

**Lennox Honychurch (2024). *Resistance, refuge, revival: The Indigenous Kalinagos of Dominica*. Papillote Press. 300pp, pbk, ISBN: 978-1-7391-3032-9. £15.99.**

Over the 200 pages of *Resistance, refuge, revival*, Lennox Honychurch details the ethnohistory of the Indigenous Kalinagos on the small island of Dominica/ Wai'tukubuli. Out of Dominica's current population of just over 65,000, 3,500 identify as Kalinago. Dominica may be small; yet, it has the largest number of people who speak the Kalinago/Carib language in everyday use (not merely for ceremonial purposes) in the Caribbean. The Dominican state has integrated Kalinago political representation into legislation through various changes to the Kalinago Chiefdom; and the Kalinago presence in contemporary Dominica is evident in culture, economy, and nation-building.

Writing against Kalinago/Carib exceptionalism, however, Honychurch meticulously details how the history of Kalinago integration and incorporation neither adheres to colonial European paternalistic ideals of an isolated Indigenous people nor of contemporary, postcolonial framings of Kalinagos as authentic symbols of an idyllic pre-European era. Instead, Honychurch draws on various sources to present a more nuanced picture of the Indigenous Kalinagos of Dominica. Divided into the sections of Resistance, Refuge, and Revival, this book draws on archaeological sources of material culture, archival documents, missionary and traveller accounts, as well as oral histories to provide a breadth of evidence for this discussion. Centring around the dialectics of change and continuity, resistance and revival, refuge and accommodation, Honychurch details the cultural, socio-historical, and political life of the Kalinago population in Dominica, especially since the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

In the Resistance section (Chapters 1-5), Honychurch starts with the typical trope of arrival: Coming to the Islands. But he discusses the socio-cultural interactions of populations in the Caribbean dating back to 5000BCE, implicitly underscoring that the history of the region did not begin with European settlement and colonisation. He details life on Wai'tukubuli, the Spanish arrival, expressions of Kalinago resistance to Spanish occupation, and, importantly, the development of parallel systems to counter Kalinago social-exclusion such as family or collectively-owned land, regardless of age, gender or legally recognised birth, in contrast to primogeniture-based laws of inheritance.

The Refuge section (Chapters 6-9) dwells on technology, trade, agriculture, and the material culture of canoes, baskets, and cassava. Here, Honychurch explains how Kalinagos were generally able to "retreat" to 100+ acres of land in Salybia, eastern Dominica. There, Kalinagos were able to be "largely self-sufficient" in the years when colonial governance changed from the French to British, formalised in the 1763 Treaty of Paris (p. 103). The canoe, in particular, provided a vehicle for interconnection through "trade, migration, and employment" across the Caribbean, and therefore "freedom" via the ocean and rivers (pp. 204-205). This point reminds us of the significance of waterways, in contrast to a terra-centric approach to the history and culture of (especially small) islands. While the author demonstrates the nuances of this refuge in Dominica, where Kalinagos lived "in the liberty of isolation" (p. 107), this place and time also signalled the colonial state's denial of "Kalinago rights to native lands"; at least until 1903 when the British declared the 'Carib Reserve.'

Chapter 9, In Splendid Isolation, rounds off this section of the book. This selective "European indifference" toward the Kalinago population, meant that Kalinagos had a degree of freedom to "exist on the periphery of colonial society" (p. 158). Kalinagos both mixed with the emancipated Black, African-descended population and also colluded with the British persecution of this group as trackers, for example. Notable evidence is that, under British colonial rule, "the Kalinagos were never mentioned on any lists of wanted rebels or as

accomplices of the enslaved Africans in acts of revolt” (p. 158). Detailed descriptions of these changing connections and conditions present a fuller understanding of 19<sup>th</sup> century Kalinago lives.

In the final section, *Revival* (Chapters 10-14), Honychurch reviews the politics and processes through which the ‘Carib Reserve’ were formalised by the British colonial government in 1903, as part of the state’s efforts to increase productivity in Dominica for the benefit of the Crown. As he notes, the dynamics of imperialism, racism, paternalism, and conflict played out in the creation of the ‘Reserve’; and the Kalinagos themselves “were hardly involved and about which they were little informed” (p. 174). As Honychurch argues, “This Kalinago Territory remains today the only piece of land ever left in trust by a European colonising power in the Caribbean for the descendants of the pre-Columbian occupiers” (p. 177).

This dedicated land for ‘Caribs’ also situated the Kalinago as the noble savage with a vested interest in reproducing racist ideas of maintaining Amerindian racial ‘purity.’ Such ideas were embedded in British social anthropology of this era, “in studying the disappearing ‘Other’ (p. 177). In Dominica, the British governor’s “practical bid for the ethnic survival of a subject people whose exploitation and decline had ironically been precipitated by the rise of that very empire” demonstrated these connections between imperialism and social science (p. 177).

Decades later, the 1978 Kalinago Territory Act was an important post-independence confirmation of Kalinago rights in multicultural Dominica. But, as Honychurch notes, “what is portrayed as a new beginning is in fact a reworking of the previous order” (p. 227). Little changed with the new legislation, although the twenty-first century brought the first woman Kalinago Chief. With worsening trade agreements for Dominican banana exports and run-on effects for the national economy in Dominica, the culture and heritage sectors, as well as tourism, become increasingly vital to economic and social development. Managing the climate emergency with an expanding tourism sector remains a particular concern for small island states and territories.

The culmination of decades of research inquiry, *Resistance, refuge, revival: The Indigenous Kalinagos of Dominica* is central reading for scholars and students in anthropology, cultural studies, development studies, history and politics, as well as for researchers working across disciplines on small states, in the Caribbean and beyond.

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