

# **Amy Ashwood Garvey and Afro-West Indian Labor in the United States Emergency Farm and War Industries' Programs of World War II, 1943-1945**

**Fitzroy Andre Baptiste**

## **Abstract**

For fifty years and more, the United States and Canada have engaged in the importation of seasonal migrant labor from Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean to work in agriculture and other sectors in several mainland states and provinces. A singular feature of these programs is their male-gender-bias. This paper focuses on an example of male-gender-biased recruitment of seasonal labor into the United States during the closing years of World War II (1939-1945) and for a few years after the end of the war in 1945. We refer to the importation of thousands of male Jamaicans, Bahamians, Barbadians and British Hondurans by the United States to work, firstly, in its Emergency Farm Program and, later, in war industries on temporary contract. An interesting aspect of this episode was the protest that the recruitment of exclusively male West Indians elicited from Amy Ashwood Garvey, first wife of Marcus Mosiah Garvey, the famous Jamaican-born founder and leader of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). While it is well known that the UNIA rocked the citadels of "White Power" astride the Atlantic System between 1920 and Garvey's death in January 1940, Amy Ashwood Garvey's feminist politics is less well known. This article sheds some light on some aspects of Amy Ashwood Garvey's perspectives on equal opportunity for West Indian women. It concludes that her perspectives on the interplay between labor recruitment, immigration, and gender bias in the United States Emergency Farm and War Industries' Programs of World War II, between 1943 and 1945 endure in today's discriminatory patterns of labor recruitment in Canada and the United States.

## **US Congressional "Quota Act" and British West Indian Immigration, 1925 to 1939**

In retrospect, the United States decision to import labor from the British West Indies in World War II to work on farms and in war industries was the first significant easing of restrictions since the passage in 1924 of the Quota Act by Congress. "African, black" meaning British West Indian admissions to the United States rose from 412 in 1899 to

8,174, 9,873 5,248, 7,554 and 12,243 in 1920, 1921 1922, 1923 and 1924 respectively. The dramatic increase in the entry figures between 1920 and 1924 was a response to the passage in 1921, and the impending passage in 1924, of new measures that tilted immigration into the United States more heavily than before in favor of Europeans of Anglo-Saxon/Scandinavian "national origin" and against so-called "lesser" "national origin" Europeans, Asians and "Africans, blacks", including those from the Caribbean. The congressional measures were influenced by a new "White Race-First" ideology known as Eugenics or the science of socially-engineering a country's gene pool in order to achieve the presumed best genetic types. The impact of the eugenics-influenced "Quota Act" of 1924 was felt immediately. In 1925, the number of British West Indians returning home exceeded the number entering the United States by 311. Though net admission had risen to 1,030 in 1930, with 1,806 entering and 776 returning, net admissions were in the minuses up to and including 1937, with the exception of a plus figure of 147 for 1931. [\[1\]](#) A compounding factor was the crash of the Wall Street Stock Market in 1929 and the ensuing Depression in the 1930s, leading up to the outbreak of World War II in September 1939. Collectively, these factors produced a bottleneck" of frustrations in the British West Indies that in turn, contributed to a rash of strikes by white' and blue' collar workers in the British West Indian territories between 1935 and 1939 against their hellish conditions of life. We can glean something of this hell from a 1941 report that a "Native Trinidadian of European descent who wishes to remain anonymous", made to a visiting US Mission sent by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The comments applied to Trinidad and Tobago as well as to all the other British West Indian territories:

Housing for the island's poor is a different story altogether. Drive through any town or village and you will see mud shacks thatched with palm leaves, their floors the bare ground, flanking the roads. In them live a goodly proportion of the laborers who work on the neighboring plantations and oilfields. So appallingly unsanitary are these settlements that hookworm, malaria, syphilis, and pulmonary tuberculosis, which seriously affect the already low earning powers of large numbers, are rampant. On the cocoa and coconut estates the workers cook, sleep, and propagate in primitive "back-to-back" barracks, dilapidated remainders of the slave years of the blacks and the indenture days of the East Indians. Some of the sugar plantations and oilfields have initiated housing schemes for their resident employees, but these constitute but a small fraction of the oil and agricultural workers of the island.

The slum areas in Port-of-Spain and the towns, entangled conglomerations of unsightly falling-down shacks, are shocks to the conscience. Here you will see dirty half-naked children playing in exposed malodorous gutters, their soiled mothers doing the laundry of the well-to-do at \$5 a month per family while their fathers (if they are lucky enough

to know who their fathers are) perform the most exhausting type of work in field and factory, store and warehouse. As the (British) Forster Commission of 1937, composed of a group of men inimical to labor's struggle, put it: "We visited barrack' dwellings in Port-of-Spain which are indescribable in their lack of elementary needs of decency and for which monthly rents varying from 12 to 15 shillings (\$2.88 to \$3.60 [US currency]) a room are paid". The district known as John-John in Port-of-Spain has been described by a medical man as "an entangled conglomeration of unsightly ruinous huts and privy cesspits placed helter-skelter on a slopping, steep and slippery hillside - a danger to health, life and limb for the local residents and a menace to the surrounding city population".

In 1939, neo-natal mortality was as high as 50 percent, but how even those surviving ever grow to manhood and womanhood is a miracle such as even Lourdes has never equaled. In single rooms that flaunt a lack of the elementary needs of decency, you will find whole families living, their diet excessively carbohydrate and decidedly deficient in animal proteins and certain vitamins. &

There is little wonder then that the blacks consider the rum shop their club, promiscuity their pastime. Their "brams" (dances) in the dancehalls of lower Port-of-Spain are hilarious affairs. Unblessed unions, most of them short-lived; are the order of the day, illegitimacy extremely high. With it all, theirs is a temperament volatile and fugitive; their capacity for enjoying life is as wide as life itself; their wisdom born of a heritage of long and wicked exploitation. [\[2\]](#)

The terrible socio-economic situation in the British West Indies in the years before the outbreak of World War II proved fertile for radical politics by formative political parties such as the People's National Party in Jamaica; the Barbados Labor Party; and the Labor Party of T.U. "Buzz" Butler in Trinidad and Tobago. Many of these political parties had a trade union base. Moreover, they were linked to West Indian and African-American organizations in the United States such as the Jamaican Progressive League, the West Indian National Council, Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association and the National Negro Congress. Many of the local and US-based leaders of these organizations professed Marxism-Socialism and/or had links with the International Communist and other anti-capitalist organizations. One result was that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) under J. Edgar Hoover, the first Director, maintained a constant surveillance of these organizations and their leaders in the United States and in the British West Indies with the help of the British Colonial Power. Charles Taussig addressed what he saw as the threat posed by "left-wing political and labor organizations" in a separate report thus:

We have accumulated the names of a large number of organizations in the West Indies and in the United States, and to a limited extent in South America, which, to a greater or lesser degree, maintain contacts in all or some of the islands. All of them may be innocuous. That some of them are being used as transmission belts from the United States to the West Indies; from the South American continent to the West Indies; and among the various islands of the West Indies, we have direct information. Whether they are used for subversive purposes we have no information, except in a few cases. That they could be used for such purposes is obvious. [\[3\]](#)

The preceding circumstances provide the immediate background to the entry of the United States into British territories in the West Atlantic, the Caribbean and South America from 1941 in order to construct a network of naval, army and air bases to take the war against Nazi Germany and later Japan. The instrument that made this possible was the Destroyers-Bases Agreement, signed between Britain and the United States, in September 1940. The protection of the Panama Canal and of a supply route for oil and derivatives from Trinidad, Venezuela, Colombia and the Dutch islands of Aruba and Curacao and of bauxite from British and Dutch Guiana for the United States and its allies was a major imperative behind the US base construction program in the circum-Caribbean then. However, there was another imperative behind the construction program, namely to generate jobs to pasteurize the anger of the populace in the base-lease territories that had boiled over in the pre-war strikes. If not addressed, such anger had the potential to become a serious security threat to the US and Allied bases in the circum-Caribbean territories.

The coming of the Americans to the depressed British West Indies during wartime created a problem of rising expectations for jobs, the injection of dollars into the local economies and improved wages. This is captured well in the above-cited 1941 account of "A Native Trinidadian of European descent who wishes to remain anonymous":

The Yanks have come to Trinidad. Their plans for building naval, air and army bases are already past the blueprint stage. Looked at even conservatively, millions of dollars will go into clearing and in other ways preparing the sites selected, into erecting buildings, hangars, wharves, and docks, into laying down landing fields, and into paying local labor. Moreover, when once the bases are manned, it is estimated that at least a million dollars will be added to the island's monthly circulation of money. The working classes, knowing only too well how grandly capital will benefit from all this, are wondering what crumbs will fall their way. Bearing in mind the universal belief that wherever Yankee bosses go they bring big wages with them, they are hoping for an improvement in their standard of living. [\[4\]](#)

Were the expectations realized? The answer is "Yes" and "No". By July 1942, the varied projects in Trinidad, the site of the largest base complex in the British West Indies after Bermuda, were employing 26,000 persons. The Naval Base alone, in the Chaguaramas Peninsula near the channel with Venezuela, employed 3,000 American civilians and 6,000 locals. More locals were employed in Army and Air bases in the island.

Employment-generation in the Bahamas, Jamaica, Antigua, St. Lucia and in British Guiana was smaller relative to that in Trinidad, since each had smaller base projects. Still, the jobs and the money-injection made a difference when compared to the pre-war situation. Barbados was not a US base site and, hence, there was little internal employment generation. There was, however, a downside to the US base presence in the British Caribbean. Data on Trinidad show that wages did not really go up, as the American authorities collaborated with the British colonial governments and influential vested interests in agriculture and commerce in the base-lease territories not to disturb local wage comparators too much. Secondly, inflation went up from the injection of US dollars into the local economies. In Trinidad, an index of inflation in the local economies was the printing of a new \$20TT note for the first time. Inflation was made worse by 1942-1943, as concerted German submarine warfare against American, British and allied war and merchant shipping in Caribbean waters cut imports of food supplies to and export of commodities from the territories to dangerous levels. For example, British Guiana and Dominica were reportedly without bread for about two weeks at one time in 1942 owing to the non-availability of imported flour. Some rationing had to be introduced in all the territories in the summer and autumn of 1942, until a hastily assembled convoy system and a Schooner Pool began to relieve the supply of imported food and other items for the civilian sectors in the territories.

Finally, another downside was that levels of employment in the US base construction programs began to decline from the peak in 1941 and much of 1942 to a low by the last quarter of 1942 moving into 1943. In tandem, there was a return of some of the strikes and unrest of the pre-war years in the territories. Jamaica and the Bahamas experienced unrest in 1942 as unemployment levels rose when work on the US bases there neared completion. Moreover, the submarine activity adversely affected travel by tourists to the islands and the export of their commodities to overseas markets. [\[5\]](#)

### **The Birth of the US Emergency Farm and War Industries Programs**

One of the selective pressures that led the United States Government to import labor from the Bahamas, Jamaica, Barbados and British Honduras was to create a safety valve', with the full support of its British ally, through the importation of a quantum of the unemployed and underemployed labor from these countries to work in enterprises

within the United States. As the draft for manpower for the war effort geared up from 1941 into 1945, the Caribbean need for employment coincided with a perceived domestic labor shortage' in agriculture within the United States.

The argument that labor shortage can be as much a matter of perception as a reality was expressed in 1918 by Louis Post, the US Assistant Secretary of Labor when he said: "the farm labor shortage is two-thirds imaginary and one-third remedial". [\[6\]](#) The same was believed to be true in the United States from 1941 to 1942. Staff memorandum No. 23-41 of the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Economics dated September 3, 1941, observed: "the total numbers of persons employed on the farms has decreased from 12,037,000 on July 1, 1940 to 1,769,000 on July 1, 1941". It was admitted that part of the decline was "a continuation of a long-time trend occasioned by the increased mechanization and increased efficiency of farm operations". However, the memorandum insisted, part of the decline was "due to the impact of the defense program". [\[7\]](#)

In reality, the farm labor situation was differential across states. According to the memorandum, there was "no conclusive evidence of farm labor shortages" in 17 of 36 states surveyed, including West Virginia, Nebraska, South Dakota, Kansas, New Mexico and Wyoming. If there was a problem of farm labor shortage in those states, it had to do with wages, and the provision of proper transportation and housing facilities for farm workers, including migrant workers. Fourteen other states reported "slight or spotty shortages" of farm labor, on account of wages. These states included Pennsylvania and Delaware in the east; Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota and North Dakota in the Midwest; Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas in the south; and Montana, Oregon and Arizona in the west. It was only in New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina that "farm labor shortages of some magnitude" existed. This was so, despite marked increases in wages in Connecticut and Maryland beyond the general nation-wide advance in farm wage rates. [\[8\]](#) The overall assessment then was that there was no farm labor shortage in the United States:

It is evident that there was in 1940 a reserve of unused or in effectively used manpower pressing upon the agricultural labor market of at least 5,000,000. [\[9\]](#)

By the third quarter of 1941, one million of this five million surplus farm labor had been diverted to other sectors, such as the Armed Forces. It was projected that this diversion would grow to between two to 2.5 million as the defense program expanded in 1942. This still left a surplus of available farm labor in the vicinity of 1.5 to two million. [\[10\]](#)



One year later in September 1943, however, Claude R. Wickard, Secretary of Agriculture, in an appearance before the House Committee on Agriculture, used language including "serious" and "the future is much darker" to describe the farm labor situation. The Agriculture Secretary's projection was that 10 million men would be in the armed forces by the end of 1943. Scaling the number down to eight million, he told the House Committee that "Agriculture will lose one million persons from its work force between July 1, 1942 and July 1, 1943". The total drain on manpower in agriculture would increase proportionately, if the target of 10 million under arms were met. As the military build-up continued in 1943-1944, he further envisaged that half of the labor loss of one million from agriculture would go into the Army and the other half into industry.

Consequently, the Agriculture Secretary called internally for more "women, older people, children and other inexperienced and less competent workers" to be drafted into farm labor. He proposed that internally, too, the Japanese from California, who had been relocated to detention camps in Arkansas after Pearl Harbor and the formal entry of the United States into the global conflict, should be "routed through the Inter-mountain sugar beet areas for the sugar beet harvest". Finally, he proposed that the United States should recruit more labor from Canada and Mexico - in the case of the latter under an ongoing United States-Mexico Government-to-Government scheme known as the Bracero Scheme that had been concluded in 1942. [\[11\]](#)

### **Enabling Measures for the West Indian Scheme by the President and the Congress**

Though Agriculture Secretary Wickard did not mention the British West Indies as a possible source of labor for the US farm program in his remarks before the House in September, 1943, [\[12\]](#) presidential executive and congressional instruments were already in place by then to tap labor from select territories. Executive Order No. 9322 of March 26, 1943 and Public Law 45 of the 78th Congress (Chapter 82 - 1st session: H.J. Res. 96: Joint Resolution) laid the groundwork "for assisting in providing an adequate supply of workers for the production and harvesting of agricultural commodities essential to the prosecution of the war". The initial executing agency was named as the Administrator of Food Production and Distribution. However, Executive Order No. 9334 of April 19, 1943 the War Food Administration (WFA) was named as the executing agency. This was enshrined in Public Law 229 of the 78th Congress (Chapter 16 - 2nd session: H.J. Res. 208: Joint Resolution). The term of reference of the measure was broadened "For assisting in providing an adequate supply of workers for the production, harvesting and preparation for markets in agricultural commodities essential to the prosecution of the war". From an initial allocation of just over US\$26 million in Public Law No. 45 up to December 31, 1943, the figure for the proposed scheme was

increased to US\$30 million for the calendar year 1944 in Public Law No. 229. The revised enabling instrument mandated the War Food Administration to apportion "not less than \$14,000,000 and not more than \$18,500,000" to states for expenditures by the Agricultural Extension Services of the Land-Grant Colleges in such states to facilitate work in connection with Emergency Farm Program. The law was later amended to enable the War Manpower Commission to import temporary foreign labor to work in war industries such as timber and lumber. [\[13\]](#)

Under the preceding enabling measures, the War Food Administration concluded the following agreements relating to the British West Indies:

1. Agreement for the employment of Bahamians in the United States, March 16, 1943. [\[14\]](#)
2. First and Second Supplemental Agreements for the employment of Bahamians in the United States, April 5, and July 12, 1943. [\[15\]](#)
3. Agreement between the Governments of the United States and of Jamaica relating to the engagement of agricultural workers in Jamaica to proceed to the United States, April 2, 1943. [\[16\]](#)
4. Memorandum of Understanding relative to employment in the United States of America of agricultural workers from Barbados, May 24, 1944. The memorandum and the accompanying "Work Agreement" were formalized on July 24, 1944 by an Exchange of Diplomatic Notes between the United States Consul in Bridgetown, Barbados and the Colonial Secretary of the Government of Barbados. [\[17\]](#)

For its part, the War Manpower Commission concluded the following agreements by 1945:

1. Memorandum of Understanding relative to employment in industry of Jamaican agricultural workers in the United States, March 24, 1944. [\[18\]](#)
2. Memorandum of Understanding between the War Manpower Commission and the Governor of Barbados, amending the memorandum of March 24, 1944 to provide for Barbadian workers to be employed in "industrial services essential to the preservation, marketing or distribution of agricultural produces, including the timber and lumber industries", September 29, 1944. [\[19\]](#)
3. Agreement for the temporary migration of British Honduras workers to the United States to work in timber and lumber industries, May 1, 1944. [\[20\]](#)

By November 1944, the War Manpower Commission was in receipt of lists of available labor for use in its war industrial program from the Governments of the Windward



Islands (Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenada). This was in response to a circular from the Commission via the State Department to Central American countries and to Caribbean territories in South America and the West Indies other than the Bahamas, Jamaica, Barbados and British Honduras, to indicate availability of workers and "the attitude of the Governments toward entering an agreement for the temporary migration of their nationals for such employment". [\[21\]](#)

### **Statistics: Bahamians, Jamaicans, Barbadians and British Hondurans in the Emergency Farm Labor Program**

Taussig's initial projection was that a maximum of 100,000 British West Indians would be recruited to work in the Emergency Farm Program. He did not specify over what period. [\[22\]](#) In reality, Taussig's projection was more than realized between mid-1943 and mid-1947 as the following statistics for the Bahamas, Jamaica, Barbados and British Honduras show. They come from Wayne Rasmussen's official' work. [\[23\]](#)

### **Bahamian farm workers employed under the Emergency Farm Labor Program by States, specified dates**

State	July 31, 1943	July 1, 1944	May 26, 1945	Sept.27, 1946	July 3, 1947
Alabama				193	
Connecticut					21
Delaware	105	469	319	210	104
Florida	260	1,203	4,688	1,453	717
Georgia		252			292
Illinois			32	4	5
Indiana			3		49
Louisiana					21
Maine				20	32
Maryland	1,785	1,412	518	744	402
Massachusetts				3	124
Michigan					69
Minnesota			10		
New Jersey		12		52	696
New York	393			378	851

North Carolina	754	310		772	349
Ohio					216
Pennsylvania		90	2	298	
South Carolina	13				
Tennessee	301	205			157
Virginia	699	1,809	206	941	295
Wisconsin			45	30	125
U.S.	4,310	5,762	5,886	5,098	4,525

Wayne Rasmussen: Table 9, p. 245, adapted.

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**Jamaican farm workers employed under the Emergency Farm Labor Program by States, specified dates**

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State	July 31, 1943	Aug. 1, 1944	Aug. 3, 1945	Sept. 27, 1946	May 2, 1947
Arizona			5		
California			2,693		
Colorado			99		
Connecticut	1,000	2,088	2,641	1,945	1,764
Delaware		580	434	292	58
Florida		1,722	2,141	139	1,530
Illinois	638	996	643	549	40
Indiana	186	224	317	217	
Iowa	314	429	766		
Kansas			225		
Louisiana				373	154
Maine		642	212	116	3
Maryland		585	1,297	424	149
Massachusetts		150	362	222	14
Michigan	747	1,659	604	940	133
Minnesota	357	197			

Missouri			143	43	20
New Hampshire			41	164	9
New Jersey	1,942	1,664	1,758	1,508	239
New York	1,524	3,005	3,072	2,514	244
Ohio	181	1,224	1,217	1,295	132
Pennsylvania	309	645	560	287	347
South Dakota				199	
Wisconsin	1,046	1,729	1,766	1,052	23
U.S.	8,244	17,649	20,996	12,279	4,859

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Wayne Rasmussen: Table 10, p. 261, adapted.

Under the agreement of 1944, 939 Barbadian workers were accepted for farm work in the United States. Of these, 909 were sent on the "S/S George Washington" on June 4, 1944. There was no further agricultural recruitment in Barbados in 1944, although the War Manpower Commission recruited a larger number for "industrial employment". Moreover, some 199 of the Barbadians contracted for the farm labor program were transferred to the industrial program. The rest of that farm labor allocation was repatriated. During 1945, shipping difficulties, given Barbados' distance from the United States and an ease in the US labor situation led to no recruitment. Instead, as far as possible, those who were in the United States were shunted to work between industry and farms. The recruitment of farm workers was resumed in 1946. The projected figure for that year was 3,000. In actuality, 3,087 were recruited and transported to the United States. Preference was given to ex-servicemen. On June 28, 1946, some 2,947 Barbadians were employed in agriculture. Of these, 2,645 were in Florida; 227 in Wisconsin; and 75 in Delaware. During the fall of 1946, the Barbadians were repatriated rapidly and, on January 1, 1947, only 641 were still working in agriculture: 617 in Florida; 17 in Louisiana; four in New York; two in Massachusetts; and one in Delaware. [\[24\]](#)

An unspecified number of British Hondurans, recruited to work in the industrial program by the War Manpower Commission, entered the United States in 1945, when the war ended. In 1946, the War Manpower Commission transferred 198 of them to the Department of Agriculture to work on farms. They were based in Florida in the winter. As the winter broke in the north, 134 were moved to Massachusetts and five to

Wisconsin to work on farms. By the end of 1946, the five British Hondurans were still working on Wisconsin farms. [\[25\]](#)

### **Terms and Conditions of the Founding Bahamas and Jamaican Agreements of 1943**

The provisions of the original agreements between the United States and Bahamas and Jamaica, though similar, had some important differences. [\[26\]](#) One such had to do with the transportation provisions. In the United States-Bahamas original agreement, the Bahamas Government undertook to bear the costs of the movement of the workers and up to 75 pounds of their personal belongings from their homes to and from the point of entry and departure in the United States, leaving the United States to handle internal movement from and back to the point of entry from their places of employment. This was changed in the United States-Jamaica agreement and indeed in the supplemental Bahamas documents. The United States Government undertook to handle the costs of the two-way ship and land movement of the workers between the capital ports of Nassau, Bahamas and Kingston, Jamaica and their places of employment in the United States, leaving the Home Governments to cover the land movement of the workers to and from the port of departure to and return from the United States. The rationale in this was that, in a war situation, the United States in conjunction with Britain had to control ship movements. There was also the fact of relative costs and convenience.

Secondly, the terms relating to wages and hours of work were more precisely pinned down in the United States-Jamaica agreement than in the United States-Bahamas one. The latter fixed the work week at six days, with Sundays or one other day in each seven days off. However, neither the daily number of hours for work nor the daily minimum wage was stated with precision. On wages, it was simply stated that the workers were to paid the wage "prevailing in the particular areas (of the United States) for similar work" and in no event less than 30 cents an hour. The workers were guaranteed employment for at least 75 percent of the period of contract, minus the days off. If unemployed during any of the period of guaranteed employment, the workers were to receive a subsistence allowance of \$3.00 a day. Further, if unemployed during the remaining 25 percent of the period of the contract, they were to receive the same allowance that was given "to other agricultural workers in migratory labor camps or labor supply centers".

The United States-Jamaica document improved on some of this vagueness in the United States-Bahamas document. Recognizing that there might be occasions when Sundays would be a good time for work, the agreement defined the work week as "six work days during the period of seven days". The work day was fixed at 10 hours; and the minimum daily wage at \$3.00, the same that was paid to American workers. [\[27\]](#) Subsistence rates

were also firmed up. The United States Government agreed to furnish the necessary subsistence, including a cash allowance of \$5.00 a week (or 75 cents per day for a period less than a week) "from the time that the worker arrives at the port of entry until the worker is furnished agricultural employment or for two weeks after the worker's arrival in the United States, whichever is the shorter period. Provided, however, that the first cash allowance shall be payable in advance as soon after the worker arrives in the United States as is practicable".

The guarantee that the worker be provided employment for at least 75 percent of the contract period also included some new language that was not there in the original United States-Bahamas agreement: "provided that if the worker is not supplied with agricultural employment upon the specified percentage (75 percent) of work days he shall be paid in respect of each work day which falls short of such specified percentage a subsistence of three dollars or one dollar sixty cents plus meals at the option of the United States Government or the employer".

Concerning housing, the United States-Bahamas document stated that as far as practicable, workers should be housed in camps maintained by the United States Government or, where such camps were not available, "only in quarters approved by the United States Government". The United States-Jamaica document repeated this language but added a proviso, namely that approved non-Government housing was "not to be inferior to those afforded other agricultural workers in the particular areas". Moreover, if meals were provided by the United States Government or by the employer, the daily charge, inclusive of living accommodations, should not exceed \$1.40 per day per worker.

Finally, there was a difference in the provisions relating to payment of wages and a savings funds. The United States-Bahamas document said that it was desirable that the workers should be paid part of their wages and that the rest should be divided between their families and a savings funds established for the workers by the Bahamas Government. The terms in the United States-Jamaica document committed the United States Government to pay the Jamaican Government "from time to time" out of the pay of a worker, such sum as the latter might require to ensure payment under a Court Order in Jamaica for "maintenance of any persons dependent on him"; to "any nominee or nominees specified by the worker"; and any remaining credit after the preceding sums "into a savings account of in the name of the worker at the Government Savings Bank, Jamaica".

Other than the above, the provisions of the two agreements were similar. The preamble stated that the agreement was for workers from the Bahamas and Jamaica to proceed to

the United States "for work . . . for the production of food for the winning of the war" (the Bahamas document) or "to be employed in agriculture or in work ancillary thereto" to further "the common effort of the United Nations" (the Jamaica document). The Health Authorities of the two parties were to give each worker a clean bill of health before he could be allowed to enter the United States. In the United States, the worker was not to be engaged in or subject to military service by or for the United States. The worker was not to be used to displace other migratory workers or to reduce existing wage rates. The worker should not suffer "discriminatory acts of any kind" in keeping with US Executive Order No. 8802 of June 25, 1941 pertaining to the payment of fair wages and salaries to employees in federal employment. Lastly, both the Caribbean Governments wrote in a provision that none of its nationals' was to be employed contractually without its consent.

This last condition was removed in 1944 agreements that the War Manpower Commission concluded with the Caribbean Governments. It wanted a freer hand and it got it. For example, workers had to accept the housing and feeding conditions provided by the United States Government or the employer. They had to work for employers to whom they were assigned only. The employer determined the hourly, piece and other rates of pay. There was to be no subsistence allowance if a worker fell ill or became incapacitated or refused to work. Some British officials criticized the terms of the War Manpower Commission as autocratic'. [\[28\]](#) However, there was little that they could do about the matter. And, the fact was that a widening group of manpower in the islands was lining up to avail themselves of the opportunity to work in and to earn some cash in the United States to mind themselves and their families, in a context of low wages and high unemployment. [\[29\]](#) By 1944, too, there was the opportunity for some to stay on in the United States. For example, by early 1945, 15 British Hondurans and five Jamaicans had apparently been allowed to enlist in the United States Armed Forces, with all that implied for the acquisition of United States citizenship. [\[30\]](#)

## **Problems and Issues in the Migrant Labor Scheme**

Obviously, there were bound to be problems in the administering of the migrant labor scheme for British West Indians in the United States in the closing years of World War II and after. As the preceding shows, some care was taken by the Caribbean Governments, especially that of Jamaica, to ensure that their people would be protected as far as possible from the contemporary "Jim Crowism" in the United States, especially in the southern states across the Mason-Dixon Line. The United States Authorities complied with the request of the Jamaican Government for much of 1943. The exception was in October-December 1943 when Jamaicans, having completed their spells in northern states, were shifted to work in the sugar belt in Florida. The Jamaican



Government approved the move after a representative visited the Florida camps to see conditions. During 1944 and up to the end of the war in mid-1945, more and more Jamaicans worked in Florida and other states. [31] Indeed, by then, the West Indian migrant workers had a distribution as far west as California and as far north as Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine. They worked under winter and non-winter conditions in northeastern and mid-western states, demonstrating remarkable adaptability. [32]

Wherever they worked, the British West Indians could not escape the anti-black racism that obtained in the United States in the era of "Jim Crowism". The Jamaican workers in particular were very sensitive about the US race-color environment. An Ohio report noted that the Jamaicans, though forewarned about the race problem in the state, were "hurt (in their pride) to be refused service in restaurants and drinking establishments". [33] A Wisconsin report observed that Jamaicans had to be handled carefully, because they were "especially sensitive to social discrimination, since very little discrimination is practiced on the islands". [34] Of course this was a blatant lie. Still, the point holds true that black West Indians of this period had an abhorrence of US racism, especially in the southern states. Hence, it is not surprising that the literature tells us of race-charged incidents that became politicized quickly by groups such as the Jamaican Progressive League in New York and Jamaica and by politicians in Jamaica and the Bahamas. A case in point is when the Jamaican Progressive League entered the fray, after a ship, the "S/S Shanks", taking an early shipment of Jamaicans to the Headquarter Camp of Pontchartrain in New Orleans in May 1943, packed in 4,000 of them. The normal carrying capacity of the ship was 1,900. Moreover, the food and water reportedly "gave out" and the sewage system failed. Trouble ensued between the white Military Police and the Jamaicans on board. One Jamaican was "forced over-board and not accounted for", while "the Military Police abused the transportees by kicking and beating them". [35] Even allowing for a degree of exaggeration, the image conjured up by the Jamaica Progressive League was that of the slave ships in the Middle Passage. [36]

Indeed, to Jamaicans and others with a history of enslavement, the control system in place at the Headquarter Camp in New Orleans (and in other camps) appeared as a throwback to the past. Military Police guarded the camp. No unauthorized person could enter it. Jamaicans could not go out without the written permission of a civilian Camp Manager appointed by a military Camp Commander. Accommodation was in tents. Lights had to be out at 11.00 P.M. The Camp Manager, in the event of his inability to maintain discipline, had to call on the Camp Commander. It was provided that any recalcitrant Jamaican farm worker will be held in restraint only as long as necessary to turn him over to the manager civilian authority'. [37] In reality, that was the norm for

American camps for migrant workers: Americans, Mexicans or West Indians. Americans of Japanese and German descent were also herded into detention camps with comparable controls - on the perception that their loyalty' was to their respective Homeland'. [\[38\]](#)

Complaints about camp conditions were inevitable. In May 1943, just after the conclusion of the first United States-Jamaica Agreement, a Labor Adviser of the Jamaican Government visited a number of US camps for migrant workers and filed a mixed report. Accommodation in Government camps was described as good'. However, the accommodation provided by individual private growers was found to be unsatisfactory' and in a number of cases unfit for human habitation'. [\[39\]](#) Soon after this tour by the Jamaican government official, racial riots' exploded at a Michigan camp housing Jamaicans recruited to work in sugar beet. The protest was partly due to the fact that 14,500 Jamaican workers under one supervisor were cramped into deplorable' and inadequate' accommodation. However, another factor in the riot was the lateness of the beet crop and the failure of the Authorities to honor an agreement to pay the 75 cents per diem if no alternative work was found. Some good came out of the Michigan upheaval in that accommodation was improved and work found. Notwithstanding, the Authorities had the uneasy feeling that in this state, there may be some tendency in racial discrimination'. [\[40\]](#)

By late 1943, a stir was created when members of the Bahamas Assembly and Executive Committee charged the Authorities in the Florida Program with inflicting a series of woes on Bahamians and Jamaican workers. The charges included bad food, poor accommodation and even the murder of some workers. To some extent, however, the trouble stemmed from frustration by workers who had completed their contract that there was no shipping available to take them home. The men were told that they would have to work until the shipping problem was resolved. Worse, they were ordered to work on cane sugar against their wish. Some 5,000 who refused were locked up and turned over to US Immigration. The Nassau Daily Tribune highlighted the charges in an emotive article dated February 24, 1944. Some of the charges were verified in a report entitled "The Current Situation affecting Jamaican workers with comments on Bahamian importees and domestic migrants". The Director of Labor of the War Food Administration commissioned the report from some "outstanding Americans". In compiling their report, the American team visited camps in Florida in late 1943 to see conditions for itself. [\[41\]](#)

Finally, Camp Murphy in West Palm Beach, Florida, was the scene of an ugly riot by some "1,000 Jamaicans and Bahamians" in July 1945, as the war came to an end. The camp was an abandoned US Army Base; and was used to house West Indians who had

allegedly "broken labor contracts", preparatory to repatriation. However, as in late 1943, no ships were available to do this; frustration levels grew; and the "dissatisfaction flared into disorder", according to employees of the War Food Administration. The "Camp Murphy Affair" reached the Jamaican House of Assembly, under a new adult franchise Constitution. The majority Jamaican Labor Party led by Alexander Bustamante supported a resolution by a member of the Opposition People's National Party that condemned the conditions that had led to the riot at Camp Murphy. Terms like "little slave drivers" were used to describe the behavior of the US Authorities in the Farm Program towards the migrant workers. The Liaison Officer of the Jamaican Government in the United States was chastised as an accomplice "slave driver". [\[42\]](#) The result was that two "electives" of the Assembly were sent to the United States to investigate and to report back. [\[43\]](#) Their finding, made in consultation with the British Liaison Officer and officials of the US Department of Agriculture, was "no negligence or harshness on the part of the Camp and Police Authorities nor indications that conditions at the Camp or the treatment of the workers were responsible for the disturbances". [\[44\]](#) It is the author's view that all parties concerned consented to cover up the incident in Florida as well as ones at Fort Collins, Colorado and La Habra, California, in hopes that the wartime migrant labor scheme would be continued after the end of the war. [\[45\]](#) The scheme continued until about 1947.

### **Gender Discrimination Charge by Amy Ashwood Garvey**

There were a host of problems and issues surrounding the migrant labor scheme that cannot be addressed in this paper. One significant issue that arose had to do with a charge by Amy Ashwood Garvey that the scheme was male-gender-biased and that nothing was being done to recruit women - Jamaican women - to work in the United States. The first and divorced wife of Marcus Garvey, who had died in January 1940, Amy Ashwood Garvey saw herself and not Amy Jacques Garvey, the second wife of Marcus Garvey, as the true heir to his legacy. In 1944, she was in politics in Jamaica as "President of the Jag-Smith Party" composed principally of women, and as its candidate for the Jamaican House of Representatives". [\[46\]](#) In April 1944, she was in the United States under a nonimmigrant visa issued by the US Consulate in Kingston, Jamaica, "for medical treatment" as a follow-up to an operation in New York "for an abdominal tumor". [\[47\]](#)

However, Amy Ashwood Garvey clearly had another agenda, namely to make a public statement that Jamaican and West Indian women must have equal consideration with their men in American and British schemes for work in the United States. Before her departure for the United States, she and her supporters had apparently spread a rumor in

Kingston "to the effect that some 25 Jamaican women were going, or had been going to the United States as domestic servants" on her initiative. The rumor also said that this group of 25 was "the first batch of a great number of Jamaican domestic servants who would be enabled to enter the United States" on a plan "evolved some time ago by the Jamaica Democratic Party, and that greater numbers of women were selected to be sent north in the near future". [\[48\]](#) Having arrived in New York, Amy Ashwood Garvey played her next card. She wrote the following to the US Vice Consul in Kingston on March 30, 1944:

There are about ten women over there, for whom I have work here. Please tell me what I should do. I understand that if their prospective employer will offer a years agreement, together with Bankers reference, stating the salary, and also income tax returns, they can leave. Their tickets would also be sent to them. Please be good enough to reply to me at your earliest date. I have been given wide publicity here in my efforts to help the women of my Country, and large numbers of white ladies have phoned me, and are calling on me at my Hotel to help them. I am an outdoor patient, and my doctors say I must lose fifty more pounds before I can stand an operation, so I will be getting an extension. I would like to help all I can before I take my operation, it may be my last act of Service". [\[49\]](#)

By then, J. Edgar Hoover had informed the State Department of intelligence received:

that Mrs. Amy Ashwood Garvey, the widow of Marcus Garvey, is in New York City, having come from Jamaica, British West Indies, presumably in the interests of obtaining jobs for 50,000 Jamaican women workers as domestics in the United States. The March 4, 1944 issue of 'The People's Voice', a Negro newspaper, relates to the transfer of these 50,000 Jamaicans to this country. [\[50\]](#)

Hoover went on to advise the State Department that Amy Ashwood Garvey must be stopped. The FBI, he said, had no information to implicate her in ongoing investigations against some of Marcus Garvey's cohorts "for sedition and conspiracy to commit sedition" in connection with the disposition of funds collected through the United Negro Improvement Association. Still, her influence was such that "any success she may have in causing the importation of these Jamaican workers may be used to advantage by the United Negro Improvement Association as a device to augment their membership and increase its influence upon the members". [\[51\]](#) Hoover's letter and those from the Consul in Jamaica galvanized the State Department and their British allies to shoot down Amy Ashwood Garvey's story or project as lacking merit. Yet, there is no doubt that the gender discrimination charge worried them.

The Philadelphia Tribune of September 15, 1945 highlighted another problem that arose from the male-gender-bias in the migrant scheme, namely the fact that some of the men had married "American Negro women" who wanted to know where they stood as the repatriation proceeded apace with the end of the war:

Many American Negro women, like a prominent Negro labor leader, found the West Indians to be just like we are'. If this be true, the immigration authorities are going to have a pretty tough time catching up with several hundred West Indians who have jumped their contracts and disappeared in the general Negro population. When the West Indians first began to discover the attractiveness of American Negro women, they sought advice on their freedom to marry in the United States. They were told that the government was obligated to provide transportation back to the islands only for each worker's luggage and himself.

Apparently the West Indians did not expect the war to end so suddenly. Few of them have made arrangements to take their wives home with them. Husbands and wives spend their five days (given to arrange affairs before leaving) dashing from place to place trying to make last minute arrangements. [\[52\]](#)

## Conclusion

The US recruitment scheme of British West Indian men to work in the Emergency Farm and War Industries programs in the closing years of World War II and for some years after is worthy of study in its own right as an episode in US-Caribbean relations. As argued, it was then the first significant break in the restrictive immigration policy of the United States towards the British West Indies in the 1924-5 "Quota Act" The recruitment scheme of 1943-1947 also stands as the transition to the passage of the Hart-Cellar Immigration Reform Act of 1965 that eliminated the restrictions against West Indian immigration in the 1924 Act. The 1924 restrictions had been reaffirmed in the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952. In the ten years after the Hart-Cellar reforms went into effect, immigration from the then newly independent countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean "exceeded that of the previous seventy years". By the early 1980s, immigration from Jamaica alone amounted to some 20,000 persons annually of an annual figure of 50,000 for the Commonwealth Caribbean. [\[53\]](#)

It is quite conceivable that some of the arrivals under the Hart-Cellar dispensation had worked in the US program during and just after World War II. They might have returned to states such as New York and Connecticut where, on the extant data, their performance in the work programs and their general social deportment had won praises



from employers and the community at large. [\[54\]](#) Today, these two states have some of the largest concentration of persons from the Commonwealth Caribbean in the United States.

Finally, the study of the history of this wartime recruitment of male West Indian labor for work in the farms and war industries of the United States during and just after World War II is significant for the gender challenge posed by Amy Ashwood Garvey to what was a norm. The male-gender-norm continues to this day in foreign and domestic migrant labor schemes in the United States, Canada and in Southern Africa.

Historically, there have been a few exceptions to the norm in the case of Canada. In 1910-1911, Canada negotiated with the French-speaking West Indian island of Guadeloupe a scheme, whereby 100 women from the island were recruited to fill a demand for cheap domestic labor in French-speaking Quebec. The \$80 fare for passage by ship to Canada for these women was pre-paid by their employers, in return for two years of service at a monthly wage of five dollars. Canada revisited this Domestic Servant Scheme in 1955. The West Indian Domestic Scheme, introduced in that year, brought 100 domestic workers each year from the Caribbean to work in Canadian homes. To be eligible, a woman had to pass a medical examination; be single; be aged 18 to 35; and have at least an eighth-grade education. Applicants were interviewed by a team from the Canadian Immigration Department that visited the territories once per year for the specific purpose of recruiting domestic workers. On arrival in Canada, the women were granted landed-immigration status and were required to work in a home for one year. Thereafter, they had the option of finding work in another field or remaining in domestic servant work. The irony in that well-intentioned Canadian scheme was that many of the women who applied successfully were not domestic servants in their home territories, but teachers, public servants, clerks, secretaries, etcetera. Indeed, at home some employed domestic servants! These women simply used the scheme "as a legitimate window of opportunity to gain access to Canada". Access to Canada presented opportunities for resource accumulation and upward mobility that were not otherwise available in their home countries. Thus, having served their 1-year contract as domestic servants, most moved back to their home careers and/or advanced themselves further. [\[55\]](#)

The United States has had different schemes of in-migration of "domestic servants" since the 1960s. One is the so-called "maid to order" scheme. [\[56\]](#) It involves the issuance of close to 4,000 A-3, B-1 and G-5 special visas annually, for diplomats, officials of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations and other international organizations to employ foreign housekeepers, cooks, drivers, nannies, gardeners and other personal servants "to prop up and provide the underpinning to support their life style" in Washington, D.C and New York especially. In 1998, the largest numbers of



such "documented" workers, some of whom are women, came from the Philippines, (22.3 percent), Indonesia (8.1 percent), Peru (5.6 percent) and India (4.8 percent). In reality, the numbers might be higher on account of the secrecy that surrounds the importation of this workforce by this elite clientele, with the connivance of the State Department and the various international agencies. [\[57\]](#)

Another scheme is that which brings nannies or au pairs to the United States on "educational and cultural exchange" under J-1 visas. These nannies or au pairs are mostly young European middle-class women. Each nanny or au pair is flown to New York for an orientation session. The individual is then placed in a geographical group with others in order to help her form a network of relationships. Once the nanny or au pair joins the sponsored family, she attends another orientation program in which she is provided with data on community resources, educational opportunities, and contact for a local support network. Every month, the nanny/au pair and her employer are required to engage in a trouble-shooting session with a counselor. [\[58\]](#)

The above two schemes fall under what is termed "documented immigration" for the categories involved, though the US Authorities are more attentive to the "white nannies" in the J-1 scheme than the mainly "non-white" women in the A-3, B-1 and G-5 one. This opens workers in the latter scheme to a host of abuses described by some community organization as "domestic slavery" by some of Washington's most privileged international and civil servants". A modern-day Underground Railway' - loose network of churches, social service groups, lawyers and individuals - has been quietly helping scores of domestics escape exploitative and often abusive situations, get legal help, and find other employment. From 1997, the formative Underground Railroad', led by organizations such as the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C., has achieved a greater degree of formalization. [\[59\]](#)

Finally, there is a vast pool of poor and relatively uneducated women from "Third World" countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean who are caught up in an "undocumented immigration" into the United States, especially in the last two decades. Estimates keep rising: In 1990, the estimate was about 3.4 million. However, the 2000 US Census placed the figure at 8.5 million. In turn, this figure represents one-quarter of the approximated 32 million immigrants in the United States in 2000. Mexicans and other Latinos represent some 4.5 million or 55 percent of the total "undocumented" population, followed by persons from Asia (India, China, Korea and the Philippines). A small percent come from the Caribbean. In light of September 11, 2001, the 2000 Census disproved previous estimates that persons from Middle Eastern/Arab countries ranked significantly among this "undocumented immigration". [\[60\]](#)

Needless to say, this vast pool of "the wretched of the earth" within the United States, many of them women, are subject to unimaginable exploitation that are being spotlighted by studies such as *Women Immigrants in the United States*. The finding of one study is as follows:

Migration adds another dimension to the contour of privileges and opportunity. Whether immigrants are documented or undocumented and whether they migrate voluntarily or are trafficked greatly affects their opportunities and the terms and conditions of their employment in the labor market. Being undocumented increases vulnerability in the labor market regardless of other characteristics and confines most undocumented immigrants to informal sector, low-paying, low-skilled and insecure employment. Various studies have shown that the coincidence of characteristics such as low levels of human capital, undocumented status and lack of access to dense social networks conspire to depress wages among recent immigrants. Despite similarities in the experience of immigrant workers who are documented and those without documents or legal papers, they continue to be differentiated by gender. [\[61\]](#)

Amy Ashwood Garvey would be happy that women workers have breached the traditional male-gender-bias in US recruitment of foreign labor. However, this champion of women's rights and of human rights would not be happy with the general exploitation and abuse to which women immigrants are subject in the United States, with a degree of connivance from the Authorities. But, then, Amy Ashwood Garvey knew painfully from her life experience and that of her husband, Marcus Garvey, that the world was not equal for men and women and for whites and non-whites. This continues to be the reality today in the operation of US documented or undocumented immigration.

### **Some of the Main United States and British Agencies involved in the British West Indian Migrant Labor Supply Scheme for Farms and War Agro-Industries, 1943-1947.**

#### **United States**

The United States Department of Agriculture, Bureaus such as the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Extension Service \*

War Food Administration

War Manpower Commission \*

War Shipping Administration \*

Department of State

United States Consulates in the Bahamas, Jamaica, Barbados and British Honduras

United States representatives on the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission (up to 1945) and its successor the Caribbean Commission from 1945

United States Public Health Service \*

United States Immigration and Naturalization Service \*

Federal Bureau of Investigations especially in relation to surveillance of black radical organizations and individuals in the United States and in the British Caribbean.

Representatives of United Fruit Company

## **Britain**

Foreign Office in London

Colonial Office in London

Colonial Government of The Bahamas, headed by the Duke of Windsor, the abdicated British monarch, for much of the war years. He held talks with the United States Government on the scheme for The Bahamas between late 1941 and early 1943.

Colonial Government of Jamaica, including a Labor Officer stationed in the Washington, D.C. to liaise with the United States Government, key Departments/Agencies and the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission.

Colonial Government of Barbados, headed by its Governor, Sir Henry Grattan. He held talks with American and British officials in Washington, D.C. in May 1944 relating the conclusion of the Barbados Migrant Labor Scheme.

## Colonial Government of British Honduras.

\* All these agencies of the United States Government sent out agents to the respective Caribbean territories to negotiate terms and conditions of the agreements and/to facilitate implementation and/or to trouble-shoot problems that arose.

## Endnotes

[1] Philip Kasinitz, *Caribbean New York: Black Immigrants and the Politics of Race*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1992, p. 24 and Table 1:1, "Black immigrant Aliens Admitted and Black Emigrant Aliens Departed: United States, 1899-1937, p. 355 in Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America*, London and New York, Verso, 1998.

[2] Record Group (RG) 59 (US State Department): Box 6022, Folder 5: 844.00/8-2045: "Social and Political Forces in Dependent Areas of the Caribbean: Part III: population and Migration in the Caribbean Area", December 1944, pp. 527-529. The author of the report was Charles Taussig, one of President F.D. Roosevelt's experts on the Caribbean, who visited the region several times during World War II. By 1944, Taussig was American co-chair of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission established by the countries in 1942. Parts II and III of the report were declassified in 1995, when the writer of this paper worked in the US Federal Archives in College Park, Maryland. The, Part I, numbered 844.00/3-945, remained "secret" then.

[3] Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York, President's Secretary File (PSF), Box 35, for Charles W. Taussig, Lt. Col. A.F. Kibler and Lt. Comm. W.S. Campbell, "Report of the United States Commission to study social and economic conditions in the British West Indies, appointed by the President of the United States on November 13, 1940" (commonly called the Taussig Report). The extract comes from chapter VII, p. 61 of the report. See, too, a heavily sanitized document from J. Edgar Hoover, Director, of the FBI to Tom C. Clark, Assistant Attorney General, entitled, "West Indies National Council, Subversive Activities in the West Indies", May 23, 1944: covering report by Special Agents dated September 12, 1941; November 14, 1941; April 11, 1942; and November 10, 1942: FBI Library, Washington, D.C. The FBI Library released a heavily sanitized version of this document to the writer in 1994.

[4] op cit. Record Group (RG) 59 (US State Department): Box 6022, Folder 5: 844.00/8-2045: "Social and Political Forces in Dependent Areas of the Caribbean: Part III: population and Migration in the Caribbean Area", December 1944, p. 518.

[5] Fitzroy Baptiste, War, Cooperation and Conflict: The European Possessions in the Caribbean, 1939-1945, New York, Westport, Connecticut & London, Greenwood Press, 1988, chapter 12 "The Battle of the Caribbean: February 1942 to August 1943", pp. 141-169; and Fitzroy Baptiste, "Colonial Government, Americans and Employment Generation in Trinidad, 1939-1944", unpublished paper, History Department, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad, December 6, 1985).

[6] RG 83 (Records of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Department of Agriculture, 1923-1946), Folder Farm Labor (1941-1946), Box 239: Entry 19, "Reports on Farm Labor Shortages and the Works Projects Administration", prepared by the War Production Agency for the House Committee investigating National defense Migration, July 3, 1941, pp. 10-11: for quote attributed to the Assistant secretary of Labor in 1918.

[7] RG 83: Entry 19, Box 239: Folder Defense Program - Farm Labor, 1939-1942, for document entitled "National Situation" that was presented, along with the one cited in # 6 and another in # 8 following, by the Administrator, Farm Security Administration, in hearings before the House Committee investigating National Defense Migration in July 1941. The statistics and the comment come from page 1 of the "National Situation" document.

[8] The data come from the document "Analysis and Digest of Farm Labor Shortages Reports", presented in the House Committee hearings of July 19, 1941, 9 pp. It is in the same batch as the documents cited in # 6 and # 7 above.

[9] The quote is contained in the document cited in RG 83 (Records of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Department of Agriculture, 1923-1946), Folder Farm Labor (1941-1946), Box 239: Entry 19, "Reports on Farm Labor Shortages and the Works Projects Administration", prepared by the War Production Agency for the House Committee investigating National defense Migration, July 3, 1941, p. 2.

It actually represented the view of a 1941 "Report of the Tolan Committee on the Interstate Migration of Destitute Citizens", p. 403.

[10] Ibid. p. 4.

[11] RG 83: Entry 19, Box 239, Folder Defense Program-Farm (1939-1942. 8pp, especially pp. 2-5. See also RG 59: 811.504/2039, Box 3879, folder # 2, for a copy of the Executive Agreement Series 278, "Temporary Migration of Mexican Agricultural Workers: Agreement between the United States of America and Mexico", effected by Exchange of Notes signed on August 14, 1942, 13pp. Other papers are 811.504/801 (draft agreement); and 811.504/806 (final agreement). And 811.504/897 memorandum dated March 26, 1943 by "WFB", Division of American Republics to other State Department officials.

[12] Just after the appearance of the US Labor Secretary before the House Committee, one Imre Ferenzi had put the case for the United States to import labor from Caribbean and Latin America. By stating that labor importation from Latin America might be inhibited by "traditional prejudice against Yankee imperialism", Ferenzi implied a preference for the Caribbean as the source: RG 83, Entry 19, Box 366 Defense Program- Labor (1939-1942): for Ferenzi's "Memorandum on Importation into the United States of Temporary Work Labor" dated October 21, 1942 to the Bureau of Agricultural Economic, Department of Agriculture.

[13] RG 33 (Records of the Extension Service) (1943-1948), Entry 46, Box 1: Meredith C. Wilson, Deputy Director of Extension, i/c of the Foreign Labor Program, to F.A. Anderson, Director of Extension Service, Colorado State College and others, August 4, 1944: listing and enclosing nine documents relating to the Farm Labor Support Acts of 1943 and 1944 and pertinent administrative actions, 20pp.

[14] RG 59: 811.504/2046, Box 3879, folder # 2, US Consul, Nassau, Bahamas, tel. #46, March 17, 1943 to the State Department; and C.O. 318/448/10 [71193/3] 1943, (British Colonial Office Records of Labour for the United States), document dated 20/3/43.

[15] RG 59: 811. 504BWI/3A, Box 3881, folder # 5, State Department to US



Consul, Nassau, August 2, 1943, copied to the Colonial Secretary of the Government of the Bahamas.

[16] RG 59: 811.504/2094B, Box 3879, folder # 2, State Department tel. #50, April 13, 1943 to the US Consul, Kingston, Jamaica. Also C.O. 318/448/10 [71193/3] 1943, document dated 2/4/43.

[17] RG 59: 811.504BWI/10-244, Box 3882, folder # 3, US Consul, Barbados tel. #388, October 2, 1944 to the State Department; and RG: 811.504BWI/69-78: same box, folder # 1, for papers concerning the negotiations back to May-June 1944. The British reference is C.O. 318/460/1 [71193/3] 1944, document dated 24/5/44.

[18] RG 59: 811.504BWI/10-944, Box 3882, folder # 3, Administrator, War Manpower Commission to State Department, October 9, 1944; and C.O. 318/460/1 [7193/3], 1944, document dated 4/3/44.

[19] RG 59: 811.504BWI/10-1144, Box 3882, folder # 3, Acting Colonial Secretary of the Government of Barbados to the US Consul, Bridgetown, Barbados, October 11, 1944.

[20] RG 59:811.2222 [1940]/11-1444, War Manpower Commission to the State Department, November 14, 1944; and C.O. 318/460/1 [71193/3] 1944, documents dated 14/4/44; 10/7/44 and September 1944.

[21] RG 59:811.504BWI/37, Box 3881, folder # 5, War Manpower Commission to the State Department, 1944 and 811.504.504BWI/71, Box 3882, folder # 1, Division of Labor Relations, State Department to War Manpower Commission, May 27, 1944; and C.O. 318/448/10 [71193/3] 1943.

[22] C.O.318/448/10 [71193/3] 1943, document 20/3/43.

[23] Rasmussen, Wayne History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program, 1943-1947, Agricultural Monograph No. 13, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington, D.C., September 1951.

[24] Rasmussen, op cit., pp. 275-276.

[25] Ibid. p. 277).

[26] Unless otherwise stated, this discussion combines data in Wayne Rasmussen, pp. 233-237 and RG 59:811.504BWI/2046 (re. Bahamas); and Wayne Rasmussen, pp. 249-251 and RG 59:811.504BWI/2094A (re. Jamaica).

[27] C.O.318/448/10 [71193/3] 1943, document 2/4/43. It was also stated the contract period was 6 months; and one-third of the daily minimum wage of \$3.00 was to be deducted and sent to Jamaica either to support dependents or as savings. Such specifics, however, are absent in the US document.

[28] C.O.318/460/1 [71193/3] 1944, document 4/3/44 concerning the War Manpower Commission's agreement with Barbados.

[29] C.O.318/460/1 [71193/3] 1944, document 14/4/44, for official concern that Wynter Crawford, the Barbadian labor leader in the Assembly, might stir up unrest among workers, if the scheme with the War Manpower Commission did not go through. For opposition to or lukewarm support for the scheme by the local planter-merchant class in Barbados, see same series, "secret" document 12/6/44. The emigration scheme to the United States and Panama for Barbadian workers then is the subject of a recent (2000-1) Ph.D. Dissertation at by David Valentine Carlston Brown. titled " Facades of a Rebellion Aborted': The Struggle for Black Empowerment in Barbados, 1937-1950", The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados.

[30] C.O.318/460/1 [71193/3] 1944, Report of the BWI Central Labour Organization, December 1944.

[31] Rasmussen, op cit., pp. 258-260.

[32] RG 33, Entry 46, Box 2, folder with maps of the camps across the United States, where the British West Indian migrants were housed. I made copies of the maps for California, Connecticut, Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Wisconsin. See too the next two endnotes.

[33] RG 33, Entry 46, Box 11 (Publicity by States concerning the Farm Program

(1943-1948), T.L Wheeler, Agricultural Extension Service, Ohio State University: "Ohio's Farm Labor Program in 1944", p. 11. The boxes on this item run from # 9 to # 11.

[34] Same series, same box, "The Wisconsin Farm Labor Program, 1943-1947", compiled by various writers, Agricultural Extension Service, University of Wisconsin, Madison, January 1948, p. 3

[35] RG 59: 811.504/2258-1/2 for unsigned letter dated May 12, 1943 to Rev. Ethelred Brown, 2286 Seventh Avenue, New York City, Secretary of the Jamaica Progressive League. In turn, the JPL Secretary wrote Cordell Hull, US Secretary of State on May 17, 1943, enclosing the unsigned letter and asking that the matter be investigated on account of "the seriousness of the charges made therein". The ship's name is given in the British records: C.O.318/448/10 [71193/3] 1943, document dated 19/5/43 and F.O.371/34157, A6157 and 6376/131/45, 19/5/43.

[36] Indeed, the writer of the unsigned letter in the State Department records described the packing of the 4,000 Jamaicans on board in excess of the 1,900 carrying capacity of the ship as "worse than the old slave ships of years ago".

[37] C.O.318/448/10 [71193/3] 1943, document dated 19/5/43.

[38] RG 39, Entry 46, Boxes 9-11. Reports consulted for California, Michigan, Wisconsin, Maryland, North Carolina and Florida show the use of German and/or Japanese POWs alongside American domestic migrants (white and African American), volunteers (New York and New Jersey high school and college youths), miscellaneous (Women's Land Army, penal inmates and conscientious objectors), British West Indians, Mexicans and, by 1948, Puerto Ricans.

[39] C.O.318/448/10 [71193/3] 1943, document 21/5/43.

[40] C.O 318/448/10 [71193/3] documents 26 & 29/6/43 and 7/7/43; and F.O.371/34157, A6157 & 6376/131/45, 19/5/43.

[41] RG 59: 811.504BWI/20, US Consulate, Nassau to State Department, tel. #43, December 15, 1943 for comments by negro' Assemblymen, Bert Cambridge and Milo Butler, and by Harold G. Christie, white' member of the Executive

Committee, carried in the local press); 811.504BWI/26, tel. # 165, January 4, 1944, press statement by J.A. Hughes, Labour Officer in the Bahamas Government about a pre-retirement visit he had made in December 1943 to migrant camps in Florida and Georgia; and 811.504BWI/36, tel. #186, March 2, 1944, with article in the February 24th issue of the Nassau Tribune in reaction to the report of the team of "outstanding Americans" about the Florida camps.

[42] RG 59: 811.504BWI/7-2545, US Consulate, Kingston, to State Department, tel. # 1197, July 25, 1945, with press coverage in the Daily Gleaner of July 24th on the debate on the resolution in the Jamaica House of Representatives that same day; 811.504BWI/7-3045, tel. # 1206, July 30, 1945, report on the riots carried in the Daily Gleaner of July 28 and 29, 1945, with an official denial in the same paper on July 29, 1945.

[43] RG: 811.504BWI/8-445, tel. #1213, August 4, 1945, text of the House resolution passed ordering two electives to probe the plight of the workers in the United States, carried in the Jamaica Times of August 4, 1945; and 811.504BWI/8-945, tel. #1222, August 9, 1945, Jamaica Daily Express (August 7th issue): interviews with returning photographed Jamaicans.

[44] RG: 811.504BWI/9-645, conclusion reached by the Jamaican electives, as reported in letter dated September 18, 1945 by Chief, Division of International Labor, Social and Health Affairs, State Department to the President, Local 248, United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, Milwaukee, Wisconsin in reply to a telegram of September 6th asking for an investigation into conditions at Camp Murphy.

[45] See n. # 11 above.

[46] RG 59: 811.504BWI/61: J. Edgar Hoover to Adolf Berle Jr., Assistant Secretary of State, State Department. April 17, 1944 (Personal and Confidential memorandum). The Jag-Smith Party' was the Jamaica Democratic Party led by J.A.G. Smith, a veteran politician.

[47] RG 59: 811.504BWI/63, dispatch # 602, April 27, 1944 from the US Consulate, Kingston to State Department.

[48] RG 59: 811.504BWI/63, clippings of the Daily Gleaner of Jamaica dated April 25 entitled "No Jamaica Women Domestic for States": attached as enclosure No. 2 to dispatch # 602 of the same date from the US Consul to the State Department.

[49] RG 59:811.504BWI/63, dispatch # 602, April 27, 1944 from the US Consul, Kingston to the State Department.

[50] Hoover's memorandum to the State Department cited in n. 41. The FBI Director was wrong in referring to Amy Ashwood Garvey as Marcus Garvey's widow. That status belonged to his second wife, Amy Jacques Garvey, though Amy Ashwood contested it then and for a long while after. Amy Jacques Garvey is the subject of a newly published book by Ula Yvette Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey: The Life & Times of Amy Jacques Garvey*, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, The University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

[51] Hoover's memorandum.

[52] The writer of the article was one George F. McCray (for the Associated Negro Press). McCray made reference to the upheaval at Camp Murphy in Jamaica, discussed earlier.

[53] Philip Kasinitz, *Caribbean New York*, pp. 26-27.

[54] See pp.9 -12 and p. 32 of the Ohio and Wisconsin Farm Reports, op cit.

[55] Dwaine Plaza, "Migration and Adjustment to Canada: Pursuing the Mobility Dream 1900-1998", *The Society for Caribbean Studies Annual Conference Papers* edited by Sandra Courtman, vol. 3 2002:  
<http://www.sconline.freemove.co.uk/olvol3.html>, pp. 4-6.

[56] For the term, see essay by that title by Joy Mutanu Zarembka at pp.95-99 in Phillippa Strum and Danielle Tarantolo (eds.), *Women Immigrants in the United States*, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Division of United States Studies, Proceedings of a conference sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and the Migration Policy Institute, with the help of the Ford Foundation, Washington, D.C., September 9, 2002:

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[57] [http://www.fpif.org/progresp/volume3/v3n26\\_body.html](http://www.fpif.org/progresp/volume3/v3n26_body.html) - The Progressive Response, a publication of Foreign Policy in Focus (FPIF), a joint project of the Interhemispheric Resource Center (IRC) and the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), volume 3 # 3, July 26, 1999 edited by Tom Barry of the IRC. The data and the quotes come from article by Stephen Fried of the IPS entitled "Empowering the Powerless: The Campaign for Migrant Domestic Rights", pp. 7-8 of the issue of The Progressive Response.

[58] Zarembka, op cit. pp. 97-98

[59] Fried, op cit; For actual cases of abuse, see article by Joy Mutanu Zarembka, op cit. pp.95-96.

[60] Migration Information Source, a publication of the Migration Policy Institute, Washington, D.C., 2002,  
<http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?ID=19>, 3pp., pp. 1-2.

[61] Sarah Grammage's essay, "Women Immigrants in the U.S. Labor Market: Second-Rate Jobs in the First World", pp. 75-93 (quote at p. 78) in Phillippa Strum and Danielle Tarantolo (eds.), Women Immigrants in the United States, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Division of United States Studies, Proceedings of a conference sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and the Migration Policy Institute, with the help of the Ford Foundation, Washington, D.C., September 9, 2002:  
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Fitzroy Andre Baptiste is a Professor of History at The University of the West Indies,

St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago.