



# Radical Moves: Caribbean Migrants and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age

*Lara Putnam*

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## **Radical Moves: Caribbean Migrants and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age** Lara Putnam

In the generations after emancipation, hundreds of thousands of African-descended working-class men and women left their homes in the British Caribbean to seek opportunity abroad: in the goldfields of Venezuela and the cane fields of Cuba, the canal construction in Panama, and the bustling city streets of Brooklyn. But in the 1920s and 1930s, racist nativism and a brutal cascade of antiblack immigration laws swept the hemisphere. Facing borders and barriers as never before, Afro-Caribbean migrants rethought allegiances of race, class, and empire. In *Radical Moves*, Lara Putnam takes readers from tin-roof tropical dancehalls to the elegant black-owned ballrooms of Jazz Age Harlem to trace the roots of the black-internationalist and anticolonial movements that would remake the twentieth century.

From Trinidad to 136th Street, these were years of great dreams and righteous demands. Praying or "jazzing," writing letters to the editor or letters home, Caribbean men and women tried on new ideas about the collective. The popular culture of black internationalism they created--from Marcus Garvey's UNIA to "reggae" dances, Rastafarianism, and Joe Louis's worldwide fandom--still echoes in the present.

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