Jorge L. Giovannetti-Torres, *Black British Migrants in Cuba: Race, Labor, and Empire in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean, 1898–1948*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. xviii + 305 pp. (Cloth US\$105.00)

During Cuba's Liberal Revolt in April 1917, soldiers under the command of Captain Julio Cadenas entered the sugar town of Jobabo in eastern Cuba and, according to eyewitnesses, executed several British West Indian men who had not been involved in the rebellion. Two more were killed in a neighboring town, and yet another was shot on the road nearby. Soldiers murdered at least fourteen black immigrants during the massacre, though likely more. "Those who were not killed or wounded at Jobabo were ill-treated, robbed, or forced to bury their own kin" (p. 93). British authorities pressured the Cuban government for justice—with little effect. The captain was exonerated, leaving the consul to seek compensation for families, which the Cubans refused. The United States, however, worried that restricted migration from the British colonies would harm the wartime sugar crop. Only upon U.S. suggestion, did the Cubans hand out compensation for "unforeseen expenses" (p. 109).

The Jobabo massacre and its aftermath illustrate the multiple forces at work in Jorge Giovannetti's masterful *Black British Migrants in Cuba*. Situated at the nexus of Cuban racism and nationalism, the vagaries of British imperial policies, and the imperatives of the global sugar economy, black British subjects were "caught between the discrimination and abuses of the Cubans and their unreliable protectors, the British consuls" (p. 137). Giovannetti begins with context on "racial fears" (p. 23) in Cuba, where revolt and rebellion were long linked to "black outsiders" and "foreign elements" (p. 42). He then details British West Indian migration to Cuba, offering specifics where others have generalized. The bulk of the book deals with the 1920s and 1930s, when British West Indians were subjected to countless abuses. Employers denied pay or paid in store credit, and evicted protestors. The Rural Guard and local police forces beat, robbed, and murdered West Indians with impunity. The Cuban state quarantined supposedly "diseased" immigrants in unsanitary, overcrowded conditions. Giovannetti meticulously documents these cases and others, as well as persistent migrant efforts to seek justice and improve their lot through mutual-aid societies and "diasporic self reliance" (p. 120).

He draws from papers in the British Foreign Office (FO) and the Colonial Office; archives in Cuba, the West Indies, and the United States; ethnographic fieldwork; and numerous newspapers. FO records reveal that, more often than not, British authorities were dismissive or downright condescending toward colonial subjects. When the British did come to their defense, it was not out of altruism, but rather because "the migrants themselves were agents in accom-

plishing this" (p. 149). British support reached a high point with a 1924 White Paper, but ultimately the fate of British Caribbeans hinged on the need for their labor "under the shadow of the international political economy of sugar production" (p. 149). During the Great Depression, the Foreign Office downgraded and closed consular posts, and in the 1940s, wary of labor unrest and overpopulation in the colonies, British officials denied repatriation requests and encouraged assimilation in Cuba.

Giovannetti makes several important contributions, most significantly with his concept of "epistolary activism" (p. 136). Migrants used a "persistent strategy" of "directing their concerns to different offices and individuals to secure attention" (p. 185). These "writings of protest" (p. 190) to British officials and home-island newspapers combined declarations of "unwavering" (p. 223) loyalty to the British Crown (often demonstrated by military service) with descriptions of hardship in Cuba. Politically savvy migrants often wrote directly to the London FO and the king himself, criticizing local officials who had done little to support them.

Black British Migrants disaggregates those lumped together as *ingleses*, unpacking significantly different experiences between Jamaicans and immigrants from the Leeward and Windward islands regarding consular representation, access to repatriation, and company control. Giovannetti also demonstrates that British West Indian immigration did not begin with the often-cited 1913 authorization to the Nipe Bay Company to import migrant workers. Rather, "non-specified Antilleans" (p. 47) were the third largest foreign group before 1910. Crucially, for race scholars, this book concretizes the insidious operations of racism in a land famous for its "dominant discourse of multiracial national unity" (p. 97). With British West Indians as a foil to the ideology of racial brotherhood, Giovannetti illustrates vividly just how often white Cubans deployed notions of nationality, disease, criminality, culture, civilization, and more to disparage the presence of black immigrants and, through their vitriol, blackness. In short, *Black British Migrants* is a most welcome, immensely readable (yet detailed) addition to the growing literature on republican Cuba, intra-Caribbean migration, and African-diasporic networks and activism in the twentieth century.

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