
Introduction

THE AMERICANS WERE COMING. In the spring of 1943, Jamaican radio stations buzzed with the news. American officials were coming to recruit Jamaican men for war work in the United States. When word reached the tiny mountain hamlet of Mulgrave—3,000 feet above sea level and twenty-five miles inland from Montego Bay—eighteen-year-old Leaford Williams and his family were thrilled and nervous. “Everywhere we went during the days and weeks that followed,” Leaford recalled, “small groups gathered under the eaves of someone’s house or on the front porch of the local shops sharing news about the recruiting program ‘for going to foreign.’” The prospect of work in the United States was big news in Mulgrave, which was so small that there was “no crime and no policeman.” So little happened in Mulgrave, in fact, that law enforcement consisted of a “Pan Head” who gave out tickets for cursing. There was no crime, but also few prospects for advancement. Boys grew up to be “rum drinkers and farm hands,” Leaford recalled. Hoping to be neither, he and his older brother Enoch walked twenty-fives miles to be first in line at the recruitment station at Balaclava.¹

Leaford didn’t want to end up a farmhand in Jamaica, but he would happily do farmwork in the United States if that’s what it would take to get ahead. Securing tickets from their local member of Parliament, the brothers made their way back to Mulgrave and from there another twenty-five miles north and downward to the coast, where a Montego Bay schoolhouse had been commandeered by the Jamaican government as a screening facility. The floor had been marked off into sections, and a doctor stood in each one. Along with thousands of others, Leaford and Enoch would have entered the room naked, and passed from station to station until they had completed all the tests.² Declared fit and eligible to work in the United States, the brothers returned home. “God be praised,” their “Dada” shouted when they walked back into Mulgrave, “God is in His Holy Temple.”

A few weeks later, they set off for the United States, carrying the cedar “grips” Enoch had made. Each contained an extra pair of pants, a shirt, and two sets of underwear sewn by their mother and sister. They walked five miles to Elderslie, where they boarded a truck sent to take them back to Montego Bay. Dozens of other young recruits traveled with them, singing and waving to people along the way. They bounced over potholes, rolled blindly around hairpin turns, and strayed perilously close to sheer drops as

they traveled down from Jamaica's Cockpit Country to the coast. By the time they arrived safely in Montego Bay's railway yard, Leaford felt like a war hero. Singing "We all are jolly good fellows," they boarded cow cars bound for Kingston's harbor.

When the doors of the cars opened in Jamaica's capitol the following morning, Leaford was struck by the sight of more "white people at one location" than he had ever seen before. The Americans rushed them up the gangplank of a waiting battleship, saying, "Hurry up, hurry up—come on, get your asses [up] here quickly." Once on board, most of the Jamaicans stood on deck, watching the Blue Mountains recede into shadow. Leaford lay on his bunk, reflecting on the slaves who had made the same journey before him and "[o]ur good fortune . . . that we were not bound in chains the way they were."

Leaford and Enoch Williams were not slaves. They had jumped at the chance to do fieldwork in the United States, walked many miles to secure recruitment tickets, waited in line for their physical examinations, and boarded a truck and train with great hopes and expectations. They had visas admitting them to the United States and work contracts that promised them conditions far superior to the treatment American farmworkers received. They were paid for their work, and they could quit and leave if they wanted to go home. But although they were not slaves, neither were they free. Leaford, his brother, and the millions of other Caribbean and Mexican men who followed them to the United States in the sixty-five years since World War II were recruited by the government to enter the country and work for American employers, but they were not free to settle down, look for better work, go west (or east!), or do any of the other things that immigrants have done (and still do) to make good in the United States. They came to the United States under contracts that promised them wages and benefits far beyond what domestic farmworkers received, but they could not invoke it without risk of deportation. If they broke their contract by trying to stay in the United States, their status changed automatically from "non-immigrant temporary worker" to "illegal alien." Leaford and Enoch were neither slaves nor free men; they were guestworkers, a quintessentially modern form of international migrant.

Guestworkers have been called different names in different parts of the world: H2 Workers and Braceros in the United States, European Voluntary Labourers in England, expatriate workers in the Persian Gulf, servants in Singapore, or simply "our Filipina" in Montreal.³ But the names all represent a relatively new form of labor migrant, one designed to balance employers' desire for contingent, less expensive, and presumably pliable foreign labor and native populations' antipathy toward those same workers.⁴ Unlike immigrants who stay, settle, and in some countries naturalize, vote, and qualify for social services, guestworkers exist in a no man's land between nations; they provide labor to their host societies but often fall outside the protections of those societies' labor laws. Ineligible for social benefits in their host country, they are

often poorly protected by their home governments, despite the value of the remittances they send home. Guestworkers exist somewhere on the spectrum between slavery and freedom. Just where is this book's central question.

The term "guestworker"—a translation of the German *gastarbeiter*—hadn't been coined when Leaford and his brother arrived in the United States in 1943. The word would be a product of the massive programs that would bring some 30 million contract workers to central Europe beginning a few years later.⁵ Nevertheless, state-sanctioned temporary worker programs, which came to be known as guestworker programs, had long been in existence. The first such programs were created in Prussia and South Africa in the 1880s. The next appeared in Australia at the turn of the century, and in the American Southwest and Europe during World War I. Like their later counterparts, these early programs all aimed to give employers access to foreign workers whom nativists sought to ban. With the exception of South Africa's long-running program, which supplied labor to gold and diamond mines, all of these programs ended during the Great Depression, a period in which foreign workers were more likely to be expelled than imported.

After a few years, war mobilization created new demand for temporary foreign workers in the United States, Germany, and Japan, setting off a second wave of state-mobilized migration. In this second phase in the history of guestworker programs far greater numbers of workers moved about. While 30 million guestworkers journeyed from Europe's periphery to its center in the decades after World War II, some five million Mexican and Caribbean guestworkers cycled in and out of the United States. The first wartime guestworkers in the United States were Mexican men, who came by train, and Bahamian men and women who flew in on planes starting in 1942. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) soon banned women from the program when a few Bahamians had abortions after being threatened with deportation for becoming pregnant. The ban would last for decades, forcing women to stay at home and male guestworkers to choose between living with their families and providing for them. In 1943, just a couple of months after the arrival of the first Bahamian recruits, the British Colonial Office agreed to let the United States recruit tens of thousands of Jamaican men as well. Jamaicans soon dwarfed the number of Bahamians on contract and would remain the vast majority of Caribbean guestworkers in the United States. A trickle of Barbadians joined in a year after the Jamaicans, followed by recruits from other British West Indian colonies. Together the separately negotiated Mexican, Bahamian, and British West Indian wartime programs were known as the Emergency Labor Importation Program. In the last year of the war, it brought 106,000 guestworkers to the United States. Canadians came too but no one bothered to count them; they were not bound by contracts; and officials didn't seem to worry about whether they left. In the imagination of U.S. officials, guestworkers were men of color whose movements had to be carefully monitored.

The war began the second phase in the history of guestworker programs but it didn't end it. After the war, new European guestworkers began rebuilding Europe's flattened cities and factories. The U.S. guestworker programs continued and grew, though U.S. officials reauthorized the importation of foreign labor for agriculture only. A small fraction of the nation's growers used hired labor—perhaps 2 percent—but that tiny minority of growers had employed guestworkers during the war and they wanted to keep doing so. Farm employers had also organized themselves into a powerful lobby. Its efforts kept U.S. guestworker programs alive despite ample evidence that, in the post-war period, the domestic supply of migrant farmworkers was growing, not shrinking. Although the U.S. guestworker programs lived on, the federal government largely withdrew from its wartime role as protector of guestworkers' wages and conditions.

Indeed, the role of the state is most remarkable in this second phase, and it is here that this book's comparative approach proves particularly useful. The U.S. government was intensely involved in the wartime guestworker programs. U.S. officials negotiated contracts; recruited, transported, housed, and fed the guestworkers; contracted them to employers; and dealt with their problems and complaints. Yet the U.S. government rapidly withdrew from its supervisory role after the war's end. Indeed, rather than protect workers or at least arbitrate grower-farmworker relations, U.S. officials increasingly served growers' interests. They authorized growers' requests for labor without question, detained workers who protested their treatment, pursued those who jumped their contracts, and suspended raids during harvests. In contrast, state actors in Europe became progressively more involved in protecting guestworkers from exploitation as time went on. As a result, guestworkers' experiences on either side of the Atlantic diverged dramatically. In Europe, temporary workers—who ended up being not so temporary—gradually gained many of the benefits and rights that unionized European workers enjoyed. Guestworkers in the United States rapidly joined the ranks of the nation's most impoverished and exploited workers. The key to that difference, I suggest, was that only European states had the power to deport workers who displeased European employers, and they used it judiciously. In the United States, employers quickly gained and still retain the power to deport the workers they imported.

Phase two in the history of guestworker programs shrieked to a halt in the 1960s and early 1970s as the European and U.S. economies sank into recession. The more European guestworkers won the right to settle and move around, the more antagonism they engendered. In the United States, an anti-guestworker campaign bubbled up from below as farmworkers in California organized a powerful and popular movement, which insisted that American farmworkers' rights depended on guestworkers' departure. This movement brought about the demise of the Mexican guestworker program—which was known as the Bracero Program for *brazo*, the Spanish word for arm. The last Braceros left

the United States in 1964. The oil shocks of the early 1970s brought an end to the European guestworker programs.

The economic slump may have spelled the end of most postwar guestworker programs in the United States and Europe, but it did not put a stop to temporary labor schemes in other parts of the world or in the United States. Indeed, the oil crisis of 1973 launched the third phase in the history of guestworker schemes: the movement of temporary labor migrants from oil-poor countries in Asia to the booming oil economies of the Middle East and Pacific Rim. This third phase in the history of guestworker programs resulted in majority foreign work forces in four Middle Eastern countries and the growing dependence of sending states on the remittances workers sent home.⁶ It also brought some innovations. Guestworker programs still supplied workers for dirty, dangerous, and difficult work, but they now also recruited highly skilled workers and professionals, such as engineers, nurses, and computer analysts. Migration programs also became increasingly feminized as “the Maid Trade” overtook the traditional trade in miners, agricultural laborers, and construction workers. With remittances in the billions, sending governments exhibited far greater enthusiasm for the idea of exporting their people as contract workers, and many actively marketed their citizens abroad.⁷ But the greater the role sending nations played in charting the paths labor migrants took, the less influence they exerted on the conditions under which their nationals lived and worked. Guestworkers, whose global numbers are now enormous, are more easily exploited than ever before.

The Mexican Bracero Program fits neatly into this three-phase rubric. It began in 1942 and continued until 1964, bringing half a million workers to the United States annually at its peak. However, the Caribbean program, which is the subject of this book, fits less neatly into this scheme. Always much smaller than its Mexican counterpart, the Caribbean Program (really *programs* initially) continued to operate long after the Bracero Program went down in a hail of controversy, although most Americans were oblivious to its existence. In 1952 Caribbean guestworkers were dubbed “H2 workers,” after the sub-section of the immigration law which reauthorized their presence, and in 1986 they were divided into H2-As (agricultural workers) and H2-Bs (non-agricultural workers). But, otherwise, this employer-dominated migration scheme continued with only minor changes. After 1986 it was feminized (by the inclusion of maids, waitresses, and other women workers) and gentrified (by the addition of high-tech and other highly educated people). It also got bigger—until the economic slump of recent years, the program was importing some 100,000 farmworkers a year and even more nonagricultural workers. And, after 1986, it became a mostly Mexican program, though Jamaicans continue to come to the United States as apple pickers, and H2 workers come from as far away as Thailand. Despite these modifications, the H2 Program has spanned the last two of these three phases, and it continues to this day,

making it the oldest guestworker program in U.S. history and the second oldest in world history, after South Africa's.

I began to consider the history of guestworkers in the United States in the 1990s, when working on my first book, *The Fruits of Their Labor: Atlantic Coast Farmworkers and the Making of Migrant Poverty, 1870–1945*.⁸ There I argued that farmworkers still suffer from low wages and even worse living conditions, not because farmworker poverty is inevitable but because the federal government intervened time and again on the growers' behalf, undermining farmworkers' bargaining power and relieving growers' need to recruit labor by improving wages and conditions. During World War I, for example, the federal government encouraged Work-or-Fight campaigns that threatened to imprison or deploy black men and women who abandoned farmwork for better-paying war jobs. During World War II, when African American, Mexican American, and Filipino American farmworkers took advantage of relative labor scarcity by organizing and striking to raise their wages, Congress passed a law that confined domestic farmworkers to their home counties even as it authorized the importation of tens of thousands of guestworkers from Mexico and the Caribbean on fixed, no-strike contracts that bound them to particular employers and forced them to cycle in and out of the country. One book led to the other, just as a labor system based on forced immobility (sharecropping, convict labor, the Work-or-Fight regime) rapidly gave way to a new one based on forced mobility.⁹

Although guestworkers came from all over the British West Indies and the Bahamas, this book focuses on Jamaicans because they made up the vast majority of *Caribbean* guestworkers in the United States and, for two decades after the demise of the Bracero Program, they represented the vast majority of all U.S.-bound guestworkers. Only since 1986 have Mexicans once again become the guestworkers of choice. For over forty years, the H2 Program was primarily a Jamaican program. The book devotes a great deal of ink to Florida's sugar industry because, from 1943 until the 1990s, it was the largest employer of H2 workers, with 5,000 to 20,000 guestworkers cutting sugar cane for five- to six-month seasons every year.

This book may seem like much ado about a small number of workers concentrated primarily in one industry, but the H2 Program's significance has long been completely disproportionate to its size. Besides being the longest running guestworker program in U.S. history, and the object of years of litigation and investigation, the H2 Program has been symbolically important as a legal alternative to unauthorized or "illegal" immigration. Since the Second World War, whenever concern about the number of "illegal aliens" in the United States reached a fever pitch, guestworkers gained legitimacy. In fact, within a few years of the war's end, the INS began dealing with the unauthorized Mexican immigrants it apprehended by transforming them into Braceros, a process that the agency unfortunately called "Drying Out the Wetbacks."¹⁰ Since the termination of the Bracero Program, whenever the U.S. public has

fixated on “illegal immigration,” the H2 Program has grown in importance as a purportedly managed alternative to a seemingly unmanageable issue. The same is true today. In recent debates about immigration reform, both parties have considered proposals that would legalize millions of unauthorized immigrants by transforming them into legal but temporary guestworkers. As we shall see, however, the story of Leaford Williams and the thousands of other H2 workers who exited boats and airplanes to work in American fields and orchards is not a story of carefully managed migration. The history of the H2 Program is a tale of exploitation, protest, litigation, and mass deportation.

The H2 Program is not just important to U.S. history. The program looms even larger in Jamaica, where veterans of the program are ubiquitous. On my first trip to the island, the taxi driver who drove me from the airport to my hotel was a former guestworker. The security guard at the pharmacy in the suburb of Port More where I stopped for supplies was still traveling to the United States every fall to pick apples. The Jamaican graduate student who became my research assistant—then one of just three Jamaicans at the College of William & Mary—turned out to be the son of an H2 worker. He led me to his tiny home village of Effort, where many of his relatives and neighbors were guestworkers. His brother had tried unsuccessfully to become one. On another occasion, when I stopped in the slightly larger town of Brandon Hill to ask directions during a torrential downpour, the man at the side of the road who got in the car to direct me was a former U.S. cane cutter. He pointed the way to a “Dead House,” where a body was laid up inside, and a small group of men, including two former guestworkers, were playing dominoes on the porch. Two more H2 workers—one still “traveling”—soon joined them. You can’t shake a palm frond in the Jamaican countryside without hitting a former guestworker or the family members his remittances helped support.

Asked about their experiences as farmworkers in the United States, almost all the Jamaican men I interviewed or spoke to informally responded with the same words: “it was rough.” The work—especially cane cutting in Florida—was physically punishing and dangerous. “It is rough work,” said Carlton Nelson, who worked in the United States off and on from 1963 to 1986, using the money to pay school fees for his children and nephew. “The food is rough. The work is rough. It is rough always.” The work was physically punishing, but it was also “rough” in the sense that it rarely produced the sort of wages the men expected. To make enough to come home with significant savings or goods, men had to work at a dangerously fast pace, a pace that increased dramatically as the sugar industry boomed in the 1960s. Veteran guestworkers insist that they were underpaid for the work they did and defrauded of wages they were promised. Yet for rural men who were desperately poor and who had little hope of changing that fact at home, the program seemed worth the risk, if not for themselves then for their children. Few would turn down an opportunity to “reach over” to the United States, if they could get one. “Some won’t cut because it is so rough,” said Nelson. “But I will. If you work,

you get money.”¹¹ Even men who were badly injured or who alleged wage fraud were often eager to try again. Wynston White complained bitterly about timecard fraud, but asked if he would go to Florida again, he answered, “I wouldn’t mind to leave right now.”¹²

Jamaican men came to the United States as guestworkers and ran to their cane rows in the morning because, to rural Jamaicans, the prospect of paid work was irresistible. In Jamaica in 1980, the average worker earned \$1,406 (US) a year; the average rural Jamaican far less. In contrast, during the five- to six-month period Jamaican H2 workers spent in the United States during the winter of 1980/81, the average worker grossed \$4,000. Even after deductions totaling \$2,327, men still earned nearly twice as much in a few months in the United States as they could have earned in a year in Jamaica.¹³ Few H2 workers made enough to buy land or build a house, even after years of five- to six-month journeys to the United States. But rural Jamaicans’ ability to pay for groceries, their utility bills, and, most importantly, their children’s school fees has long depended on temporary farmwork in the United States. The average H2 worker supported a family of six.¹⁴ The H2 Program allowed men to be providers, even as it separated them from their families. Highly skilled and educated Jamaicans often left the island for jobs as nurses, doctors, and teachers in the United States, Canada, and England. But for less educated rural people, the “farmworker programme,” as Jamaicans call it, has long been the best—and often the only—way to earn the cash that made the difference between a decent life and desperation.

Guestworkers’ desperation goes a long way toward explaining why employers fought long and hard to retain them. Time, space, and longing produced an unbeatable work ethic. But there was more to growers’ fondness for the H2 Program than that. There are two other explanations. The first is the kind of workers employers could get through the H2 Program. The Jamaican government has long defended the guestworker system as a foreign aid program that cost the United States nothing. But the H2 Program and its West Coast counterpart did more than send U.S. dollars to poorer countries. Perversely, sending countries sent foreign aid *to* the United States in the form of young men in their peak years of physical fitness. Traveling without their families, men could be housed and transported more efficiently than domestic workers who came with families in tow. Guestworkers didn’t demand space for people who didn’t work; they didn’t require schools or Head Start Programs; they didn’t attract as much attention from misty-eyed reformers; they didn’t get pregnant and give birth to citizen children. Their wives and girlfriends had their children back in Jamaica, Barbados, St. Kitts, and Mexico, and there they stayed. Local midwives or hospitals delivered them. Local schools taught them. When guestworkers’ children became young adults, they too might follow their fathers to Florida, New York, or Virginia, but until then, they remained offshore. And when guestworkers were too old to travel, they wouldn’t be called back. By hiring a young, male

labor force, agricultural employers banished the most persistent and media-worthy problems that had plagued the nation's fields since the late nineteenth century—child labor and illiteracy, abysmal maternal health care, and aged former farmworkers. They did so not by solving those problems but by outsourcing them to the United States' poorest neighbors. These neighbors gave the United States men in their prime, and took them back when they were old or sick. The United States took the fittest, letting other nations worry about their survival.

Second, guestworkers proved to be especially desirable sort of workers, not just because of their youth and work ethic, but because of their deportability. Much to growers' chagrin, guestworkers weren't always willing to put up with conditions that domestic workers would reject; they frequently resented the conditions they were offered. And, in fact, Jamaican and other Caribbean guestworkers were often far more militant in defense of their interests than their domestic counterparts, who were more likely to protest by quitting and quietly walking away. Guestworkers, who couldn't change employers without transforming themselves into illegal immigrants, were far more likely to strike. Their militancy was rendered impotent, however, by the fact that their American employers had the power to repatriate them. It wasn't complacency but deportability that made guestworkers particularly vulnerable to exploitation. This deportability also weakened domestic farmworkers, who were vulnerable to replacement by vulnerable guestworkers.

To study the H2 Program, I made four trips to Jamaica to search for records and to interview former guestworkers. I traveled into Jamaica's mountainous interior, where mudslides are common and potholes can swallow a compact car. Most of my interviews took place in two mountainous Clarendon Parish hamlets: Effort, which is so lush and tiny that none of the houses are visible from the road; and Brandon Hill, a slightly larger, one-store village on a mountaintop ridge. I chose the first because it was the home of my research assistant; I chose the second because Sheryl Reid, a fellow student of the "farmworker programme," had generously provided me with a list of former guestworkers who lived there. Both towns could stand in for the communities of rural smallholders that dot the Jamaican countryside, though only the second appeared on my road map. Even in Frankfield, the bustling market town about a half hour from Brandon Hill, two women standing in front of a corner shop could point out half a dozen former guestworkers among the men milling about. When it came to locating research subjects, my method was about as complicated as having people point.

Finding guestworkers to interview was easy. Finding government documents in Jamaica's National Archives was another story. The key Jamaican agency involved in "the U.S. Farmworker Programme" was the Jamaican Ministry of Labour, but its records were neither at the National Archives nor at the Ministry itself. According to the Ministry official I interviewed—whose name I will omit to protect his job—the Ministry periodically burned

its records instead of turning them over to the Archives. Given the fact that J.A.G. Smith, Jamaica's Minister of Labour in the 1980s, went to prison in 1990 for embezzling from the Canadian farmworker program, one can only presume that the Ministry's bonfires were meant to shield the workings of the agency from inquiring minds like mine. Fortunately, Florida's cane companies had copies of government records such as the minutes of the Regional Labour Board, the intra-Caribbean agency that annually negotiated guestworkers' contracts with employer representatives. Those copies were made available to guestworkers' attorneys as part of the discovery process in a long series of lawsuits, and those attorneys shared their records with me. It's sad to say that I now have more records of the Ministry of Labour in my attic than Jamaica has in its National Archives.

Besides the cache of records I have built up as a result of visits to attorneys' offices, I have cut a swath through governmental records in the U.S. National Archives, and the British Colonial Office papers in the Public Records Office in Kew Garden, England. Unfortunately, U.S. and British sources are only bountiful through the World War II era. At that time, the U.S. officials who ran the labor camps that housed guestworkers wrote weekly reports and the secretary of state for the Colonies investigated charges of abuse, fearing that mistreatment of black British subjects in the United States would tarnish the Allies' international reputation. As England began to disentangle itself from its colonies in the 1950s, and as the United States withdrew from daily supervision of the guestworker programs, government records began to peter out. Fortunately, one of the Jamaican liaison officers who accompanied guestworkers to the United States, a white Jamaican named Walter Comrie, kept copies in triplicate of every report he wrote and every bit of correspondence he sent in his twenty-plus years on the job in Florida. He gave one set of copies to me. He also kept a sort of diary and, after retiring, wrote an unpublished memoir of his experiences. The H2 Program has also been the subject of countless investigations by journalists and governmental bodies ranging from the Government Accountability Office to the House Subcommittee on Education and Labor. Together, they produced reams of reports, correspondence, and hearing minutes.

Finding former guestworkers in Jamaica and archival records in the United States and England was easy. Finding U.S. employers who would speak frankly with me was more difficult. For the H2 Program's first forty years, beginning in 1943, the vast majority of guestworkers labored in Florida's sugarcane industry, a business dominated by five large companies. U.S. Sugar—the oldest and the biggest of the five—responded to my inquiries by sending me a little white pamphlet with gold lettering on the cover that touted the miracle of sugar production in the Everglades. No answer to my request for an interview nor access to corporate records was forthcoming. George Wedgeworth, the CEO of the Sugarcane Growers Cooperative, did agree to meet me, but his at-

torney and public relations director remained in the room. It was not my most productive interview. Wedgeworth promised to send me a long list of names of Jamaicans who would sing the praises of the Co-op and the H2 Program in general, but the list never arrived.

Fortunately, growers' views are well represented in a wide array of sources from federal hearings to correspondence with government officials to letters to the editor and depositions. The small number of employers who used guestworkers formed a powerful lobby during World War II and succeeded in making their views well known. And because public interest lawyers who began suing the sugar companies on behalf of cane cutters in 1968 have shared reams of corporate records they secured through the discovery process, I was able to read some revealing internal company documents as well.

Not surprisingly, many of these sources privilege moments of conflict between guestworkers and their employers. Far more ink has been spilled over workers who struck or protested than over those who worked quietly and contentedly. Yet the records reveal that guestworkers who resented their treatment and guestworkers who desperately wanted to return to the United States were not separate people. Employers could deport hundreds of workers en masse for disrupting a harvest by striking and within a day have hundreds more workers waiting at the Kingston airport to replace them. Workers might be sent home, blacklisted for protesting their condition, and return under an assumed name as soon as they could arrange it. Guestworkers were neither slaves nor free; they were both. In the wide world of international migration, dissatisfaction and desire are two sides of the same coin.

For all the protests, investigations, and litigation that have surrounded the H2 Program over the past sixty years, its essential purposes and functions have remained the same. It has offered some of the nation's biggest commercial farmers an alternative to domestic workers who can organize for change without fear of deportation. It has offered the state a perceived alternative to undocumented immigrants whose presence has generated periodic panic. And, as in other parts of the world where guestworkers are in use, the H2 Program has arrested the development of wages and conditions for some of the nation's most neglected workers. To quote Jamaica's former prime minister, Michael Manley, "better must come."¹⁵