

Her depiction of the free trade-union movement as perennially “moderate” has more to do with her attempt at a nuanced appreciation of the ICFTU as a manifestation of Labour-Liberalism – hence the book’s title. Again, this seems to run the risk of judgement by labels, though, of course, some terms have to be employed if we are to offer any kind of explanation. Doubtless many in the ICFTU would not take exception to being deemed “liberal”, and it can be safely stated that the ICFTU regarded liberal democracy as an essential environment for free trade unionism to flourish. But free trade unions defined themselves very broadly and offered an umbrella beneath which people of many different persuasions could engage pragmatically. Did this necessarily demand moderation? I suspect not, although in the circumstances of Cold War competition there were certainly pressures in this direction. And what might constitute “moderation” was not necessarily the same in all situations – or to all those involved. One person’s “moderation” might well be another’s “radicalism”. As for whether the ICFTU’s members were better described as “liberal” than “free”: it is moot. But one can guarantee that the question is more likely to arouse passion in the groves of academe than in the ranks of the unions themselves. All in all, the book makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the ICFTU in the period, and particularly through its focus on regional bodies in Europe and Latin America.

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WHITE, ASHLI. *Encountering Revolution. Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic*. [Early America. History, Context, Culture.] Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 2010. ix, 267 pp. Ill. £28.50; doi:10.1017/S0020859012000053

The Haitian Revolution is surely among the most important events of the “Age of Revolutions”, which shook the Western world in the late eighteenth century. As important as the French or American revolutions, it would have been strange had it not had such a major impact on the slave societies around it.

For a long time, scholars including David Geggus, John Garrigus, Laurent Dubois, Malick Ghachem, and Carolyn Fick have emphasized the importance of studying more deeply not only the Haitian Revolution itself, but also its transnational history. This is what makes historians of slavery throughout the Atlantic world, such as Ada Ferrer, João José Reis, and Flávio Gomes, in publications such as *The World of the Haitian Revolution*,¹ come to emphasize the profound impact of the Haitian Revolution in neighbouring regions such as Cuba or in distant – but still highly interconnected – lands like Brazil.

Similarly, scholars such as Eric Foner and Ira Berlin have been advocating the need to examine the history of the United States from an international and transatlantic perspective, rejecting the narratives that, even to this day, emphasize American exceptionalism. For them, even the discussions about the concepts of nation and citizenship, crucial to understanding the first years of the early republic, must be understood not only in the context of the American Revolution, but also in that of the French and Haitian revolutions.

1. David Geggus and Norman Fiering (eds), *The World of the Haitian Revolution* (Bloomington, IN, 2008).

In her recent book, *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic*, Ashli White follows the same path. Absorbing both the contributions of the historiography of slavery in the French Caribbean and the United States and of the scholarship on the history of US policy, she aims to analyse how the Haitian Revolution shaped the early United States not only through the impact of ideas and news about the Haitian Revolution circulating in the Atlantic world, but, mostly, through the arrival in the United States of refugees from Saint-Domingue.

Between 1790 and 1809, the date of the last great immigration of refugees from Saint-Domingue, thousands of people, including white colonists, slaves, and free blacks, sought refuge in the port cities of the eastern United States, eventually comprising the largest group of immigrants from this period. In the second migratory wave alone, in the first decade of the nineteenth century, about 10,000 Saint-Domingans (approximately one-third white, one-third black slaves, and one-third free blacks) migrated to New Orleans, contributing significantly to the growth of that city's population.

Having formulated five questions, each developed in its own chapter, White tries to explain how the exiles forced Americans to confront the paradox of being a slaveholder republic.

In the first chapter, emphasizing the pre-existing links between the US and Saint-Domingue, she analyses the reactions of Americans and refugees to their social and cultural exchanges in North American cities. Although emphasizing the differences between American and refugee communities in these cities, the author highlights how the presence of free blacks and slaves was important in allowing points of convergence between white Americans and white refugees, just as they sought to distinguish between the black refugees and the free African Americans who also inhabited these cities.

The reactions of Americans (in this case, white Americans) to the presence of refugees from Saint-Domingue, both slave and free, provide the setting for the next two chapters, the most interesting in the book. In the second chapter, White examines how locals reacted to the pressures that the exiles placed on the republican ideal of asylum. In her third chapter, she focuses on refugee influence on the policy of the early republic. In both cases, her analysis is compelling enough to indicate that the maintenance of slavery in a republic was not only a theoretical but also a practical problem.

In addition to public debates being conducted about the character of North American slavery (often seen by contemporaries as a more benign form of slavery than its Caribbean counterpart), it was necessary to determine whether the refugees would be the objects of American philanthropy, and, if so, who, among whites and blacks, would be entitled to receive help. Likewise, the very idea of philanthropy, so dear to the ideals of American independence, began to be questioned by groups of white Americans, who saw in French philanthropy the origins of the Haitian Revolution, whose replica in the United States they sought to avoid. For this group, the arrival of enslaved people from Saint-Domingue in the United States also served to strengthen the arguments against the slave trade, seen by American abolitionists as an atrocity against the republican spirit and by others as an undesirable incentive for slave rebellions.

The fear of importing ideas and rebellious people from Saint-Domingue is the root of the fourth chapter in the book. Dedicated to understanding the question, "What did residents make of the possibility for the importation of slave rebellion from Saint-Domingue to the United States?", White draws conclusions very close to those of other scholars of slave rebellions, namely that the white property owners of every region tended to fear slaves from areas considered to be turbulent and prone to revolt. Saint-Domingue, of course, was the most turbulent of them all.

The fifth chapter jumps slightly ahead in time to consider the last wave of exiles, in 1809, and the way the refugees figured in the national debates over territorial expansion. Although the slave trade had been outlawed in 1808, White shows that the entry of such a significant number of prisoners challenged the limits of the law, since the need to create and populate Louisiana and to form political loyalties in the United States was stronger than the fear of slave rebellions. In the end, it seems clear that the commitment to slavery by the whites was stronger than their commitment to law or their fear of slave rebellions.

Perhaps because the book is based almost exclusively on newspapers, government papers, private letters, and, to a lesser extent, novels, we hear very little about the everyday life exchanges between Saint-Domingan refugees and Americans. Although the author is right to point out that the documents most commonly used in studies of social history, such as wills, inventories, and records of baptism (some of which she uses in the book), are not always easy to find, especially from the period of the first wave of immigrants from Saint-Domingue to the United States, one wonders why documents such as civil and criminal lawsuits are absent from the book.

The use of documents such as these, together with the voices of white Americans concerning the impact of the Haitian Revolution on their lives and on American politics, would allow us to better understand, though not always with the same detail, the voices and impressions of African Americans, both free and enslaved, concerning the refugees and the Haitian Revolution, as well as the ideas and perceptions of those from Saint-Domingue who, while enslaved, ended up living in the United States.

None of these issues detracts from the merits of Ashli White's book however: in combining methods of political and cultural history to examine the impact of the Haitian Revolution in the United States, it opens up possibilities for further studies on the role of this same event in the slave societies around the US. In addition, in dealing with a subject so difficult to circumscribe within national boundaries as that of modern slavery, the book is a fine example of how a broader approach allows for a less reductionist analysis than the reductionisms of uniquely national narratives.

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