Graham T. Nessler, *An Islandwide Struggle for Freedom: Revolution, Emancipation, and Reenslavement in Hispaniola, 1789–1809*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016. 294 pp. (Paper US\$ 29.95)

Islandwide Struggle for Freedom is part of an opening salvo of the very necessary revision and expansion of the historiography of the Haitian Revolution to include its critically involved island neighbor, Santo Domingo. Despite isolated classics like Emilio Cordero Michel's *La revolución haitiana y Santo Domingo* (1968), the topic of Dominican involvement in the Haitian Revolution, or even the indisputable mutual constitution of Saint-Domingue and Santo Domingo in the 1700s, remains woefully understudied. The reasons for this oversight are multiple: anti-Haitian biases in Dominican nationalist scholarship, an overlooking of largely incremental and subsistence-oriented histories of emancipation and statemaking in the east, and finally the narratives of Haitian exceptionalism and isolation long lamented by Michel-Rolph Trouillot and other scholars. Graham Nessler contributes centrally to a revision of the revolutionary processes, to the mutual constitution of the islands' colonial and national histories, and to recognition of the regional struggles for emancipation, as well as the Atlantic networks of repression that they engendered. In these contributions, it is an invaluable monograph that simultaneously raises questions for further research.

Islandwide Struggle makes a strong case for the importance of Santo Domingo not only as a staging ground of revolutionary struggle in the 1790s but also as a key site of French strategy and proslavery reaction following Toussaint Louverture's kidnapping in 1802, through the eventual expulsion of French authorities in early 1809. A prehistory of this revolutionary period, the deep commercial interrelation of the two colonies in the eighteenth century, is treated only very briefly (pp. 13–14). In the following chapters, Nessler capably describes the many reversals, heterogeneous aims, tremendous uncertainty, pragmatic, cynical, and idealistic motivations, and deep commitments of particular actors at various moments from the mid-1790s onward; his engagement with prior scholarship, growing ever richer, is as evident in the footnotes as in the text. Santo Domingo was clearly a critical theater of fighting; battles in the San Juan Valley, for example, preoccupy forces steadily from 1796–98, even before Louverture's decision to occupy the east. In his consideration of Louverture's aims in Santo Domingo after 1800, Nessler expands not only on the territory's strategic importance, but also on a familiar and necessary reminder of the limits of emancipatory visions: how, in elites' comprehension, abolition was never functionally separate from new schemes of labor control.

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As with many novel and generative texts, *Islandwide Struggle* raises new questions. The archival center of gravity lies in French archives in the latter chapters, as the narrative follows Saint-Dominguan émigrés eastward into Dominican territory, and so other elements of eastern context necessarily remain somewhat diffuse. Future texts might dawdle on the contours and contests of the central San Juan Valley, where British authorities at least claimed that there were “thousands” of people living in slavery. They might elaborate on the acute social conflicts of southern towns like Azua, the site of both pronounced kidnapping and slaving by some Dominicans and significant Haitian participation as military allies in the anti-French fighting of 1808. In general, the “emerging liberation discourses” growing from the antislavery struggles on the island—which drew residents of Boca Nigua and Maniel into direct fighting, and which must have transformed the political climate of a number of Dominican towns as nominal authority changed hands—demand more expansion and study. These discourses may well defy easy documentation without careful, localized research. The real and enduring popularity of these antislavery and anticolonial sentiments in Santo Domingo, however, has far greater explanatory promise for the history of the colony in the 1810s than do traditional narratives, which decry the fighting only as a moment of tumult. Nessler’s study participates in this dialogue, as he concludes the book by detailing the tenacious legal strategies employed by freed people ensnared in the new French regime in Santo Domingo to preserve their hard-won freedom.

Islandwide Struggle represents an important contribution to Dominican national history and Atlantic studies of emancipation simultaneously. First, it locates Santo Domingo within the regional plantation nexus from which it has often been artificially excluded. Throughout the text are references to proslavery sentiment in Dominican territory, whether in an apologia penned by an elite individual or in Dominican participation in proslavery regimes, both Spanish and French. These principles and practices, as much as the events of the fighting itself, challenge persistent vague and romanticized narratives of Santo Domingo as an egalitarian space, somehow removed from its surroundings. Nessler also argues cogently how re-enslavement during French rule in Santo Domingo crystalized as a whole set of racist laws, putatively regulating everything from mobility to inheritance. As he also establishes, the vitriolic reaction against black freedom also engendered kidnapping, piracy, and extralegal violence, of course, both in Santo Domingo and well beyond Dominican shores.

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