

MODERN PANAMA

Panama in Black: Afro-Caribbean World Making in the Twentieth Century. By Kaysha Corinealdi. Durham: Duke University Press, 2022. Pp. 280. \$99.95 cloth; \$26.95 paper.
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Kaysha Corinealdi offers an engaging, cogently argued, and archivally rich study of the ways Afro-Caribbean Panamanians navigated the imposition of multiple exclusions to citizenship and made their own understandings of community through diasporic circuits of belonging. The book centers predominantly on the period between 1920 and 1970, although the conclusion brings the central themes of the work into the twenty-first century. Geographically, the work is capacious without feeling scattered, beginning in Panama and grounded in its particular historiography, and also pays careful attention to the many transnational threads of the narrative. This includes Caribbean migration circuits and the importance of the Afro-Caribbean Panamanian community in New York during the latter half of the period. Following such threads of “diasporic world-making” foregrounds the creative and diverse ways Afro-Caribbean Panamanians “demanded [and enacted] a more inclusive understanding of citizenship and belonging” (3).

Through the book’s five chapters, Corinealdi “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*” (4). As opposed to a “rescue,” Corinealdi’s book highlights the ways such “words, ideas, and actions” were ever-present components of national and diasporic conversations, and often comprised powerful resistance practices. Corinealdi establishes Panama as “a major hub of black migration and Afro-diasporic activism,” from the mid 1850s. Corinealdi also demonstrates that this case is much more widely valuable and sheds light on other kinds of myth-based, White-supremacist exclusionary practices. The book is also attentive to movement—in both figurative and literal senses. Corinealdi foregrounds both the ways “citizenship [is] an invention, a practice, and a right” (5) and how the act of demanding national belonging or “claiming Panama” was “about not just geography but the idea of a continuous becoming and purposeful claiming” (151). At the same time, she demonstrates how crucial community was to those individual acts of becoming and claiming. As a result, this book contributes to multiple important scholarly conversations around the “world-building” of diasporic communities and Blackness, including Black internationalism and transnationalism. The book also contributes to dialogues that push back on the myth-making of *mestizaje* through careful attention to labor, migration, and race-based identity formation.

In the introductory chapter, Corinealdi lays out the key conceptual frames for the study, including vernacular citizenship, diasporic world-making, and local internationalism.

Chapter 1 focuses on the *Panama Tribune*, a weekly paper founded in 1928 by Sidney Young for the Afro-Caribbean community in Panama. The second chapter, shifting into the 1940s, details activism networks that grew in response to a denationalization campaign ultimately written into the 1941 constitution. Chapter 3 narrates the evolving “conversation about what role, if any, Afro-Caribbeans could have in speaking for and representing Panama in the modern world” during the first half of the 1950s (93). The subsequent chapter, “To Be Panamanian” turns to the renegotiated Canal treaty of 1955 and its complicated implications for the Afro-Caribbean population. The final chapter, shifting to New York, follows the efforts of *Las Servidoras*, a woman’s scholarship group, and the ways its efforts demonstrate both a process of claiming Panama and the building of communities of “multi-diasporic blackness.” The conclusion looks at several examples of Afro-Caribbean Panamanian contributions to intellectual and public life post 1960 and the complexities of claiming citizenship through diaspora.

Corinealdi attends to debates around citizenship among the Afro-Caribbean community in and beyond Panama, and the ways such conversations shifted and adapted to particular historical moments, reminding us they are often not cohesive and tend to demonstrate diverse conceptualizations of belonging. It provides a map of the local internationalism that undergirded this work of anti-racism and inclusion that is detailed and illustrative; there is also a wonderful thread of individuals that weaves through the chapters and makes for compelling reading. Throughout the book Corinealdi delicately maintains the tensions between demanding inclusion in nation-state-based visions of belonging and formulating Afro-diasporic alternatives to hypernationalist projects. As a result, her book is a widely appealing and valuable addition to diaspora studies, Central American and Caribbean historiography, and scholarly understandings of how individuals and groups navigate belonging in and beyond the nation.

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CHILEAN JEWS AND PINOCHET

Latent Memory: Human Rights and Jewish Identity in Pinochet’s Chile. By Maxine Lowy.
 Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2022. Pp. xxi, 297. Notes. Index. \$79.95
 cloth.
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This is a book with a purpose. After several years spent interviewing Chileans of Jewish descent, Maxine Lowy wove their memories into a narrative that goes along with primary and secondary documents related to the abuses of the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship. The stated goal of the book is to “harness the latent memory of both Jewish and Chilean history” (5) as a way to start healing past wounds. Specifically, that