

Dreams of Re-Creation in Jamaica: The Holocaust, Internment, Jewish Refugees in Gibraltar Camp, Jamaican Jews and Sephardim

Diana Cooper-Clark

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Dreams of Re-Creation in Jamaica is valuable for bringing a little-known aspect of WWII to public awareness.

Even World War II buffs who think they've read it all will encounter fresh revelations in this tale of Jews who fled the Holocaust to find unlikely shelter in the New World in Diana Cooper-Clark's *Dreams of Re-Creation in Jamaica*.

In the early years of World War II, as conditions became more and more dire in Europe, hundreds of thousands of Jews sought asylum in countries throughout the free world. Many were turned away or found refuge in countries that were ultimately occupied by Nazi forces. *Dreams of Re-Creation in Jamaica* tells the story of one such group who found refuge in internment camps in one of the unlikeliest place of all—Jamaica.

The book is the result of deep and substantial research, drawn from postwar publications as well as articles, correspondence, and records created during the war. Most impressive are the number of personal interviews conducted with the refugees, many of whom lived to advanced age.

There are some stylistic problems that slow the book's pace considerably. Paragraphs tend to be overlong and disorganized, crammed with disparate facts and touching on multiple subjects that would have been better presented as single paragraphs. The writing style is awkward and sometimes unclear, and repeated use of two- or three-word quotes to express simple thoughts robs the book of its own voice. The text also uses an excessive amount of melodramatic verbiage—especially in describing Hitler, war conditions, and global anti-Semitism. Also distracting are repeated punctuation errors and the decision to attribute sources both within the text itself and in footnotes at the bottom of the page. The welter of parentheses and quotation marks in already-dense paragraphs makes for a halting read.

The book is at its strongest when the refugees' stories emerge without embellishment, trusting the audience to capture the impact of what's unsaid as well as what's said.

Supplemental materials included in the book attest to the massive amount of research undertaken. Color maps at the beginning lay out Jamaica, the location of the refugee camps, and the routes taken to Jamaica by Jews fleeing Hitler and, hundreds of years before them, the path of Sephardic Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition. A solid bibliography is included as an appendix. The book's most remarkable achievement is the wealth of pictures assembled and reprinted here, showing the Jamaican camps during their period of active use and many of the families who took shelter there.

Dreams of Re-Creation in Jamaica is valuable for bringing a little-known aspect of WWII to public awareness, for assembling a vital photo record, and for preserving a compendium of otherwise lost research to tell the story.

SUSAN WAGGONER (September 29, 2017)

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