

Suzanne Francis-Brown, *World War II Camps in Jamaica: Evacuees, Refugees, Internees, Prisoners of War*. Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2022. xvi + 316 pp. (Paper US\$ 35.00)

In introducing this fascinating study, Suzanne Francis-Brown outlines the upsurge in Jamaican anticolonial struggle of the 1930s when the island was afflicted by both the global depression and continuing decline in the plantation economy. These conditions, investigated by the 1938 Moyne Commission, provided fertile ground for burgeoning labor and independence movements. Crown Colony rule and a property-based franchise was replaced by an elected legislature and universal suffrage in 1944, signposting Jamaica's path toward self-government. Appointed at the height of the prewar Jamaican protests, Governor Arthur Richards resisted this rapid change, using emergency legislation to suppress political dissent, underscoring how local political expediencies, as much as obligations to empire, preoccupied the colonial regime throughout World War II.

Wartime Jamaica faced the task of accommodating internees from hostile nations, evacuees, and refugees from many White European backgrounds. As Francis-Brown argues, responsibilities for displaced people posed dilemmas for the colonial government, keen to preserve the imperial racial order. White camp residents undertaking manual or forced labor or Black Jamaicans administering internment and refugee camps might signal the potential for change. Unlike the small number of Jamaicans who directly encountered the war in the Caribbean Regiment, Royal Air Force, naval service, or metropolitan wartime industry, those who remained at home, while certainly relatively remote from violence, were nevertheless affected in a multitude of ways. As such, Francis-Brown's focus on the island Home Front complements Dalea Bean's 2018 study of Jamaican women in the world wars by recentering marginalized, wartime voices, and experiences.

Francis-Brown underlines the connections between camps built to accommodate victims of war and those developed as holding centers for people regarded as hostile to wartime imperial interests. 1500 evacuees from Gibraltar came to Jamaica in the summer of 1940 when their Mediterranean outpost was threatened with German occupation. Gibraltar Camp, where they were housed, was established under the direct authority of Governor Richards, and managed on quasi-military lines without consultation with local elected representatives. Although referred to by the *Daily Gleaner* as "a free people ... removed from a zone of danger" (p. 101), camp inmates were subject to a pass and curfew system. The requirement that young women be chaperoned underlined official preoccupations with the policing of racial boundaries. Evacuees were

also barred from outside employment, although many inmates contributed to the running of the camp as volunteers and paid workers. The recruitment of special constables to police the Gibraltarian community from among camp inmates highlighted official desires to segregate temporary White wartime residents from the Black Jamaican population. Nevertheless, despite the semi-internment effectively operated at Camp Gibraltar, a hierarchy emerged in which those evacuated by British imperial policy, principally the Gibraltarians, placed themselves above refugees, including Eastern European Jews and Dutch colonial evacuees, accommodated in a separate area of Camp Gibraltar from early 1942.

In addition to facilities for refugees and evacuees, three internment camps were constructed in Jamaica during the war. A facility next to Up Park Camp military headquarters initially accommodated around a hundred men deemed to be enemy aliens, detained as soon as war was declared. Over the course of the war, internee numbers increased significantly with the addition of captured German and Italian seafarers, men detained by other Caribbean colonies, and over 400 enemy aliens transferred from Britain's West African possessions, who arrived in late 1940. Jamaican political activists, whose campaigns and statements were regarded as detrimental to the war effort, were also held alongside the enemy aliens, officials being as concerned with the maintenance of colonial authority as with the defeat of the Axis Powers. Among the detainees were Jamaica Progressive League activist W.A. Domingo, who returned from the United States in 1941, and "the four H's," a group of Marxist-oriented Peoples' National Party members. To underpin colonial racial and gender hierarchies, guard duties within all camps were performed by White soldiers, including garrison troops drafted from Canada. Non-White military and police personnel were restricted to duties beyond camp perimeters.

The thoughtful, concluding chapter on the legacy of the camps from memory and landscape perspectives particularly showcases Francis-Brown's imaginative use of descendant testimony, alongside a rich array of more conventional archival and newspaper sources. This is a most welcome study which will hopefully encourage other researchers to engage with the Caribbean home fronts. While Anglophone Caribbean historiography of the world wars has perhaps rightly addressed hitherto forgotten military sacrifices, Francis-Brown has tapped into a rich seam of wartime experience and change which equally merits our attention.

*Richard Smith*

Department of Media, Communications and Cultural Studies,  
Goldsmiths, London University, London, U.K.

*r.w.smith@gold.ac.uk*