The Capital of Race Capitals: Toward a Connective Cartography of Black Internationalisms

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"Black internationalism," as the term is used by historians, can encompass both the radical Pan-Africanism of the British West Indian activist George Padmore and the more conservative cosmopolitanism of the first African American Rhodes Scholar Alain Locke. It can account for the imperial loyalties of the Senegalese politician Blaise Diagne as well as the radical feminism of the Jamaican journalist Una Marson. In the context of the United States, blackness has a long history of being defined in terms of the "one-drop rule."[1] In Third and Fourth Republic France, one could become whiter via cultural assimilation.[2] Across the Caribbean, class and race have historically mapped onto each other in complicated ways, often manifesting in a kind of colorism.[3]

[1] W. D. Jordan, "Historical Origins of the One-Drop Racial Rule in the United States," *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies* 1, no. 1 (2014): 98–132.

[2] Jennifer Boittin, "Black in France: The Language and Politics of Race in the Late Third Republic," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 27, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 23–46.

[3] Frantz Fanon, "West Indians and Africans," in *Toward the African Revolution*, trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York, 1969): 17–27; Mercer Cook, "The Race Problem in Paris and the French West Indies," *Journal of Negro Education* 8, no. 4 (1939): 673–80.

Gender has also played a crucial role in how racial identity was elaborated and imposed.[4] Stuart Hall perhaps put it best when he described blackness not as "the sign of an ineradicable genetic imprint but as a signifier of difference: a difference which, being historical, is therefore always changing, always located, always articulated with other signifying elements: but which, nevertheless, continues—persistently—to register its disturbing effects."[5]

With such slipperiness in mind, how should historians begin to understand differences within Black communities? How should we define and refine the practice of writing African people into history without automatically positioning their experiences vis-à-vis a Eurocentric norm?[6] How should we reconcile overlapping claims to Blackness and African belonging? A great deal of ink has already been spilled reflecting upon these questions and the historically contingent nature of the category of race. In this article I contribute to these ongoing conversations by making the case for thinking through historical iterations of Black internationalism and Pan-Africanism—two categories of anti-imperial and anti-racist politics and strategy that could be both mutually constitutive and highly exclusive—in relation to space and place, specifically the urban city sites from which the categories emerged.

A PLACE AS AN IDEA

In his long poem *Notebook of a Return to The Native Land*, Aimé Césaire writes:

> And I say to myself Bordeaux and Nantes and Liverpool
> and New York and San Francisco*
> not an inch of this world devoid of my fingerprint and my calcaneus on
> the spines of skyscrapers and my filth in the glitter of gems![7]

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[4] In France see Jennifer Boittin, "In Black and White: Gender, Race Relations, and the Nardal Sisters in Interwar Paris," *French Colonial History* 6 (2005): 119–35; Yaël Simpson Fletcher, "Unsettling Settlers: Colonial Migrants and Racialised Sexuality in Interwar Marseilles," in *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities,* ed. Antoinette Burton (London: Routledge, 1999): 79–94. For an international perspective: *Race Women Internationalists: Activist-Intellectuals and Global Freedom Struggles* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018); Keisha Blain and Tiffany Gill, eds., *To Turn the Whole World Over: Black Women and Internationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019).

[5] Stuart Hall, "Black Diaspora Artists in Britain: Three 'Moments' in Post-war History," *History Workshop Journal* 61, no. 1 (2006): 2.

[6] Earl Lewis, "To Turn as on a Pivot: Writing African Americans into a History of Overlapping Diasporas," *American Historical Review* 100, no. 3 (1995): 786.

[7] Aimé Césaire, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, trans. and ed. A. James Arnold and Clayton Eshleman (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press,

This work, perhaps the best known of the Martinican intellectual and politician's poems, points elegantly to the key ideas I want to broach in this article. Intentionally a poem of the African diaspora, of the Black international, it meditates upon the socio-historical construction of blackness that Césaire theorized and named: *Négritude*. It encapsulates two different yet intertwined optics. The first is the physical space of interaction, by which I mean the influence of the physical and lived experience, as well as the literal way in which certain Western cities, centers of empire, were built using Black labor—often forced Black labor. This brings into account histories of slavery, migration, and urban living. The second is the imagined value of these cities—the capital of these capitals, so to speak—which is as much the product of the disenfranchised as of those in power, even if such relations are asymmetrical.

Césaire prompts me to wonder if it is possible to write a history of Black internationalism that allows the tangible architecture of a city to merge with the ideological structures associated with and engendered by the city. This essay is an exploration of the possibilities of such a conceptual framing, using case studies of significant urban locations in the twentieth-century history of contestations of blackness and African belonging. I examine the interwar sites of Harlem, Paris, and London before turning to Algiers and Dakar in the post–World War II period of decolonization.[8] While much important scholarship already exists on the first three cities in these moments, they are not usually studied in connection with each other, nor in relation to postwar sites of Black internationalism.[9] Much less work has been done on the role of place in the postcolonial imaginaries of Black internationalism that arose from Algiers and Dakar. In this article I explore this question of place and seek to compare and connect those postwar iterations of Black internationalism to those of interwar Harlem,

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2013; French text, 1939), 21.

[8] Many other cities, such as Accra, Bamako, Bangui, Cayenne, Liverpool, Marseille, or Le Havre, could also have been selected. Jacqueline Nassy Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail: Geographies of Race in Black Liverpool* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Annette K. Joseph-Gabriel, *Reimagining Liberation: How Black Women Transformed Citizenship in the French Empire* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2020), 17; Kate Marsh, "Colonial Workers, Imperial Migrants and Surveillance: Policing in Le Havre, 1914–40," *Social History* 43, no. 1 (2018): 1–29; Minayo Nasiali, *Native to the Republic: Empire, Social Citizenship, and Everyday Life in Marseille since 1945* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2016).

[9] On geographic connections see Jake Hodder, "Toward a Geography of Black Internationalism: Bayard Rustin, Nonviolence, and the Promise of Africa," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 106, no. 6 (2016): 1360.

Paris, and London. In so doing, I make the case for grounding the intellectual history of Black internationalism in urban realities, a methodological approach that allows us to "understand how a place on a map is also a place in history."[10]

Following in the footsteps of such scholars as Larry Wolff, this is an effort at "the study of a place as an idea," whereby I simultaneously trace the layers of meaning that these particular cities acquired in the pantheon of Black internationalism and inquire into the relationship between these meanings and the physical sites of the cities themselves.[11] As other scholars have observed in the case of projects of federation in post–World War II Africa, key political leaders have often drawn upon regional and spatial imaginaries as "discursive resources" to further political projects.[12] My comments, therefore, start with the insight that the diverse *spatial* emanations are connected through their relation to this imagined landscape of racial community, wherein symbolic capital can become politically and culturally real.[13] Connecting the actual places where conversations about blackness took place with the *representation* of these spaces and of the *practices* of Black internationalism allows us to better understand the ways in which these cities shaped behaviors and were themselves shaped by Black internationalism.

Harlem, Paris, London, Algiers, and Dakar were sites of residence, crossroads where peoples of different cultures pushed up against each other and shared ideas. They were also locations in which notions of Black group consciousness came to be physically and psychologically enacted in different ways, often through experiences of discrimination and segregation. In each of these cities, race had multiple and overlapping definitions that are significant to reconstructing the dynamics of Black internationalisms. A key characteristic of Black internationalisms prior to the Second World War was the desire for equal citizenship within the framework of existing imperial and nation-state structures. That desire is rendered particularly apparent, for a variety of situated reasons, by studies of London, Harlem, and Paris.

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[10] Adrienne Rich, "Notes Toward a Politics of Location," in *Blood, Bread and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979–1985* (New York: Norton, 1986): 211.

[11] Larry Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia: History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 4.

[12] Chris Vaughan, "The Politics of Regionalism and Federation in East Africa, 1958–1964," *Historical Journal* 62, no. 2 (2019): 519–40.

[13] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991): 11–12. See also Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994).

This is different, as will become clear, from the elaboration of Négritude in Dakar and the postwar revolutionary discourses in Algiers.

It is important to note that the ideas embedded in these Western cities were not carried to decolonizing capitals such as Dakar and Algiers and then indigenized. To the contrary, the producers or actors of Black internationalism who seeded those ideas in Paris, London, and New York hailed from non-Western countries. That they shared ideas and understanding with European thinkers does not make those ideas European a priori. Nor were these actors operating within some hermetically sealed realm of race but rather in a complex, contested conversation with Western thought. They were, and are, co-authors of the Western world, of the cities that are taken to be inherently Western as well as those that are not. Pertinent here is Paul Gilroy's call for scholars to cease characterizing Black contributions to modernity as distinct from or imitations of Western or "white" movements.[14]

In geographical terms it is possible to turn Eurocentric frames on their head by considering that cities traditionally considered to be Western sites are part of an expanded Caribbean or an expanded Africa.[15] Martinican thinker Édouard Glissant advanced a conceptual framework—*créolisation*—for thinking through the genealogy and relationality of ideas that is useful here. In his *Le discours antillais,* Glissant argued that, due to the historical rupture of slavery, the formation of identity and culture in the post-slavery Antilles is an ongoing process of entanglement and intermixing deeply rooted in the physical and psychological space of the Caribbean.[16] Later, he extended this thinking to include "rhizomatic thought," a principle "in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other."[17] For Glissant, this ultimately utopic process of becoming was centered in the Antilles. Glissant's notion nonetheless has possibilities that extend beyond that region. As the West Indian writer George Lamming put it: "There is a

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[14] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993).

[15] Daniel Whitall, "Creolising London: Black West Indian Activism and the Politics of Race and Empire in Britain, 1931–1948" (PhD diss., Royal Holloway, University of London, 2012), 79–95. See also C. Brock "The West Indian Dimension of Western Europe," in *The Caribbean in Europe: Aspects of the West Indies Experience in Britain, France and the Netherlands*, ed. C. Brock (London: F. Cass, 1986): 3–14.

[16] Édouard Glissant, *Le discours antillais* (Paris: Gallimard 1997), 333–36. Aimé Césaire is often cited as Glissant's antecedent in thinking through creolization, but Suzanne Roussy Césaire's work should also be acknowledged: "Le Grand Camouflage," *Tropiques* 13–14 (September 1945): 267–73.

[17] Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 11.

Caribbean in Amsterdam, Paris, London, Birmingham; in New York and other parts of North America." To live in one of those places was to be "an important part of the Caribbean as an external frontier."[18] Scholars such as Michaeline Crichlow have argued that Lamming's point can be illustrated by deploying methodologies that simultaneously "displace the notion of creolization outside its original setting" and retain "the *idea* of creolization's *rhizomic rootings* in the Caribbean."[19] That is to say, she asks scholars to pay more careful attention to the way that understandings of the Caribbean have been articulated and practiced in ways that go far beyond geographical location. To illustrate her case, Crichlow examines how the London of the 1920s and 30s became part of an expanded and international Caribbean experience for many intellectuals.[20]

To extend this line of thinking, creolization can be understood to occur when the colonized encounter the colonizers on their home ground, so to speak. Flipping the perspective allows us to understand the trajectories of non-Western thought not in relation to ideas coming outward from Europe—as in Dipesh Chakrabarty's critique of Eurocentric historicism "first in the West, then elsewhere" but as circles of influence coming outward from Africa or the Caribbean and then ricocheting back to those sites in particular moments.[21] In her recent book, *London is the Place for Me,* Kennetta Hammond Perry has, for example, examined how Afro-Caribbean claims to citizenship and right, in London and other metropolitan spaces of postwar Britain, "recalibrated the political landscape of a decolonizing imperial metropolis in profound ways."[22] Although her book does not ground elaborations of blackness in the physical urban landscape of the once-imperial city, the possibilities to do so in that period are vast. The same can be said of New York, where postwar migration from the Caribbean and southern states transformed both the cultural and physical landscape of Manhattan.

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[18] George Lamming, "Concepts of the Caribbean," in *Frontiers of Caribbean Literature in English*, ed. Frank Birbalsingh (London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1996), 9.

[19] M. Crichlow, *Globalization and the Post-Creole Imagination: Notes on Fleeing the Plantation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), ix, ix–x.

[20] On postwar experiences, see Bill Schwarz, "The Strange Creolisation of Anglophone Caribbean Letters," *Wasafiri* 26, no. 4 (2011): 11–13.

[21] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 6.

[22] Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship and the Politics of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 6. See also Anne-Marie Angelo, "The Black Panthers in London, 1967–1972: A Diasporic Struggle Navigates the Black Atlantic," *Radical History Review* 103 (Winter 2009): 17–35.

INTERWAR CITYSCAPES AS NODES
OF BLACK INTERNATIONALISM

Interwar New York and specifically the neighborhood of Harlem, as Alain Locke so famously declared, was the "Mecca of the New Negro," "the Israel of the black man." Reaching from Manhattan's 96th Street up to 155th Street and framed, roughly, by Frederick Douglass Boulevard and Fifth Avenue, Harlem had earned such monikers less because it was home to many Black people from the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa itself than because it was a vibrant and dynamic space in which versions of blackness were constantly being elaborated. In 1927, the Harlem Renaissance writer Wallace Thurman described Harlem as "the city of constant surprises, a city of ecstatic moments and diverting phenomena . . . a cosmos within itself." Thurman notes that "to the laymen [Harlem's residents] are all indiscriminately lumped together as 'Negroes' or 'Niggers'" but in reality they are "really unclassifiable under any existent ethnic term." In the veins of the "American Negro . . . flows the mixed bloods of the Africans from whom he originally stemmed, the American Indians with whom he intermarried . . . and of every white race under the sun. And in Harlem this home-grown ethnic amalgam is associating and inter-mixing with Negroes from the Caribbean, from Africa and Asia, South America and any other place dark-skinned people hail from."[23] We can see this diversity in the emergence of Black internationalist movements as varied as Marcus and Amy Ashwood Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), W. E. B. Du Bois's Pan-African Congresses, and the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB), founded by Caribbean emigrés Cyril Briggs, Otto Huiswoud, Richard B. Moore, and the African American activist Grace Campbell.[24]

Harlem's urban space played a significant role in bringing these multiple peoples together and in circulating ideas around Black internationalism more generally. Census data shows us that high demand for housing—Harlem had a population density of 336 people per acre—led to diverse

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[23] Wallace Thurman, "Harlem Facets," in *World Tomorrow* (New York, 1927): reprinted in Wallace Thurman et al., *Collected Writings of Wallace Thurman: A Harlem Renaissance Reader*, ed., Daniel M Scott, Amritjit Singh (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 35.

[24] On UNIA see: Adam Ewing, *The Age of Garvey: How a Jamaican Activist Created a Mass Movement and Changed Global Black Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014). On Caribbean emigrés see Michelle Ann Stephens, *The Black Empire: The Masculine Global Imaginary of Caribbean Intellectuals in the United States, 1914–1962* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Joyce Moore Turner, *Caribbean Crusaders and the Harlem Renaissance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005).

peoples sharing living quarters.[25] Sites such as Speaker's Corner, at 135th Street and Lenox Avenue, saw orators such as the West Indian socialist organizers A. Philip Randolph, Hubert Harrison, and UNIA founders Marcus and Amy Ashwood Garvey hold forth on multiple topics, including racial uplift, labor organization, philosophy, and psychology.[26] Crowds entering and exiting the subway station there, or browsing in the nearby shops, stopped to listen to these speakers. Many were mobilized to join organizations such as the ABB and the UNIA on the basis of the ideas they had heard in the street. Indeed, Garvey's particular brand of racial organizing was especially popular among Harlem's working-class Black peoples who bore the economic and social brunt of being America's "second-class citizens."

Paris had a similar cachet to New York in the interwar period. American Civil Rights activist Roger Baldwin called Paris "the capital of men without a country" and "the headquarters of agitation of the French colonial peoples, where black, brown and yellow men can argue their case for freedom." Baldwin attributed this "capital" to the Parisian revolutionary tradition of "Liberté, egalité, fraternité"—the tradition of 1789—and to "the scores of little papers published daily or weekly as mouthpieces of the colonies of exiles; . . . the cafés where they gather."[27] Black internationalism in this context was constituted by the Pan-African Congresses held by Du Bois and Diagne on strictly Black African lines as well as in terms of anti-colonial solidarity across French colonial territories which, at various moments, encompassed Black African, Antillean, Indochinese, and Arabic identities.

Gender played an important role in these constructions of blackness. Movements such as Du Bois's Pan-Africanism often staked their claims to equality in their identities as civilized men whose intelligence and level of education spoke to their assimilation into the Western world.[28] So too did the so-called *trois pères* of the Paris-born political and cultural movement of Négritude, Léon Gontran-Damas, Léopold Sédar Senghor, and Aimé Césaire, construct their theories of racial identity in masculine terms. Such construc-

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[25] Winston James, "Harlem's Difference," in *Race Capital? Harlem as Setting and Symbol*, ed. A. M. Fearnley and Daniel Matlin (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 119; Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants and the Harlem Community, 1900–1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 45–48.

[26] Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations,* 94.

[27] Roger N. Baldwin, "The Capital of Men without a Country," *The Survey*, 1 August 1927, 460.

[28] W. E. B. Du Bois, "To the World, Manifesto of the Second Pan-African Congress," *Crisis* 23, no. 1 (November 1921): 5.

tions ran at odds with the experiences of women of color occupying the same physical, if not ideological, spaces.[29] Often excluded by virtue of both gender and race, many Black women advocated for activism that did not just replicate the gender inequalities of imperialism, but instead imagined a new path forward. Indeed, at the 1919 Pan-African Congress held in Paris, one of the few women in attendance was the African American nurse and activist, Addie Hunton. She criticized the delegates for ignoring Black women's experiences and urged them to remember the "importance of women in the world's reconstruction and regeneration."[30] So too did thinkers such as the Martinican intellectual and activist Paulette Nardal elaborate their own ideas of Black internationalism. Nardal believed Antillean women in Paris stood at the vanguard of the fight for racial solidarity. Antillean men in particular Parisian cultural circles, were, she believed, "content with a certain easy success" that was afforded by their sex and access to education.[31] In contrast, Antillean women, doubly bound by the restrictions of gender and race, "felt long before the latter the need for a racial solidarity that would not be merely material."[32]

Paulette Nardal, alongside her sisters Jane and Andrée, were key figures in Parisian interwar Black internationalism. For several years they ran a Sunday salon at their home, 7 rue Hébert, in the Parisian suburb of Clamart. Many artistic and creative luminaries from across the Antilles, Africa, and the Americas came together at these salons to discuss "Paris or world news . . . colonial and interracial problems, the growing place of men and women of color in French life . . . every manifestation of racism."[33] These salons were crucial to the formation of the Harlem Renaissance connections made by Damas, Senghor, and Césaire in the mid-1930s. Moreover, the three men's thinking about race and national belonging owed an intellectual debt to both the salons and the writing of the Nardal sisters, although the three men never acknowledged it. Instead, Césaire would later be scathing about the feminine and domestic space of the salons, making a point of

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[29] T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Negritude Women* (Minneapois: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Jennifer Ann Boittin, "In Black and White: Gender, Race Relations, and the Nardal Sisters in Interwar Paris," *French Colonial History* 6 (2005): 120–35.

[30] Du Bois, "The Pan-African Congress," 272; Adele Logan Alexander, "Introduction," in Addie W. Hunton and Kathryn M. Johnson, *Two Colored Women with the American Expeditionary Forces* (New York: Brooklyn Eagle Press, 1920), xxii.

[31] Paulette Nardal, "L'Eveil de la conscience de race chez les etudiants noirs," *La Revue du monde noir* 6 (April 1932): 29.

[32] Nardal, "L'Eveil de la conscience de race chez les etudiants noirs," 29.

[33] Louis Achille, "Preface," in *La Revue du monde noir/Review of the Black World* (Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1931), xv.

stating that he had never enjoyed attending a single one.[34] The Nardals' cousin, Louise Achille, also described the salons in terms of "a feminine influence," a domesticity that sat apart from "a corporate circle or masculine club."[35] Nevertheless, this "female space" ultimately produced one of the most important Black internationalist journals of the interwar period: *La Revue du monde noir*. Like the discussions in Clamart, this new publication was bilingual—in French and English—and intended for "the intelligentsia of the black race and their partisans" throughout the world, an elite vanguard who hoped to "awaken race consciousness."[36] The *Revue's* offices were at 45 Rue Jacob, at the heart of the Parisian Left Bank, near other important intellectual hubs such as the famed café *Les Deux Magots*.

Physical proximity was a key factor in the development of the interwar Parisian intellectual landscape. Historians Jennifer Boittin and Michael Goebel have given us an example of how an intellectual history rooted in the Parisian cityscape might be written in their respective path-breaking books, *Colonial Metropolis* and *Anti-Imperial Metropolis*.[37] Boittin shows how Paris was shaped through the presence of colonial migrants in the city's streets, in the images and structures of empire built into the city, and in the white men and women engaged with overseas France. Goebel describes the ways that migrants from throughout the French empire and beyond were brought together in Paris's restaurants, lodgings, and cultural clubs. In grounding their histories in the metropolitan landscape, Boittin and Goebel make distinct but complementary arguments about the ways physical proximity, in conjunction with the experience of similar pressures, made becoming anti-imperial a transcultural phenomenon, albeit one that manifested in myriad forms across different migrant groups. Scholars such as Brent Hayes Edwards, Tyler Stovall, and Gary Wilder have also characterized interwar Paris as a crucial space for elaborating race and diasporic activism.[38] Their work is important but must be considered alongside scholarship on other

[34] Aimé Césaire, *Nègre je suis, Nègre je resterai, Entretiens avec Françoise Vergès* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 2005), 25.

[35] Louis Achille, "Preface," xv.

[36] The Management, "Our Aim," *La Revue du monde noir* 1 (October 1931): 2.

[37] Jennifer Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010); Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[38] Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora;* Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996); Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

cities with similar status, such as London, in order to fully understand the particularity of the internationalisms that emerged in Paris.[39]

Interwar London was ascribed a different kind of ideological capital, with intellectuals such as the British West Indian writer Eric Walrond describing it as "the cradle of English liberty, justice and fair-play," the place where the British West Indian realizes for the first time that he is, in fact, West Indian, rather than just British. Another West Indian student summed up this sentiment rather neatly when he said: "I have often had occasion to remark that much of the nationalism in the West Indian Negro is born at Paddington, the train station at which I arrived when I first came to England."[40] Driving through the streets of Paddington, the student experiences an England at odds with the "bowler hats and brollies" of Trafalgar Square that news reels had shown him. He notices that he speaks better English than many of the white Londoners he meets, and this prompts him to wonder if he has "been falsely led to believe that his fellow Negroes in Africa have not progressed beyond the shanties and tribal dance displays that so often greet him at the cinema."[41] Still, "West Indian" remained, for organizing purposes, a group identity that was often clearly delineated from "African." Somewhat differently, the African American actor and activist Paul Robeson said that it was in London that he "'discovered' Africa." With that discovery, he said, "I came to consider that I was an African."[42] Others, like the Sudanese-Egyptian intellectual Dusé Mohamed Ali extended his sense of an international African identity to encompass a "Pan-Orient Pan-African" platform that gave voice to all of the "darker races": "Black, Brown and Yellow Races—within and without Empire." These races had a singular international identity when it came to shared experiences in the metropole of "derision, contempt, and repression."[43]

When elaborating understandings of Black internationalism, historians have until recently downplayed the significance of interwar London relative to Paris and Harlem. Marc Matera and Daniel Whitall have begun the

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[39] Minkah Makalani has traced Caribbean radicalism in New York and London: *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917–1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

[40] "Epilogue: Experience in Britain," in *Disappointed Guests: Essays by African, Asian, and West Indian Students,* eds. Henri Tajfel and John L. Dawson (New York: Oxford University Press, under the auspices of the Institute of Race Relations, London, 1965), 143.

[41] "Epilogue," 144.

[42] Paul Robeson, "How I Discovered Africa," *Freedom*, June 1953, reprinted in *Paul Robeson Speaks: Writing, Speeches, Interviews 1918–1974,* ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Brunner and Mazel, 1978): 351–53.

[43] Dusé Mohamed Ali, *The African Times and Orient Review* 1 (July 1912): 27.

work of reasserting the city's significance in the interwar years but much more work remains to be done.[44] After all, as Winston James argues, London "was not only a site of residence . . . it was also . . . the planet's primary crossroads at which Black people come to a greater sense of group consciousness."[45] Black group consciousness intersected with myriad other political movements. In London it was possible for the Jamaican writer and radical Claude McKay to contribute to the suffrage activist Sylvia Pankhurst's newspaper *Worker's Dreadnought*. He reported on the labor and racial struggles of the city's docklands and championed the Irish struggle against the English. McKay knew Pankhurst through friends of his from New York, the radical editors of the *Liberator* magazine, Max and Crystal Eastman.[46] Alternatively, Black women like the Jamaican journalist Una Marson chafed against the male-oriented nature of much of the race-based organizing in interwar London and turned to feminist (if still racist) organizations such as the British Commonwealth League in order to fight for women's rights.[47]

While historians have paid attention to the imagined "capital" of cities such as New York and London individually, they have yet to bring these studies together to map a new cartography of Black internationalism in this period. By placing Paris and London side-by-side, we can see how the elaboration of a particular kind of English liberty sets London apart from the *liberté* of the Parisian landscape. This distinction between the notions of liberty extolled in the British and French contexts is a key cleavage in elaborations of Black internationalism at this moment, a difference which mapped onto linguistic differences too.[48] There is continuity, however, in some of the ways gender dynamics operated to doubly exclude or marginalize Black women. If New York is added to the mix alongside Paris and London, we can trace the crossings and connections that existed between these capitals, understanding the continuities as well as the differences.

[44] Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015): 145–99; Whitall, "Creolising London."

[45] Winston James, "The Black Experience in Twentieth Century Britain," in *The Black Experience and the Empire*, ed. Philip Morgan and Sean Hawkins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 348.

[46] James, "Letters from London in Black and Red: Claude McKay, Marcus Garvey and the *Negro World*," *History Workshop Journal* 85 (1 April 2018): 285.

[47] Imoabong Umoren, *Race Women Internationalists: Activist Intellectuals and Global Freedom Struggles* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 28–29.

[48] Sarah C. Dunstan, *Race, Rights and Reform: Black Activism in the French Empire and the United States from World War I to the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

POSTWAR RACIAL LANDSCAPES

From 1939 onward, New York, Paris, and London begin to be conceptualized as part of a fuller Black and African international landscape. In 1930 the African American poet Langston Hughes, in his poem "Afro-American Fragment," could write

> Through some vast mist of race
> There comes this song
> I do not understand,
> This song of atavistic land,
> Of bitter yearnings lost
> Without a place—.[49]

By the 1950s, as African nations began to gain their independence from empire, African cities emerged from the amorphous "vast mist of race" Hughes described to become tangible places in the international Black imaginary (as they had always been in the lives of their inhabitants). The features that Roger Baldwin had ascribed to Paris—the meetings of intellectuals, the newspapers circulating, the ideological resonances of freedom and liberty—were characteristic of postcolonial African cities such as Dakar and Algiers as they fought to elaborate blackness and Africanity in cityscapes physically shaped and politically haunted by colonialism.

We can see this in the case study of the city of Dakar, in Senegal, which, in 1966, hosted the Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres (World Festival of Negro Arts). Held under the auspices of President Léopold Sédar Senghor, the festival brought together participants from forty-five African, European, West Indian, and North and South African countries. The festival was simultaneously praised as a celebration of blackness and criticized as far too elite and "white," with too many lingering traces of French colonialism.[50] When given the opportunity to vote in the French Community Referendum of 1958, Senegal had voted to remain, only taking independence when the fragmentation of the French empire was certain. Senghor, one of the aforementioned *trois pères* of Négritude and the new President of the Republic of

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[49] Langston Hughes, *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, ed. Arnold Rampersad (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 4.

[50] Society of African Culture and Unesco, *1st World Festival of Negro Arts, Dakar, April 1–24, 1966: Colloquium: Function and Significance of African Negro Art in the Life of the People and For the People, March 30–April 8, 1966* (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1968).

Senegal, had genuinely believed in the potential for a Eurafrican organization of France that would allow African states to exist in federation with it. Nonetheless, he and many of his colleagues, within and outside of Senegal, believed Dakar should be recognized as a capital of Black culture. They believed that the existing geographical design of Dakar's cityscape lent itself to an identity as a capital of the Black world, as Paris was to the Western world.

There was historical precedent for this role. In the interwar, Dakar had been known as "la ville impériale" and the "little Paris," and the city attracted activists from throughout the African world, from the Caribbean, Algeria, Morocco, Sierra Leone, and British Gambia.[51] At one stage, the city boasted a branch of the League for the Defense of the Negro Race as well as a section of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. This kind of activity was heavy policed, however, by a French colonial administration fixated on conspiracies of communist revolution. As far as such authorities were concerned, Dakar's very nature as a port lent itself to this kind of activity because "news brought by ships can be easily and rapidly put into circulation, amplified, and distorted by those seeking to cause disorder."[52] Placing interwar Dakar next to Paris, London, and New York emphasizes the particularity of elaborations of race that emerged in the imperial metropole in contrast to the closely policed reality of life in colonial territories themselves.

In 1966, Dakar was no longer under French colonial rule but it was no less central to the circuits of internationalism. The program for the festival of 1966 described Dakar as the natural location for Black international meetings because it was "at the crossroads of Europe, the Americas, and Africa."[53] This was true in another sense too: the city comprised a cross-section of Black religious identities—Islamic, Catholic, and Serer. The 1966 festival and the city itself were to "be an illustration of Négritude," a demonstration of the Black man's capacity to contribute to "Universal Civilization," and to enter into the frame of modernity.[54] To this end, delegates

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[51] R. F. Betts, Dakar: "Ville Impériale (1857–1960)," in *Colonial Cities: Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context* ed., R. J. Ross, G. J. Telkamp, vol. 5 (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1985), 193–206.

[52] Governor-General to Ministry of Colonies, 14 February 1921, Fondes modernes, 21 G 126, Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence. See also Kathleen Keller, *Colonial Subjects: Suspicion, Imperial Rule, and Colonial Society in Interwar French West Africa* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018).

[53] FESMAN [Livre d'or], *"Objectives," Premier Festival mondial des arts nègres*, Dakar, 1966, 35.

[54] Léopold Sédar Senghor, "Message du président Senghor au peuple sénégalais," speech, Radio National Sénégalais, Dakar, February 4, 1963, as cited in Éloi Ficquet and Lorraine Gallimardet, "On ne peut nier longtemps l'art nègre," *Gradhiva* 10 (2009): 138.

invited to the festival included many luminaries of the Black world: from Senghor himself and his fellow countryman, the historian Cheikh Anta Diop, to the African American poets Langston Hughes and Sarah Webster Fabio and the musicians and performers Duke Ellington, Alvin Ailey, and Marion Williams; from the Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka and the South African activist Nelson Mandela to the Togolese singer, Bella Bellow. Senghor and his government had also invested a sizeable amount of the nascent nation's capital into cultural development: somewhere between 25 to 30 percent of the national budget was allocated to the Ministry of Culture.[55]

In addition, the city made a huge investment in infrastructure ahead of the festival, including the renovation of the port and additions to Yoff airport; the construction of the Daniel Sorano National Theatre, capable of seating 1200 people; and the building of the Musée Dynamique for a commissioned exhibition: *L'Art nègre/Negro Art: Sources, Evolution, Expansion*.[56] This exhibition, which combined African art from public and private collections across Europe, America, and Africa, was an unprecedented collaboration between Paris, Dakar, and UNESCO.[57] It would move to Paris in the summer of 1966 to be displayed at the Grand Palais des Champs-Élysées, a building first erected for the 1900 Paris Exposition which had primarily housed displays showcasing the technological advancements of the modern age. In general, France, as well as the United States and the Soviet Union, supplied a great degree of financial and technical support for the 1966 festival.[58] The Soviet support was particularly conspicuous as it came in the form of several large cruise liners docked in Dakar's port, which were used as lodging for festival attendees. This left Senghor open to charges of allowing neo-colonialism.[59] The South African poet

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[55] Léopold Sédar Senghor, "Introduction," in *Anthology of Contemporary Fine Arts in Senegal*, eds. Friedrich Axt and El Hadji Moussa Babacar Sy (Frankfurt: Museum für Völkerkunde, 1989), 20; Elizabeth Harney, *In Senghor's Shadow*: *Art, Politics, and the Avant-Garde in Senegal, 1960–1995* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 49.

[56] FESMAN [Livre d'or], *"Objectives,"* 35; Ficquet and Gallimardet, "On ne peut nier longtemps l'art nègre," 139.

[57] Georges-Henri Rivière, *L'Art nègre/Negro Art* (Paris: Musée Nationaux Francais, 1966), xxxvi.

[58] On the African American participation in this see Penny von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World!: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006): 152–63. For a music and performance-oriented reading of the festival and the Cold War implications see Melissa D. Reiser, "Music, Negritude, and the 'African Renaissance': Performing Blackness at the World Festivals of Black Arts in Dakar, 1966 and 2010" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin—Madison, 2014), 78–79.

[59] Francesca Castaldi, *Choreographies of African Identities: Négritude, Dance, and the National Ballet of Senegal* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 199.

Keorapetse Kgositsile argued that even "the most beautiful poem Senghor can write about the validity of the existence of a glorious Black culture, without attempting to make the social institutions in Senegal actually African, actually liberated from France, does not even improve the diet of a single undernourished black child anywhere in the world where black people are colonized by Caucasians."[60]

Alongside the continued connections to Paris in Dakar's festival of Black culture, these physical manifestations of neo-colonial and Cold War interests in Dakar's cityscape are indicative of the way that Black internationalism has always been implicated within particular political constellations, whether the imperial edifices of France and Britain, or the struggles for hegemony of the United States and the Soviet Union. In many ways the Dakar festival colloquium was a continuation of an elite Black and masculinist internationalism that dated back to the beginning of the twentieth century and which included Du Bois's Pan-African Congresses as well as the Présence Africaine conferences coordinated by Alioune Diop and held in Paris and Rome in 1956 and 1959 respectively.[61] Publicly, Alioune Diop's Société Africaine de Culture and UNESCO sponsored the academic colloquium at the festival and this emphasized the elite nature of the organization.[62] One writer for Présence Africaine, the Beninese poet Paulin Joachim, later emphasized this connection: "Dakar was the perfect place for this type of meeting. It is our own Sorbonne. So the city, too, so to speak, took part in this intellectual festival and all of the Senegalese participated."[63]

Notably, unlike the interwar Pan-African Congresses associated with African American scholar W. E. B. Du Bois and held in New York, Paris, and London, only one of sixty (mainly male) delegates to this colloquium came from the Caribbean: from Martinique.[64] Many of the papers delivered emphasized an overarching Black unity in cultural expression, and they all celebrated traditional "African" expression as opposed to specific African cultures. They linked Africa and its diaspora directly, presupposing a unifying Black identity that transcended difference (and which was implicitly

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[60] William Keorapetse Kgositsile, "Paths to the Future," *Negro Digest* 7, no. 11–12 (September–October 1968): 40.

[61] Dunstan, *Race, Rights and Reform,* 207–37.

[62] Delegates came from the United States, Soviet Union (1), France, Britain, Cameroon, Nigeria, the Ivory Coast, Belgium, Benin, Poland, Germany, Burundi, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Ghana (1), Liberia, South Africa, among others.

[63] *Lumières noires (Black Luminaries)*, DVD, directed by Bob Swaim, France: Entracte Productions, 2006.

[64] Sarah Claire Dunstan, "Conflicts of Interest: The 1919 Pan-African Congress and the Wilsonian Moment," *Callaloo* 39, no.1 (Winter 2016): 133–50.

distinct from the continent's Arab inhabitants).[65] The official film documentary of the festival, directed by the African American filmmaker William Greaves and funded by the United States Information Agency, also underlined this sense of Black universality. Using Langston Hughes's 1921 poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" as the initial voice-over, the entire film framed the physical landscape of Dakar as the symbolic capital of the Black international community rather than just the Senegalese republic and affirmed the connection of all African peoples regardless of national belonging.[66] Connections between African diasporic groups had also become quite literally more proximate at this time, with the advent of accessible air travel. Pan-Am allowed the journey between Dakar and JFK airport in New York, for example, to pass with what one attendee called "disconcerting speed."[67]

Shortened distances aside, the claims to a unifying and universalist Black identity made at the colloquium conflicted with the experiences of difference and difficulties of unity in evidence at the festival as a whole. The colloquium itself, for example, was primarily held in French—despite, as one American attendee complained, "the promise of bilingualism"—and this led to a degree of difficulty in communication.[68] Indeed, communication was an obstacle at many of the events attended by international visitors to Dakar. Moreover, the indoor festival events were often invitation-only or ticketed at a prohibitive price, intended only for an elite cohort of primarily male politicians, intellectuals, and international guests. The more accessible events took place outside, in the streets of Dakar. Primarily conducted in the Wolof language, these events were orchestrated with a more popular audience in mind and included the performances of folk troupes (*troupes folkloriques*), wrestling matches, and a lottery.[69] These questions of accessibility, so clearly parsed here in terms of the spatial division of indoors and outdoors—the pre-existing streetscape versus the new buildings—reflect the way that Dakar

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[65] For the papers see: J. H. Kwabena Nketia, "Music in African Culture"; Jean-Baptiste Obama, "La musique africaine traditionnelles"; Louis T. Achille, "Negro Spirituals"; Sim Copans, "The African Heritage in the Music of the American Negro"; Eno Belinga, "La Musique Traditionnelle d'Afrique Noire." See also Reiser, "Music, Negritude, and the 'African Renaissance,'" 99.

[66] William Greaves, dir., "First World Festival of Negro Arts, Dakar 1966" (New York: William Greaves Productions, 2005).

[67] John Povey, "Dakar—an African rendez-vous," *Africa Today* 13, no. 5 (May 1966), 6. See too Tobias Wofford, Diasporic Returns in the Jet Age: The First World Festival of Negro Arts and the Promise of Air Travel, *Interventions* 20, no. 7, 952–64.

[68] Povey, "Dakar—an African rendez-vous," *Africa Today*, 5.

[69] Estrella Sendra and Saliou Ndour, "Fiftieth Anniversary of the First World Festival of Negro Arts: A Comparative Study of the Involvement of the Population in the World Festival of Negro Arts in 1966 and 2010," *Interventions* 20, no. 7 (2018): 973.

in 1966 was simultaneously an imagined space of racial unity for an international audience and a site of uneven inclusion for the city's population. In other words, the "discursive resources" that leaders such as Senghor used to assert Dakar as a node of Black internationalism stood in direct tension with the community connections enabled in its physical spaces.

The same, of course, can be said for all of the case-studies explored in this article. Much of the source base for this article is necessarily teased from the writings of an intellectual and political elite who sought to mobilize particular notions of blackness and Africanity to serve their activist aims. The way that these actors attached meaning to particular city sites sits alongside the diverse experiences of Black populations residing within these places themselves. Attending to the relationship between evocations of particular sites as racial capitals and the physical realities of these cities is one way of grasping how unevenly Black internationalism could manifest in practice. Moreover, in connecting individual studies of cities that both physically and imaginatively shaped the diverse practices of Black internationalism and Pan-Africanism, we gain a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of each site.

This is particularly evident when we connect Dakar to the city of Algiers, a very different political and cultural space in imaginaries of Pan-Africanism and Black internationalism. Algeria, and particularly the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale or FLN, had drawn the world's attention in its decade long struggle for independence from France. Algiers, the nation's capital, was at the forefront of this focus, not least because it was the political seat of power. Amilcar Cabral, a poet and political activist from Guinea-Bissau, described it as the "Mecca of Revolution."[70] Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat characterized the city as "the window through which we appear to the West."[71] This was not just figurative posturing: the newly independent nation stood between the European and African continents, a literal gateway between North and South, Europe and Black Africa as well as the Arab world.

The revolutionary change was writ large on the physical landscape of the city. Colonial Algiers had been a segregated space. Home to the largest French population outside of France, *les pieds noirs*, the urban space of the city reflected the colonial hierarchy with a European colonial center clearly

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[70] Chefik Mesbah, "Entretien avec Lakhdar Brahimi (part 1)," *Le Soir d'Algérie*, 30 June 2007; Chefik Mesbah, "Entretien avec Lakhdar Brahimi (part 2)," *Le Soir d'Algérie*, 1 July 2007.
[71] Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays* (New York, NY: Grove Press, 1988): 180–81; Arafat quoted in Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012): 52.

demarcated in relation to the primarily Muslim Casbah.[72] When the Front de Libération Nationale emerged victorious and the Évian accords were signed in 1962, the physical architecture of the city remained a clear reminder of a colonial past. As part of France's withdrawal, the French engineering corps relocated many statues of the French colonial rule to Camp Sirocco, a French military base at the south end of the bay.[73] Those statues and relics that did remain in Algiers were covered in pro-revolutionary, often Marxist, graffiti. Between 300,000 and 330,000 *pieds-noirs* had left the city by 1962.[74] The homes of the departing *pieds-noirs* were filled as the elite among the Algerian families moved from the Casbah into the European center of the city. Their houses were, in turn, filled with the flow of people who had been displaced by the French military camps. In this process, by 1966 the city population increased by two-thirds.[75]

This displacement was the very literal achievement of the dream the Caribbean psychologist and activist Frantz Fanon described in his 1962 *The Wretched of the Earth*: "It is true, for there is no native who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in the settler's place."[76] Before his death in 1961, Fanon had dreamed of "carrying Algeria to the four corners of Africa."[77] It is through this lens that Algiers can help us understand the way that anti-imperial movements and Black internationalism were often mutually constitutive. Despite the pivotal role that Algiers played in Black imaginaries at this time, the city is rarely mentioned in the scholarship on Black internationalism in the 1960s and 1970s.[78] To paraphrase Fanon,

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[72] Larbi Icheboudène, *Alger: Histoire et capitale de destin nationale* (Alger: Casbah éd., 1997), 345.

[73] Alain Amatto, *Monuments en exil* (Paris: Éditions de l'Atlanthrope, 1979):150. On the legacy of these monuments see: Jennifer Sessions, "The Entangled Politics of Postcolonial Commemoration," in *Algeria Revisited: History, Culture and Identity*, ed. Rabah Aissaoui and Claire Eldridge (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 193–211.

[74] Claude Estier, *Pour l'Algérie* (Paris: F. Maspero, 1964): 16.

[75] Djaffar Lesbet, *La Casbah d'Alger: Gestion urbaine et vide social* (Alger, 1985): 57.

[76] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Penguin, 1963): 13.

[77] Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution* trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1988), 180.

[78] Samir Meghelli's work on music in this context is the exception. Here, I build upon Meghelli's foundational work to situate this moment within the much broader sweep of black internationalism: Samir Meghelli, "A Weapon in Our Struggle for Liberation," in *The Global Sixties in Sound and Vision: Media, Counterculture, Revolt,* ed. Timothy Scott Brown and Andrew Lison (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); "From Harlem to Algiers: Transnational Solidarities Between the African American Freedom Movement and Algeria, 1962–1978," in *Black Routes to Islam*, Manning Marable and Hishaam Adi, eds. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 99–119.

however, the corners of the African diaspora were certainly watching. From Harlem, the Caribbean activist Richard B. Moore wrote, "The inhuman atrocities of the French colonialists against the Algerian people, who were struggling valiantly for their independence, aroused widespread sympathy and fraternal support among the people of Harlem."[79] This interest went both ways. When the FLN leader Ahmed Ben Bella visited New York in October 1962 for a United Nations Assembly, he observed to Martin Luther King Jr. that "there was a direct relationship between the injustices of colonialism and the injustices of segregation."[80] King agreed with Ben Bella that "the struggle for integration here was 'a part of a larger worldwide struggle to gain human freedom and dignity.'"[81] Throughout their conversations Ben Bella repeated the phrase "We are brothers." King confirmed the connection, writing "The battle of the Algerians against colonialism and the battle of the Negro against segregation is a common struggle."[82] This language was heavily gendered, emphasizing a racial brotherhood that left little room for the struggle of women wrestling with the intersecting dynamics of race and gender.

Martin Luther King never visited Algiers but his contemporary Malcolm X did. Walking through the streets of the Casbah, Malcolm X saw "the conditions the Algerians had lived under while they were colonized." The segregated nature of colonial Algiers's cityscape alongside the stories of degradation and humiliation struck a chord with the radical activist. Not least because "those same conditions" were all too evident to him "in America in every Negro community." He had seen their like in Boston and in Flint, as well as New York.[83] The Algerians were Malcolm X's "blood brothers," just as they were the "blood brothers" of every Black man in America. Of course, Malcolm X was tied to the FLN by faith as well as racial sensibilities. He had adopted an Arabic name, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, with his conversion to the Islamic faith. Nevertheless, Algiers would provide a temporary home to the organization that he had inspired, the Black Panther Party, even if its members did not necessarily share the Islamic religion. The Black Panther community in Algiers sprang from the arrival in 1968 of the organization's Minister for Information and, later, head of the International Section, Eldridge Cleaver. A militant activist, Cleaver was on the run from a charge of attempted murder in the United States and had come to Algiers

[79] Moore, "Africa Conscious Harlem," 399.
[80] Thomas Ronan, "Ben Bella Links Two 'Injustices,'" *New York Times,* 14 October 1962, 20.
[81] Ronan, "Ben Bella Links Two 'Injustices,'" 20.
[82] King, Jr., "My Talk With Ben Bella," 12.
[83] Malcolm X, in *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements,* ed. George Breitman (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966), 66.

after being expelled from Cuba. He was soon followed by his fellow activist and wife, Kathleen Neal Cleaver, and a number of other Black Panther Party members. From 1968 through 1974, approximately thirty Black Panthers lived in a hilltop villa in Algiers. The Algerian government paid them monthly bursaries and gave them a storefront in the center of the city for their meetings and activism.[84]

The storefront, which the Black Panthers dubbed the Afro-American center, was on one of Algiers's main commercial thoroughfares, the rue Didouche Mourad. The Black Panther Minister of Culture, Emory Douglas, had procured material from California for the Center and Julia Hervé—the daughter of the once Paris-based African American novelist Richard Wright—acted as a translator and helped to coordinate lectures, film screenings, and informal discussion nights. Douglas recalled that the response "was just overwhelming. People from all over the world were there. . . . I would hand them literature. All on the streets of Algeria we would hand out posters and they were grabbing them and stuff like that."[85] Cleaver was also the first to admit that this state of affairs was partly just "very fortunate," telling the documentary-maker William Klein that he "had no idea . . . [he] . . . would end up in Algeria" when he left the United States.[86] Nevertheless, he thought Algiers had given the Black Panthers "an opportunity to make ourselves known to the other liberation movements who were brought together by the festival. The stage was set."[87] The Panthers certainly ran themselves as a liberation movement, holding self-defense and weapons instructions sessions.[88]

Elaine Mokhtefi, an American working for the Algerian national press, recalled that she received invitations for Cleaver to meet with "the ambassadors of North Vietnam, China and North Korea, as well as representatives of the Palestinian liberation movement and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (the Vietcong)."[89] For Mokhtefi, the irony of the Black Panther radicalism existing within an essentially conservative society

[84] Kathleen Neal Cleaver, "Back to Africa: The Evolution of the International Section of the Black Panther Party (1969–1972)," in *The Black Panther Party (Reconsidered)*, ed. Charles E. Jones (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998), 211–54.

[85] Emory Douglas, interview by James G. Spady, 10 November 2007, Philadelphia, PA, as cited in Samir Meghelli, "A Weapon in Our Struggle for Liberation," 176.

[86] *Eldridge Cleaver, Black Panther*, 35mm film, directed and filmed by William Klein (Algiers: ONCIC, Algerian National Film Board, 1970).

[87] *Eldridge Cleaver, Black Panther*, 1970.

[88] Elaine Mokhtefi, "Panthers in Algiers," *London Review of Books* 39, no 11 (1 June 2017): 34–35. More broadly, see Chapter 4 of Elaine Mokhtefi, *Algiers, Third World Capital: Freedom Fighters, Revolutionaries, Black Panthers* (London: Verso, 2020), 77–110.

[89] Mokhtefi, "Panthers in Algiers," 34–35.

was simply ignored by many of the radicals living there. She argued that, for all the professions toward Black international solidarity and Pan-Africanism, Algiers was not without its anti-Black racism. So too was she struck by the confinement of women's behavior within the Islamic community, a situation at odds with her own belief in gender equality. At the same time, Barbara Easley, another of the Black Panthers who lived for a time in Algeria, spoke glowingly about the opportunity Algiers provided to meet "women from other liberation movements."[90] As she swapped tales with other activists, she began to develop an understanding of the fact that her group, was "not the only group of little black people, this select group of African Americans in America that are fighting for that freedom."[91] Physical proximity, once again, played an important role in establishing international solidarity.

The connection between Algerian revolutionaries and the Black Panther Party, and the sites of Algiers and Harlem, was not lost upon American authorities. Upon the publication of an English translation of Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* in America in 1965, Eldridge Cleaver had referred to the book as "the Black Bible."[92] More famously, in 1970, when thirteen Black Panthers stood trial in New York for the crime of conspiracy to bomb a number of stores in the New York area, Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 film *The Battle of Algiers* became entangled in the case. *Variety*'s headline blared "Subpoena 'Algiers' as Textbook Pick of Black Panthers" and reported that "the film, which portrays terrorist activities of Algerian rebels prior to that country's successful fight for independence is 'required viewing' for Panther members."[93] While "required viewing" might have been a stretch, many Black Panthers had indeed seen the film and were inspired by the FLN's revolutionary tactics in much the same way that Malcolm X had been upon his visit. When she came to attend the 1969 Pan-African Cultural Festival, one young African American attendee, Michele Russell, wrote: "We had seen the film 'Battle of Algiers' in the States. Now, wandering the city, each street came upon us with the shock of a double exposure. Neon signs became the flames of bombed cafes. Women in veils became saboteurs. Taxi drivers, the

[90] Barbara Easley as quoted in Robin J. Hayes, "'A Free Black Mind is a Concealed Weapon': Institutions and Social Movements in the African Diaspora," *Souls* 9, no. 3 (July 2007): 231.

[91] Easley, quoted in Robin J. Hayes, "A Free Black Mind is a Concealed Weapon," 231.

[92] Eldridge Cleaver in *Eldridge Cleaver: Post-prison, Writings and Speeches*, ed. Robert Scheer (New York: Random House, 1969), 18.

[93] "Subpoena 'Algiers' as Textbook Pick of Black Panthers," *Variety* 260, no. 12 (November 4, 1970): 1.

incarnation from Harlem to Algiers of dedicated cadres careening around corners to unknown rendezvous."[94]

This sense of Algiers as a cityscape of revolutionary capital transcended an Algerian-African American axis. The Algerian government also gave financial support and buildings to a number of Black revolutionary movements such as the Mozambique Liberation Front and the African National Congress of South Africa. Algiers was also the location of choice when the Organization of African Unity decided in September 1967 on the urgent need to hold "a Second Bandung" conference to promote African cultures and international unity.[95] In physical terms, this decision meant the rapid construction of a conference venue and an accompanying luxury hotel that befitted the honor of being "the Mecca of Revolution." Funding for the project was international indeed, coming from Egyptian, Chinese, and French sources in order to prepare the urban infrastructure of the city in time for the July 1969 meeting, the First Pan-African Cultural Festival.[96] More than ten thousand men and women from throughout the Black international landscape flocked to the city to discuss the role of Black culture in revolutionary movements. The boundaries between "Black" culture and "African" culture were, it should be noted, blurrily defined in this moment, often encompassing both Black and Arabic Africa (and the multitude of national, ethnic, and religious identities that fell under those umbrella terms).

The Nation of Islam's organ journal *Muhammad Speaks* reported that "Black artists from Harlem to Algiers; 107 American and 15 African nations" would be in attendance. The same article enthusiastically predicted that the festival would "be the greatest event in the history of Africa, if not the entire world."[97] Similarly rapturous claims came from newspapers and journals throughout the African diaspora, from the Paris-based *Jeune Afrique* to the Sudanese *Al-Ayam,* the Californian *Black Scholar,* the Cameroonian *L'Effort Camerounais*, and the Algerian *El Moudjahid*.[98] Others, such as the Maghreb intellectuals behind *Souffles* were unsure about the actual value of the 1969 meeting in terms of "a collective or individual

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[94] "Algerian Journey," 355–64.

[95] *All-African Cultural Festival Handbook* (Addis Ababa: OAU General Secretariat, 1969): 1.

[96] M'hamed Yazid, "De Bandoung à Alger," *Démocratie Nouvelle*, June 1965.

[97] Kenneth C. Landry, "Algerian Festival to Spotlight Africa's Vast Cultural Heritage," *Muhammad Speaks*, July 13, 1969, 31.

[98] "La Presse Africaine et Le Festival," Alger 1969: Bulletin D'Information du 1er Festival Culturel Panafricain 4 (May 15, 1969): 40–43; Nathan Hare, "Algiers 1969: A Report on the Pan-African Cultural Festival," *Black Scholar* 1, no. 1 (November 1969): 3.

position . . . on the continental or international implications of the Festival or even the problems that were debated there."[99] The Nigerian playwright Joseph Okpaku was even more cynical, reflecting that "After several days of sitting in plenary sessions at the Pan-African Cultural Festival at Algiers, I wondered whether I was in the right place or . . . had strayed into an international cocktail party."[100]

Even if the festival was best characterized as "an international cocktail party," its symbolic significance as a beacon of a particular kind of internationalism should not be underestimated. In this iteration of anti-imperial activism and Pan-Africanism, the connective tissue lay in historical connections to the continent of Africa and to the political project of revolution against empire rather than to evocations—like those in Dakar—of a shared ethnic identity, although strands of this thinking did emerge at both the conference and throughout the festival.

Attending to the relationship between evocations of particular sites as racial capitals and the physical realities of the cities of Algiers, Dakar, London, Paris, and New York is one way of revealing these differences to show how unevenly black internationalism could manifest in practice. By rooting studies of black internationalism and Pan-Africanism in the cityscapes that both physically and imaginatively shaped the diverse practices of those the term encompasses, we can eschew conventional framings that insist upon monolithic understandings of racial, political, or religious solidarity.

Whether in the imagery of poetry such as Césaire's, in the film-making of Pontecorvo and Greaves, or in the language of political and cultural debates, particular cityscapes became both symbolic vehicles for constructing visions of blackness and African belonging and mechanisms for their conscious and unconscious development. Here, I have gestured to the ways that New York, Paris, London, Algiers, and Dakar have been both repositories and producers of black internationalism. They were, and remain, deeply networked spheres of mutual influence that nonetheless stand distinct in their elaboration of blackness. Understanding their histories as connected sites and symbols of internationalism helps to map out the rich texture and character of black internationalism and Pan-Africanism as historical categories.

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[99] "Le Festival Culturel Panafricain D'Alger 1969," *Souffles*, 4th trimester 1969 / January–February 1970.
[100] Joseph Okpaku, "Artists and Politicians, Algiers: The Wrestling Match that Never Took Place," *Africa Report* (November 1969), 41.