

# Race, Labor, and Empire in the Twentieth Century Caribbean: 1898-1948

The Caribbean region has a long and complex history of colonialism, imperialism, and racial oppression. The arrival of European colonizers in the 15th century led to the establishment of a plantation economy based on the forced labor of African slaves. This system of racial exploitation persisted for centuries, and it had a profound impact on the development of Caribbean societies.



## Black British Migrants in Cuba: Race, Labor, and Empire in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean, 1898–1948 (Cambridge Studies on the African Diaspora)

by Charlene McIver

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Caribbean region underwent a period of significant economic and social change. The rise of the sugar, banana, and oil industries led to an influx of foreign capital and labor. This period also saw the emergence of new racial ideologies, which justified the continued exploitation of Caribbean people.

The United States' occupation of Puerto Rico in 1898 and the British colonization of the Lesser Antilles had a profound impact on the region. The US imposed a system of racial segregation in Puerto Rico, and it used the island as a base for its military and economic expansion in the Caribbean. The British, meanwhile, continued to exploit the labor of Caribbean people on their plantations and mines.

The experiences of Caribbean people during this period were shaped by the complex interplay of race, labor, and empire. Racial ideologies were used to justify the continued exploitation of Caribbean people, and labor practices were designed to maintain a cheap and docile workforce. The imperial powers, meanwhile, used their control over the region to extract resources and profits.

The Caribbean region was a site of intense racial conflict during the early 20th century. Race riots broke out in several islands, and the Garvey movement, which advocated for the self-determination of African people, gained widespread support. These events reflected the growing frustration and anger of Caribbean people over their continued exploitation.

The period from 1898 to 1948 was a watershed moment in the history of the Caribbean region. The experiences of Caribbean people during this period helped to shape the development of the modern world. The legacy of race, labor, and empire continues to shape Caribbean societies today.

## **Race and Labor in the Caribbean**

Race has been a central factor in the history of the Caribbean region. The arrival of European colonizers in the 15th century led to the establishment of a plantation economy based on the forced labor of African slaves. This

system of racial exploitation persisted for centuries, and it had a profound impact on the development of Caribbean societies.

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### **The Rise of the Labor Movement in the Caribbean**

The early 20th century saw the rise of the labor movement in the Caribbean. Workers in the sugar, banana, and oil industries began to organize themselves to demand better wages and working conditions. This movement was led by a new generation of Caribbean leaders, who were inspired by the ideas of socialism and nationalism.

The labor movement in the Caribbean faced significant challenges. The imperial powers were often hostile to organized labor, and they used their control over the region to suppress strikes and other forms of protest. However, the labor movement continued to grow, and it played a key role in the struggle for independence in the Caribbean.

## The Legacy of Race, Labor, and Empire in the Caribbean

The period from 1898 to 1948 was a watershed moment in the history of the Caribbean region. The experiences of Caribbean people during this period helped to shape the development of the modern world. The legacy of race, labor, and empire continues to shape Caribbean societies today.

The Caribbean region is a diverse and vibrant region with a rich history and culture. However, the legacy of race, labor, and empire continues to cast a long shadow over the region. The experiences of Caribbean people during the early 20th century are a reminder of the importance of fighting against racial oppression and exploitation.



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