AUTHORS' NOTE

What you hold in your hand is the start of a journey through time and space. Each of the 366 daily entries in this book is a portal into the life of a person, group of people, place or event that is part of Black history and part of global history. Some you might already have heard of, and can now learn more about, but others will possibly be new to you.

In these pages you will see hope and connection, ingenuity and creativity, alongside tales of racism and oppression, resistance and celebration. Read this book in whichever way you want. You might start on 1 January, or whichever date this book comes into your possession, and read a page a day for a year. You might look up your birthday, and other occasions that are important to you, to see what happened on each date. Where entries have links to other entries in the book we will let you know. Inevitably, space in this book is limited, so please also look upon each entry as a starting point, giving you the information you need to research and find out more about the particular people, groups, places and events that spark your interest.

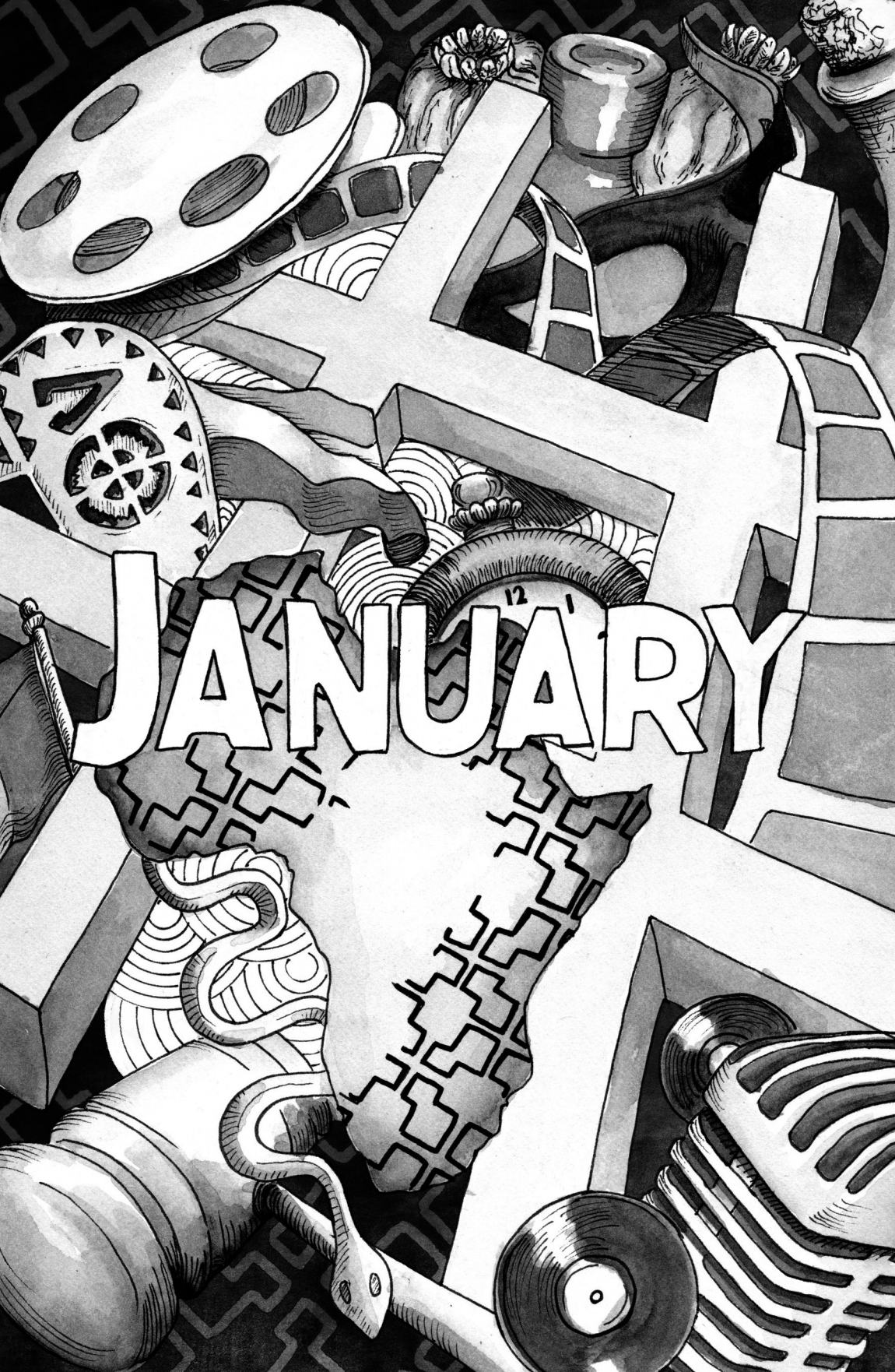
At the back of the book you will find twelve timelines. These showcase some groups of related entries that will help you to explore particular themes in the book. These include such themes as the Victorian anti-slavery movement that sought to end slavery once and for all, the Black contribution to the First and Second World Wars, and the work of Black creatives from the Harlem Renaissance to the Black Arts Movement. You will also find a glossary that explains some key terms that are used in the entries and their use in the context of talking about Black history. When you come across a word, acronym or phrase in bold text, please look for it in the glossary for an explanation and wider information.

We have made some decisions about language in the book that we would like to draw your attention to. We use the term Black with a capital B to make it clear that we are writing about a group of people with shared African heritage and culture, not just a colour. We also use the terms ‘enslaved person’ and ‘enslaved people’ to remind us that people living under slavery were human and that slavery was a state forced upon them, and not who they were.

Don’t forget to look closely at the illustrations that you will find dotted around the book, on the inside covers, at the start of each month, on pages within each month, and in the timelines. In them you will find more interesting details that link to the entries and that celebrate Black history and creativity in visual form.

Whichever way you read this book, we hope that you enjoy it and share some of what you learn with your friends and family.

David, Yinka and Kemi Olusoga


JANUARY

1 JANUARY - THE YEAR OF AFRICA

Ahmadou Ahidjo, prime minister of Cameroon, announced his country's liberation from its French **colonists** on 1 January 1960. By the end of the year that became known as the Year of Africa, sixteen more colonies had wrested back control of their own lands and people from European colonizers.

The sweeping changes that engulfed the continent over this year had many causes but represented the culmination of decades of work from the **Pan-Africanist** movement. After fourteen European nations had carved up Africa for exploitation at the Berlin Conference (see 15 November), Henry Williams founded the African Association to try to unite Africans, both in the colonies and in the **diaspora**, against this existential threat. The first grand meeting of this anti-colonialist movement took place in London in 1900 attended by, among others, W. E. B. Du Bois, Samuel Coleridge Taylor and Dr John Alcindor (see 23 February, 15 August and 16 July).

The Pan-African movement gathered real steam after the World Wars. The Europeans had relied heavily on troops from their colonies to bolster their forces. Africans had fought for their colonial rulers and now justly felt that they had earned the right to independence. Unrest spread and resistance to colonial rule began to take form. In the 1950s, revolution in Egypt forced British and French forces out, liberating both Egypt and its neighbour Sudan, and Algeria began a long, bloody yet ultimately successful war of independence. Kenya too fought its occupation in the Mau Mau Rebellion (see 23 July) which was brutally put down by the British ruling powers, who unleashed a campaign of systematic violence and torture against the country's civilians. It was becoming increasingly clear that the days of empire and colonialism were numbered.

After Kwame Nkrumah's (see 1 July) victory in a hard fought battle for Ghanaian independence (see 6 March), he made it his mission to nurture other independence movements across the continent. In December 1958, Nkrumah organized the first of three meetings of the All-African Peoples' Conference, the successor to the Pan-African Congress (see 21 October). He brought movement leaders, unions and community representatives to the event in Accra, including Patrice Lumumba of the Democratic Republic of Congo (see 24 June), Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Hastings Banda of Malawi, and Tom Mboya of Kenya. The conference resolved that 'the political and economic exploitation of Africans by Europeans should cease forthwith' and Nkrumah outlined a four-step pathway for an Africa free from colonial interference:

British prime minister Harold Macmillan meeting Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa of Nigeria, January 1960

> 1. the attainment of freedom and independence;
> 2. the consolidation of that freedom and independence;
> 3. the creation of unity and community between the free African states;
> 4. the economic and social reconstruction of Africa

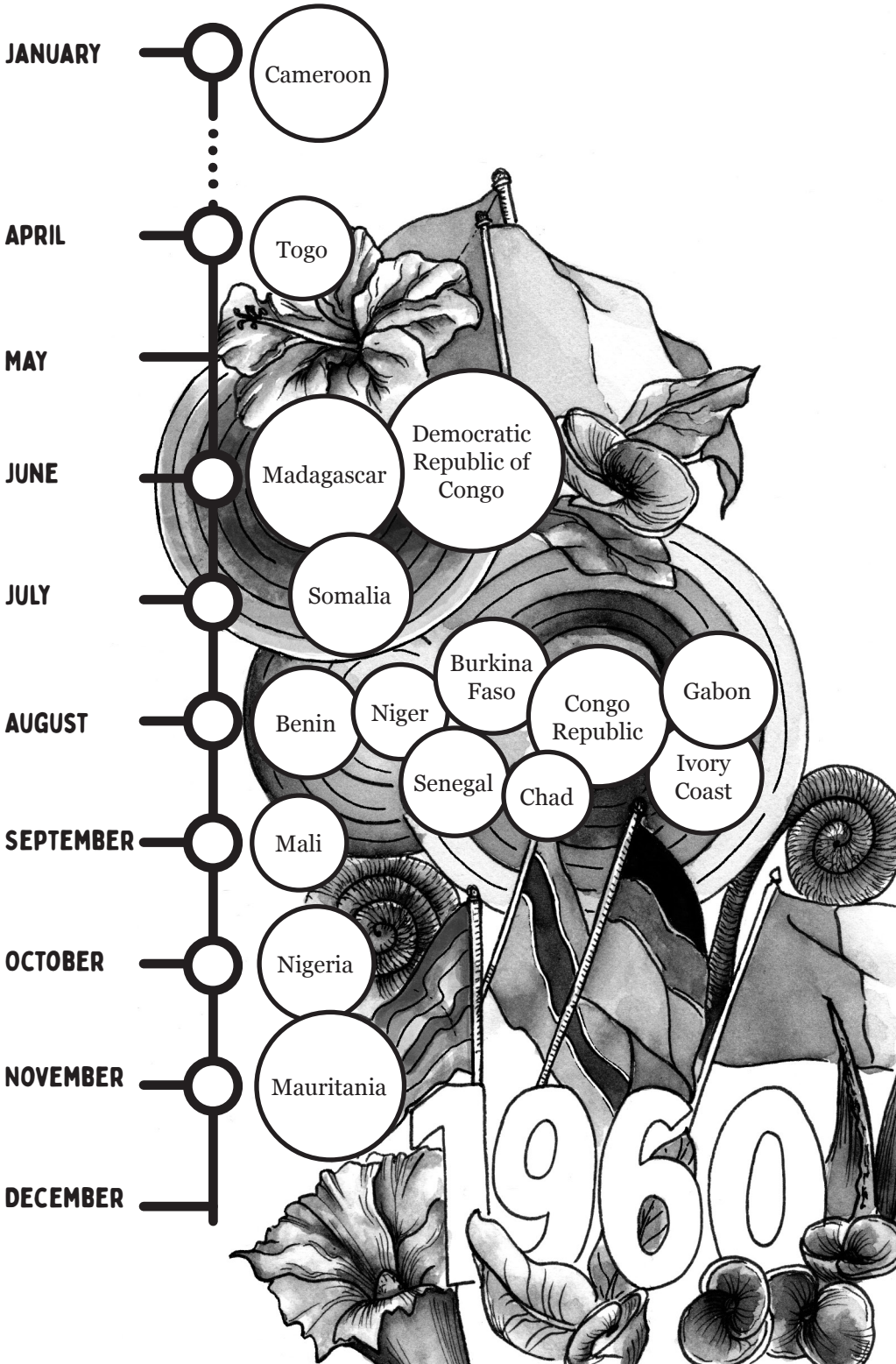
The colonial powers could now see that the end of their overt rule in Africa was at hand. Originating in a memo from the British Ministry of Colonies, the phrase 'Year of Africa',

reached the ears and conciousness of the public in a speech from British prime minister Harold Macmillan. In France, General Charles de Gaulle made efforts to protect French interests by rebranding the colonies as 'territories' and offering them self-governance with a route to full independence. The abundance of natural resources in Africa had sustained the wealth of Europe over centuries and an end to colonial rule was a direct threat to the economic status quo. The Europeans were reluctant to grant a full and genuine independence to their former colonies and so top officials were often installed and received military backing from the outgoing power. This uncomfortable situation resulted in much unrest and a high number of **coups d'état** for many of the nations in the years following their independence.

Patrice Lumumba signs the document granting independence to the Democratic Republic of Congo

At the end of 1960, the **UN General Assembly** approved the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. There were no votes against it, but Australia, Belgium, the Dominican Republic, France, Portugal, Spain, the Union of South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States all chose to abstain.

TIMELINE OF THE YEAR OF AFRICA, 1960



2 JANUARY ~ KAAPSE KLOPSE

Kaapse Klopse is an annual carnival held in Cape Town, South Africa, on 2 January.

Dutch settlers colonized Southern African in 1652 and established 2 January as a New Year tradition when the enslaved were granted a day off work. South Africa was then colonized by the British during the 19th century, in a violent process that established a society in which white settlers, who were only 20% of the population, ruled over everyone else.

After the British abolished slavery in 1834, 2 January also became a day of celebration for non-white populations in Cape Town. This coincided with the rise of minstrelsy shows, a form of Victorian entertainment where white singers wore blackface make-up and clothes to mimic and exaggerate the features and behaviour of Black people (see 8 May). By the late 1800s, many clubs (or klopse) would come together to perform in these celebrations on 2 January.

Shutterstock/Ravi Santana

Second New Year, Cape Town, South Africa – 2 January 2017
Minstrels celebrating the Carnival and marching at Bo Kaap neighborhood

Despite controversy around some aspects of the festival, particularly the continued use of blackface, Kaapse Klopse has managed to survive into the 21st century as a celebration of the multi-ethnic people of the Cape.

3 JANUARY ~ ARETHA FRANKLIN

On 3 January 1987, the African American singer-songwriter Aretha Franklin, the Queen of Soul, became the first woman to be inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

Atlantic Records 1968 (Life time: Published before 1978 without a copyright notice), Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

As a child, Franklin performed gospel songs in the church where her father was the minister, and at the age of just eighteen she became a professional singer. In a career that lasted over fifty years, she sold over 75 million records, won eighteen Grammy Awards and became one of the most successful artists of all time. Some of her most famous songs, such as her versions of 'Respect' and '(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman', reflect and celebrate her identity as a Black woman.

Throughout her life, Franklin was involved in the Civil Rights movement, which campaigned for equal rights for Black people in the United States of America, and she supported the rights of **Indigenous** peoples across the world. She attended protests, donated money, performed at fundraising benefits and spoke up in support of other campaigners.

In 2005, Franklin was awarded the **Presidential Medal of Freedom**. In 2019, one year after her death, she was awarded a **Pulitzer Prize** Special Citation for her contribution to American music and culture.

4 JANUARY ~ THOMAS WYNDHAM'S JOURNEY TO WEST AFRICA

In the Tudor era (1485–1603) the English began to travel further south, beyond the Mediterranean Sea, exploring the west coast of Africa. The Portuguese had been trading in Africa for years and the English were keen to try to break into that trade and establish connections with African rulers.

One of the first English explorers was Thomas Wyndham, a former pirate, who had the advantage of having a Portuguese second-in-command, Anthony Anes Pinteado. With the support and money of London merchants and King Edward VI, Wyndham and Pinteado left for West Africa in 1553. This was supposed to be a trading expedition, and while they did trade with Africans for gold and pepper, Wyndham also attacked and raided Portuguese ships, taking their goods; which included enslaved people. Rather than heading back for England, Wyndham ignored advice from Pinteado and continued sailing around the African coast. This was a big mistake. Wyndham, Pinteado and two thirds of their crew died from fever.

In 1555 Richard Eden wrote about Wyndham's journey, in a book called *Decades of the New World*. He spoke to the survivors of the journey and examined the ship's logs. In his book, Africa was described as dangerous, and its people as superstitious, violent and uneducated. Eden's account of the voyage, and of the Africans Wyndham encountered in the court of the **Oba** of Benin, was extremely biased and negative. Despite this, Wyndham's journey was a huge financial success, and his investors, including the king, encouraged other sailors to begin their own trading expeditions to Africa in the years that followed.