

as entrenched patterns of corruption, weak party systems, and cycles of neopopulism—the book would have benefited from further comparative analysis. There are brief mentions of Chávez and other “neopopulist” leaders, but a deeper analysis of the similarities and differences between the Peruvian case and other cases of neopopulism and electoral authoritarianism would not only have placed the Fujimori regime in a broader context, but even further enhanced the book’s contribution to our general understanding of authoritarianism and democratic erosion.

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HOWARD NEPTUNE: *Caliban and the Yankees: Trinidad and the United States Occupation*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

On September 2, 1940, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt authorized the transfer of 50 World War I-era U.S. destroyers to Britain, in exchange for 99-year, rent-free leases of several British bases in the Western Hemisphere. In a message to Congress, the President hyperbolically described the agreement as an “epochal and far-reaching act of preparation for continental defense in the face of grave danger . . . the most important action in the reinforcement of our national defense that has been taken since the Louisiana Purchase.”

The “destroyers-for-bases” deal is usually remembered as an example of Roosevelt doing everything he could, short of intervention, to aid the British before Pearl Harbor. Yet Harvey Neptune’s *Caliban and the Yankees* persuasively argues that the agreement also dramatically transformed social and cultural mores in Trinidad, home to the largest of the leased bases. (The United States sent around 25,000 troops to an island whose prewar population totaled 15,000.) Neptune contends that both nationalist leaders and lower-class Trinidadians used the American occupation for their own purposes. The result was less a clear-cut moral battle matching imperialists against “recalcitrant natives” than a story that “offers further evidence for the necessity of histories that attend to contingency, ambiguity, and especially the penetrating debates about political and cultural imaginations that occurred as the age of empire entered its twilight.” (p. 14)

The book opens with an exceptional chapter describing Trinidad in the 1930s. Neptune argues that nationalist sentiment was intensifying before the first U.S. soldier set foot on Trinidadian soil, and he faults nationalist historians for overlooking this period to focus more on the immediate pre-independence years. The decade began with a fierce debate over liberalizing the island’s divorce law—with workers’ representatives active on both sides of the contest. In *How*

Far the Promised Land: World Affairs and the American Civil Rights Movement from the First World War to Vietnam, Jonathan Rosenberg demonstrated how the Ethiopian war energized U.S. blacks; Neptune shows that the conflict attracted keen interest from Trinidadians as well. As a local journal noted in 1935, “The progress of the Italo-Ethiopian war is the all-absorbing topic of the hour.” (p. 38) The conflict, Neptune contends, further discredited the British Empire, as Trinidadian activists strongly opposed London’s undermining League of Nations sanctions against Italy.

While the United States and Trinidad had scant diplomatic contact before World War II, American culture spread southward: as occurred in Europe, U.S. movies subtly undermined imperial thought. Neptune adds that the American image helped shape Trinidadian nationalism in other ways. A handful of intellectuals, such as Louis Meikle, were bitterly anti-American, but most in Trinidad saw the United States as a path to achieve the social progress blocked by British rule.

Once the destroyers-for-bases deal was implemented, the arrival of U.S. rule undermined the status quo in unexpected ways. For instance, the wages paid by the U.S. military to local workers were 50 percent higher than wages paid by local, white plantation owners. Plantation owners resisted, urging increased immigration from other Caribbean islands and eventually a labor draft. None of these alternatives, however, could prevent more than 15,000 people from finding work with the Americans, while military officials, worried more about short-term security than the planters’ long-term financial well-being, went along with wage hikes.

U.S. soldiers also affected the island’s social mores. The Trinidadian white elite—fearful of race-mixing—hoped to minimize contact between white soldiers and black natives by encouraging social interactions between their daughters and the troops. When persuasion failed, they urged, to little effect, imposition of a kind of Jim Crow system for the island. In a fascinating section, Neptune analyzes how black U.S. soldiers affected gender relations among native Trinidadians. Local women sought relationships with black soldiers, and sometimes used them to exact vengeance against abusive local boyfriends. Such behavior, Neptune notes, was “hardly the act of feminist revolutionaries,” but it nonetheless provided the women with agency they lacked before the Americans arrived. (p. 179)

Caliban and the Yankees has two noticeable weaknesses. First, while Neptune recounts how the local political and social elite responded to the cultural changes of the 1930s and 1940s, he gives far less attention to the ideas and actions of U.S. government officials. Obviously, policy toward Trinidad was rarely (if ever) considered in detail by figures such as Franklin Roosevelt or George Marshall. Yet Neptune spends little time probing the policy proposals of lower-level officials

in the War Department, State Department, or Interior Department. Indeed, his bibliography contains no mention of either Interior Department archives or any collections held at the Franklin Roosevelt Presidential Library.

Second, jargon or off-point analysis sometimes interrupts the book's flow. For instance, Neptune occasionally refers to "subalterns," which he describes as "the poor, women, and youth." (p. 10) Yet while an emphasis on subalterns is customary in contemporary cultural studies, its use in this book contradicts the nuanced portrayal of Trinidadian society that Neptune offers throughout the text. Elsewhere, citing "the calamities in Iraq and Afghanistan and the shenanigans in nearby Venezuela," Neptune ends the book with the jarring assertion that West Indian immigrants in the United States need to work for "genuine democracy." (p. 198) Not only did he fail to define this term at any point in the book, but also Neptune never even hinted at a relationship between the themes and events of the book and the U.S. campaign against the Taliban or the testy relationship between the United States and Hugo Chávez's Venezuelan government.

Despite these problems, *Caliban and the Yankees* is an important book in the international history of the Caribbean. It brings attention to significant cultural, racial, and economic developments in an occupation that most people—even in the field of inter-American relations—have overlooked.

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DAVID GRIFFITH: *American Guestworkers: Jamaicans and Mexicans in the U.S. Labor Market*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006.

Building on insights and data from his diverse research projects conducted during more than a quarter-century, David Griffith presents an excellent exposé of the working conditions of Jamaican and Mexican migrant workers on an H-2 visa in the United States.

This book is timely. The current trend in immigration policies of most major countries that receive migrant workers is to reduce permanent settlement of newcomers in favor of temporary migration. For policymakers, temporary migration is more attractive than long-term settlement. The main reason is that temporary migration visas, authorized for particular types of jobs or even particular employers (as is the case of H-2 visas), are viewed as the best way to address shortages of labor in specific economic sectors for which no domestic labor is available. But this is the official story. In reality, as Griffith convincingly argues, imported workers often displace domestic workers who are no longer considered suitable