Domingo, C. L. R. James, Claude McKay, Richard B. Moore, and George Padmore. The tradition continued in the second half of the century in figures such as Stokely Carmichael and Louis Farrakhan. James, *Holding Aloft the Banner*, 1.

⁸Ken Post, *Arise Ye Starvelings: The Jamaican Labour Rebellion of 1938 and Its Aftermath* (The Hague, 1978), 221–24.

⁹The FBI had kept tabs on these groups since the late 1930s because of their suspected ties to radicalism. Most followed the JPL formula; taking the names Antigua Progressive League, Barbados Progressive League, and so on, these groups rallied expatriates according to insular loyalty in order to promote self-rule for their home islands. In all cases, according to the FBI, the formation of such leagues in New York predated the founding of similar organizations back home, thus underlining the importance of the political space New York offered. Hoover to Berle, 17 March 1944, box 4928, 844.00B/1, Department of State Central Decimal File, record group 59, U.S. National Archives II, College Park, Maryland (hereafter RG 59).

¹⁰Richard Hart agreed regarding the New York "anticolonial ferment." Hart, *Rise and Organize: The Birth of the Workers and National Movement in Jamaica* (London, 1989), 23.

¹¹West India Royal Commission (Moyné Commission), *Report*, 1945, microfilm, 440–45. Sugar brought much misfortune to the Caribbean after World War I, and the problems that accompanied the industry were among the main obstacles to progress. See Cary Fraser, *Ambivalent Anti-Colonialism: The United States and the Genesis of West Indian Independence, 1940–1964* (Westport, CT, 1994), 38–41; Idem, "The Twilight of Colonial Rule in the British West Indies," *Journal of Caribbean History* 30 (June 1996): 1–27.

¹²Post, *Arise Ye Starvelings*, 96. See also O. Nigel Bolland, *On the March: Labour Rebellions in the British Caribbean, 1934–1939* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1995), 132.

¹³Post, *Arise Ye Starvelings*, 167–70.

¹⁴Bolland, *On the March*, 135; Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 120. On the Rastafarians, see Barry Chevannes, *Rastafari: Roots and Ideology* (Syracuse, NY, 1995).

"CAPITAL OF THE CARIBBEAN"

- ¹⁵Governor of Trinidad to Colonial Office (hereafter CO), 26 June 1937; CO 295/599/70297 Part II; Memorandum of Conversation, Deputation of West India Committee, 3 July 1937; CO 295/599/70297 Part I, Public Record Office, Kew Garden, United Kingdom (hereafter PRO); Post, *Arise Ye Starvelings*, 321–22; Lloyd Braithwaite, introduction to *Trinidad Labour Riots of 1937: Fifty Years Later*, ed. Roy Thomas (St. Augustine, Trinidad, 1987), 10.
- ¹⁶See Bolland, *On the March*; Hart, *Rise and Organize*; Post, *Arise Ye Starvelings*; Thomas, ed., *Riots*; and Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832–1938* (Baltimore, MD, 1992), 382–88.
- ¹⁷Ken Post, *Strike the Iron: A Colony at War: Jamaica, 1939–1945*, 2 vols., (Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1981), I, 74.
- ¹⁸Kelvin Singh, "The June 1937 Disturbances in Trinidad," in Thomas, ed., *Riots*, 58–59.
- ¹⁹U.S. Consulate-Bridgetown to Department of State, 17 August 1935, box 4829, 844C.504/1, RG 59.
- ²⁰Singh puts it bluntly: "The 'disturbances' of 1937 . . . opened the way to British West Indian internal self-government, [which] had been sought in Trinidad, with limited success, [for] more than eighty years." Singh, "June 1937," in Thomas, ed., *Riots*, 66, 74; Bolland, *On the March*, 190–91.
- ²¹Trevor Munroe, *The Politics of Constitutional Decolonization: Jamaica 1944–1962* (Mona, Jamaica, 1972), 21.
- ²²The British government sent a commission under Lord Moyné to the region to find ways to improve the quality of colonial life and prevent future riots. Although publication of the body's embarrassing findings were withheld due to the outbreak of the war, a summary of them guided a major colonial reform. The Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 appropriated five million pounds annually for education, health, and welfare projects, although much smaller sums were actually spent during the war. "Future Provision for Colonial Development and Welfare," Colonial Secretary to War Cabinet, 15 November 1944; CO 852/588/11/60303, PRO.
- ²³U.S. Embassy-London to State Department, 1 June 1938, box 4829, 844G.00/26, RG 59.
- ²⁴Interview, *Daily Worker*, 9 June 1938, cited in Post, *Arise Ye Starvelings*, 358.
- ²⁵Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 19; Fitzroy Baptiste, *The United States and West Indian Unrest, 1918–1939* (Mona, Jamaica, 1978), 41.
- ²⁶State Department to U.S. Embassy-London, 22 June 1938; State Department to U.S. Embassy-London, 8 July 1938, box 4829, 844G.00/27, RG 59.
- ²⁷Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945* (New York, 1979), 236.
- ²⁸Hoover to Berle, 17 March 1944.
- ²⁹Hoover to Berle, 15 February 1944, box 4928, 844.00B/1, RG 59.
- ³⁰*Ibid.*
- ³¹Domingo to White, 6 November 1940, box A332, folder "Labor—British West Indies—1940–49" ["BWI 1940–49"]; NAACP Papers (hereafter NAACPP), Library of Congress, Washington, DC (hereafter LOC).
- ³²Richard B. Moore, "Reply to Cordell Hull," in *Richard B. Moore: Caribbean Militant in Harlem, Collected Writings 1920–1972*, ed. W. Burghardt and Joyce Turner (Bloomington, IN, 1988), 267–68.
- ³³Hoover to Berle, 31 May 1944, box 4928, 844D.00B/2, RG 59.
- ³⁴*Ibid.*
- ³⁵See reports on West Indian groups found in State Department Records, RG 59.
- ³⁶Baptiste, *War, Conflict, and Cooperation: The European Possessions in the Caribbean, 1939–1945* (Westport, CT, 1988), 47.
- ³⁷Colonial Secretary to War Cabinet, 27 December 1940, Foreign Office (hereafter FO) 371/26152, PRO. On this and other issues including Taussig, the AACC, and Domingo, see Fraser, *Ambivalent*, 57–67, 80.
- ³⁸Welles to Roosevelt, 8 October 1940, Official File [OF] 4318 "Charles Taussig, 1937–42," Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York (hereafter FDRL).
- ³⁹Taussig to Roosevelt and Hull, 9 September 1940, box 35, folder "Caribbean Commission—US Section—Report on BWI 1940," Charles W. Taussig Papers (hereafter CWTP), FDRL.
- ⁴⁰Richards to Beckett, 23 December 1940; FO 371/26175, PRO.
- ⁴¹White to Reid, 15 October 1940, box A155, folder "BWI 1940–49," NAACPP, LOC.

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

- ⁴²For another view of the Taussig mission, see Tony Martin, "Eric Williams and the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission: Trinidad's Future Nationalist Leader As Aspiring Imperial Bureaucrat," *Journal of African American History* 88 (Summer 2003): 274–90.
- ⁴³Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 14–16. Von Eschen applies Benedict Anderson's landmark concept of "print-capitalism," in this case, as a vehicle for "nationalist" black consciousness and identity, to the pan-African projects of the 1930s. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York, 1991).
- ⁴⁴Letter, White to Whom It May Concern, November 7, 1940, box A155, folder "BWI 1940-49," NAACPP, LOC.
- ⁴⁵Report of Taussig Mission, December 1940, box 35, folder "Caribbean Commission—U.S. Section—Report—Committee on British West Indies, 1940," CWTP, FDRL.
- ⁴⁶Taussig to Welles, 6 March 1941, box 46, folder "#2," CWTP, FDRL.
- ⁴⁷Roosevelt to Knox and Stimson, 19 March 1941, OF 4101 "Naval Bases 1940–43," FDRL.
- ⁴⁸White to Hull, 23 April 1941, box 35, folder "Caribbean Commission—U.S. Section—Correspondence—Duggan Lawrence," CWTP, FDRL.
- ⁴⁹Report of Taussig Mission, December 1940.
- ⁵⁰Edwards to Churchill, 14 April 1941 and Martin to Mallet, 7 May 1941, FO 371/ 26175, PRO.
- ⁵¹Halifax to Foreign Office, 12 December 1941, FO 371/26175, PRO.
- ⁵²Handbill, American–West Indian Association on Caribbean Affairs, 1 July 1942, fiche #005,732-1, Schomburg Center Clipping File [SCCF].
- ⁵³Martin, "Eric Williams," 275–76.
- ⁵⁴Hastie was not the only person at Howard with links and interest in the Caribbean; the university indeed complemented Harlem as a center for intellectual activism, hosting an important conference on the region in 1943. For more on this and Howard's wartime role, see Clifford Muse, "Howard University and U.S. Foreign Affairs During the Franklin D. Roosevelt Administration, 1933–1945," *The Journal of African American History* 87 (Fall 2002): 403–16.
- ⁵⁵William Hastie, oral history interview transcript, 17 August 1972, 4–6, Oral History Collection, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri.
- ⁵⁶Hoover to Berle, 17 March 1944.
- ⁵⁷Hoover to Berle, 10 November 1942, 844D.00B/3; Hoover to Berle, 30 March 1943, 844.00/148, box 4928, RG 59.
- ⁵⁸For more on the battle for Caribbean representation on the AACC, see Martin, "Eric Williams," 285–88.
- ⁵⁹Hastie, oral history interview, 17 August 1972.
- ⁶⁰Although Taussig was unable to include a black presence on the December 1940 mission, White encouraged him to do so in the future, and recommended Hastie. White to Duggan, 7 December 1940, box A609, folder "Staff—Walter White—Good Neighbor Policy, 1940–41," NAACPP, LOC. Taussig took White's advice and enlisted Hastie for a 1942 tour of the islands, and Hastie "was of substantial value" to the mission and thus became an excellent candidate for the AACC Advisory Committee. Hastie to Taussig, 16 April 1942, box 35, folder "Caribbean Commission, Washington Office, Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1942–44," CWTP, FDRL.
- ⁶¹FBI Report, "West Indies National Council: Subversive Activities in the West Indies," 11 April 1942, box 4928, 844.00B/3, RG 59.
- ⁶²Press Release, WINC, 24 November 1941, fiche #005,720-1, SCCF.
- ⁶³White to Taussig, 7 July 1941, box A332, folder "BWI—1940–49," NAACPP, LOC. See also Post, *Strike the Iron*, vol. 1, 281.
- ⁶⁴Duggan to White, 31 July 1941, box A332, folder "Labor—BWI 1940–49," NAACPP, LOC.
- ⁶⁵Press Release, forwarded from British Embassy-Washington to Foreign Office, 15 December 1941, FO 371/30657, PRO.
- ⁶⁶Ministry of Information to CO, 2 October 1940; Richards to Colonial Secretary, 23 February 1940; CO 137/68511/229/40, PRO.
- ⁶⁷Munroe, *The Politics of Constitutional Decolonization*, 43–44.

"CAPITAL OF THE CARIBBEAN"

⁶⁸Richards to CO, 13 September 1940, CO 137 68511/229/40, PRO.

⁶⁹Richards to CO, 4 November 1940, CO 137 68511/229/40, PRO.

⁷⁰Ministry of Information to CO, 2 October 1940.

⁷¹Brown to Roberts, 17 July 1941, box 2B, folder "Correspondence Between Roberts and Domingo," MS 353, W. Adolphe Roberts Papers, National Library of Jamaica, Kingston, Jamaica.

⁷²Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 92–97.

⁷³Richard Hart, *Towards Decolonization: Political, Labour, and Economic Development in Jamaica, 1938–1945* (Mona, Jamaica, 1999), 155.

⁷⁴Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 26–27. Walter White was not alone in his public stands; other leading African American journalists seconded his case. However, thanks to his access to the Roosevelt administration, White was unique in his ability to lobby the White House behind the scenes as well. Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 140–41.

⁷⁵Report (untitled) of Henry Field and Paul Blanshard, December 1944, Field Papers, FDRL.

⁷⁶Department of State to U.S. Consulate-Kingston, 26 April 1944, box 4, folder "Confidential Correspondence 1944," Consulate Files 1944, RG 84, Consular Post Records: Kingston, U.S. National Archives, College Park, Maryland (hereafter RG 84: Kingston).

⁷⁷Lord to Hull, 16 December 1944, box 4928, 844D.00/12-1644, RG 59.

⁷⁸Hoover to Berle, 19 June 1944, box 4526, 844.00B/6-1944, RG 59. Powell had met with Taussig and Hastie in 1942 in an attempt to promote expatriate concerns. FBI Report, 30 March 1943, box 4525, 844.00/148, RG 59, cited in Fraser, *Ambivalent*, 72.

⁷⁹One luncheon during his trip attracted Pearl Buck, Wendell Willkie, and other black and white anticolonialists. Invitation list, 11 October 1945, box A356, folder "American Committee for West Indian Federation, 1945–48," NAACP, LOC.

⁸⁰White to NAACP Members, 11 January 1946, fiche #005,719-1, SCCF.

⁸¹Report (untitled) of Field and Blanshard, December 1944.

⁸²U.S. Embassy-Panama to State Department, 11 September 1947, 844D.504/9-1147, RG 59.

⁸³Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 98.

⁸⁴U.S. Consulate-Kingston to State Department, 1 December 1948; U.S. Consulate-Kingston to State Department, 7 December 1948, Box 8 (1948), folder "Confidential Correspondence 1948," RG 84: Kingston.

⁸⁵Cheryl Greenberg, "*Or Does It Explode?*" *Black Harlem in the Great Depression* (New York, 1997), 17; Nat Brandt, *Harlem at War: The Black Experience in WWII* (Syracuse, NY, 1996), 32–33.