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Beyond colonialism: servants, wage earners and indentured migrants in rural France and on Reunion Island (c. 1750–1900)

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The way bonded labour was defined and practised in the colonies was not only linked to the definition and practise of wage labour in Europe but their development was interconnected. The *engagés* (equivalent to indentured servants) and bonded labourers in the French colonies would have been inconceivable without hiring for services and domestic service in France. This connection was possible because there were important differences in status between masters, landowners and employers on the one hand, and domestic servants, wage earners, bonded labourers and apprentices on the other.

Introduction

Ever since the eighteenth century, historians have been engaging in comparative analyses of "free" and "forced" labour as if the boundary between the two was ahistorical and universally defined. Free wage labour in the "West" was habitually contrasted with slavery and other forms of bondage in the colonies; however, during the past twenty years several scholars have begun to stress the divergent historical meanings and definitions of both "free" and "unfree" labour.[2] In fact, until at least the mid-nineteenth century, the notion of "free" labour was not one to which we are now accustomed;[3] it included indenture, debt bondage, and several other forms of unfree labour;[4] conversely, the official abolition of slavery saw not the disappearance of forced labour but rather the emergence of new forms.[5] In both cases, in legal terms, coerced labour was in fact "free labour".

In this increasingly complex picture, the historical transition from slavery to emancipation has also been reassessed. For example, in French as well as in British and Spanish colonies, personal emancipation often took a long time, with years sometimes elapsing between the deed signed by the owner and the tax paid by the quasi ex-slave. During those years the ex-slaves had an intermediate status between that of a slave and a freedman.[6]

A similar though less impressive shift has been taking place in the evolution of "free" labour in Europe. For *ancien régime* France, for example, it has been demonstrated that the division of society into old orders and corporative regulation had weakened greatly, and to some extent even disappeared, by the early eighteenth century;[7] on the other hand, important status markers persisted under the liberal regime, for example in relation to the legal status of married women, children, and merchants.[8] In short, the dividing line between "free" and "unfree" labor is under attack. The question is: how far can we push

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the attack? For example, does all this imply that abolitions (of domesticity, slavery, etc.) are legal artefacts with no real impact?

I argue that we need to escape both the easy oppositions of ideal types (the slave, the wage-earner) and extreme deconstructivist and relativist approaches. Both approaches lead to loose historical dynamics, the former because it relies upon general models, logical time and historical determinism and the latter because it has no truck with structural visions of static opposing systems (colonial world versus local traditions). Rather than supporting one or another of the general definitions of "free" or "forced" labour, this article aims to place the tension between the two in appropriate historical contexts. Hence, I will be studying the dividing line between "free" and "forced" labour in France and on Reunion Island. An important aspect of my analysis, generally ignored by historians, will be to bring out the connection not only between these forms of bondage and slavery but also their relationship to so-called "free" labour in Europe.

This paper argues that these phenomena were not opposed but in fact strongly interconnected – the way "forced" labour was defined and practised in the colonies was linked to the definition and practise of "free" labour in Europe. This does not imply, as subaltern studies argue, that colonial legal constructions were a tool for dominating "peripheries"; to the contrary, I argue that imperial tensions linked to the circulation of notions and practises of labour were complex and had uncertain consequences. Like Cooper, I assume that working people and "colonised" were not just passive actors;[9] but unlike Cooper, I say that the French did not export just the notion and practise of "wage earner" but a peculiar form of it, that is, indentured labour. This peculiar contract was derivative of two already existing contracts: that of the sailor and that of the agrarian labourer. This is important, for it was the conjoining of these notions and practises in the peculiar context of Reunion Island that created the issues we will be dealing with in this article. The *engagés* (equivalent to indentured servants) and bonded labourers in the French colonies would have been inconceivable without hiring for services and domestic service in France. In other words, there is a clear historical connection between these institutions and forms of labour. This connection was possible because in France and some of its colonies between the seventeenth and the nineteenth century there were important differences in status between masters, landowners and employers on the one hand, and domestic servants, wage earners, bonded labourers and apprentices on the other. This means I agree with those who argue that, despite the revolution, the legal status of labour in France was extremely unequal, in particular between certain urban-industrial protected areas and the countryside. But it would be misleading to conclude from this that "nothing had changed." Continuities and changes have to be empirically proved.

The same conclusion can be drawn from Reunion Island; much of current historiography considers the indentured labor there as a form of disguised slavery.[10] I contest this simplistic view and show the way immigrants were able to use or not use colonial rules. Yet this issue does not imply that they benefited from their masters' rights; between total lack of legal rights and formal equality, there was a whole spectrum of inequalities in terms of legal and social entitlements. This paper seeks to identify these gradations in France, in its different industries (rural, textile) and in colonies such as Reunion Island.

On the basis of these observations, I will call into question several oppositions that are commonplace among historians: the opposition between Western Europe and its colonies; between the old regime (assumed to grant priority to legal status) and the modern era (egalitarian and based on the contract); between pre-industrial regimes and industrial economies; and finally, between "free" and "forced" labour.[11]

The focus on Reunion Island requires some explanation. Indeed, for a very long time, the historiography of slavery and indentured labor in the Indian Ocean has been influenced by that which has treated transatlantic slavery. As I will explain later, there were major differences between these two in terms of their origins and the forms and evolution of forms of servitudes. In this context, Reunion and Mauritius Islands, along with certain parts of the Swahili Coast, constitute an exception in the Indian Ocean insofar as they were the only areas which were developing plantation economies. Yet the passage from slavery to indentured labour acquired certain peculiar features that distinguished it from the Antilles and West Indies. As such, I will use the extreme case of Reunion Island to raise doubts regarding the validity of the "colonial paradigm" in general and labor questions in particular.

I have relied especially on institutional sources and legal archives – this in keeping with research procedures developed by Cottereau and many other historians in France and even more so by British historiography with regard to "wage" labour and bonded labourers in the colonies. In addition to the archives of certain justices of the peace on agricultural labourers and numerous anthologies of local agricultural labour customs, I consulted the National Archives in Paris (Archives Nationales –henceforth: AN) and at the Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer (CAOM) as well as files housed at the Departmental Archives on Reunion (ADR).

Daily labourers, task workers, and domestic servants in France

From a historical perspective, the institutional status of labour in France can be divided into two main topics, both of which have generated debate over continuities and breaks with the past. On the one hand, there was the legacy of the guilds and how they were abolished, and on the other there was the long-term process of ending slavery in the colonies along with its legacy. In each case, the object of analysis has been unjustifiably restricted. Work outside of guilds and above all in agriculture has been neglected in the analysis of labour in France; in the colonies, slavery has received far more attention than other forms of bondage. Our aim is to readdress those issues surrounding the institutional status of labour and its practises as well as how they were passed on over time by focusing on agricultural labourers and *engagés* and ultimately on the historical relationship between these two groups.

In the past, historians have been fond of opposing the persistence of guilds and the corporatist spirit in French labour law to the free market of Anglo-Saxon labour.[12] This contrast is no longer relevant and the regulation of labour in France is no longer viewed in opposition to market growth.[13] From this standpoint, France would even appear to be the first country to have abolished life-long domestic service as well as criminal penalties in labour disputes.[14] This chronology requires further explanation. As late as the eighteenth century, France's leading legal experts considered labour to be a service provision.[15] Moreover, French case-law made no clear distinction between hiring a person for service and hiring a thing.[16] Similarly, apprenticeship contracts and domestic service contracts of longer than a year obliged individuals to place all of their time in the service of their employers,[17] which prompted the writers of the *l'Encyclopédie méthodique* to denounce such contracts as "slavery".[18]

Although the revolution eliminated lifelong domestic service, it retained both forms of contracts from earlier periods: hiring for labour (*louage d'ouvrage*) and hiring for services

(*louage de service*). While the former brought the status of the wage earner more in line with the independent artisan, the latter represented an important legacy from earlier forms of domestic service.[19] Cottereau has emphasised the importance of hiring for services in nineteenth-century France and its ability to protect wage earners.[20] This argument, while not false, is nevertheless tributary to the sources studied, i.e. the textile industry and certain urban milieus. But what about the other sectors, especially agriculture, and these sectors later on in the colonies?

Both before and after the revolution, working people in agriculture were either labourers or "task-workers" (*tâcherons*), while servants in husbandry were added to these two categories.[21] In the eighteenth century, servants in husbandry were by far the most numerous wage earners in French agriculture as well as in Great Britain.[22] In the nineteenth century, official statistics reported by Mayaud show that daily labourers were commonly found in the Mediterranean south, Alsace-Lorraine, the Ile-de-France and Picardie. It is estimated that in 1862 about half of the 4 million agricultural wage-earners were daily labourers; thirty years later, that figure had dropped to 1.2 million. This trend was linked in large part to a sudden reduction in the number of small landowners between 1862 and 1892; by contrast, servants in husbandry made up an increasingly high percentage of agricultural labourers.[23]

The problem is that these statistical classifications and categories fail to convey the fluidity of institutional definitions of agricultural (daily) "labourers" (*journaliers*) "pieceworkers" (*tâcherons*) and "domestics" (*domestiques*) or how these actors themselves used these definitions. Prior to the revolution, penalties were imposed on all labourers, pieceworkers or domestic servants who quit their jobs before the end of their contract or without the employer's authorisation. A variety of contractual arrangements to limit mobility existed at the time (bonuses for hardworking labourers, payment by task) along with more general provisions.[24] Thus, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, agricultural labourers and servants were free to move about and change employers only at certain times of year – that is, according to the critical periods in the agricultural calendar; in some regions, mobility was permitted around the feast of Saint Martin (11 November), i.e. between the end of the harvest and the beginning of winter; in others, it was around the feast of Saint Jean (summer solstice) or at Christmastime.[25] The seasonal nature of agricultural labour gave rise to a significant amount of regional mobility, which was already considerable in the seventeenth century and remained high until around the end of the nineteenth century.[26] It is precisely this mobility, together with the notion of labour as service in the legal and economic culture of the time, that helps to explain the harsh penalties imposed on labourers and servants. They were not allowed to leave their masters until the end of their contract, and if they left prematurely, they were subject to heavy penalties as well as the loss of their earnings. The master, on the other hand, could discharge them at any time.[27]

Little research has been done on the post-revolutionary period using legal sources to study agricultural labour – as did Cottereau for certain select industries. One of the exceptions is the thesis of Yvonne Crebouw,[28] based on local customs recorded in France during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Indeed, in studying institutions and labour standards in the countryside we can resort to two main sources, both of them considerable albeit seldom used until now: local customs and the archives of the justices of the peace. Practices were inventoried and published in great numbers during the second half of the nineteenth century in response to parliamentary investigations in this area, the first

launched in 1848, the second in 1870.[29] In reality, this reflected a more general trend under the Second Empire to codify local customs in trade, labour, land ownership, etc.[30] The codification of customs was requested by several groups (chambers of commerce, landowners associations, local elected officials) who were concerned that, in local meetings and in the event of disputes, there was no longer a consensus about the content of one or another local custom. Publishing those practises was an attempt to compose a certain picture of these customs at the very moment when they were beginning to fragment. The anthologies of customs, which were quite numerous[31] – along with the aforementioned parliamentary investigations and the revolutionary archives[32] – constitute important and easily accessible sources on labour relationships in agriculture.

These sources can be compared with the archives of the justices of the peace available in departmental archives (series U4), keeping in mind that in the field of labour, as the legal statistics indicate, in the nineteenth century many more disputes were brought to justices of the peace than to the industrial tribunals (*prud'hommes*).[33] This can be explained in part by the fact that justices of the peace had exclusive jurisdiction in lieu of industrial tribunals, which were often not present in rural areas. Unlike the British justice of the peace, the French *juge de paix* was a trained lawyer. Thus, even where industrial tribunals were present, justices of the peace decided all cases concerning limited amounts of money. Disputes over the wages (*gage*)[34] of "servants in husbandry" and labourers was one of the areas reserved for justices of the peace,[35] especially as masters were taken at their word (until 1868), in opposition to their dependents, regarding any issue concerning *gages*, wages or advances (Art.1781 of the French Civil Code).

In the event of a dispute, a justice would above all try to identify the kind of case involved, attempting to ascertain whether it involved a journeyman, a domestic servant or a pieceworker; however, it was by no means easy to distinguish between them. For example, with regard to labourers, the wage unit constituted a single day, this corresponding to a unit of work. The length of the workday was the same throughout a given region; it took into account meals, travel time and rest periods; but it differed from one season to the next, and wages changed along with the length of the workday. Unlike hiring for a specific task, the journeyman's workday was paid at an agreed price regardless of the amount of work performed, which led farmers to seek out pieceworkers.

A journeyman could leave his employer at any time or be discharged without prior notice – and without providing or claiming any compensation. In practise, however, the need to ensure hands for urgent labour had an obvious corrective effect on this rule. For example, a labourer paid by the day might be kept on for one or two weeks or even a month or two in the summer and autumn. In some regions, incidentally, there were forms of journeyman contracts for six months or a year. In any case, the journeyman as well as the employer could go back on his word without prior notice.

Indeed, labourers remained free to propose their services to several farmers if their schedules permitted. Yet, as Crebeuw notes, both the wage earner and the master paid for that freedom: the journeyman's employment status was precarious and he ran the risk of seasonal unemployment, while the employer faced a possible shortage of hands during peak seasons.

Was that reason enough to prefer officially declared piecework?

Indeed, this mode of hiring created a few reciprocal obligations: the labourer was supposed to finish the task he undertook and the employer was not to discharge him without serious reason until its completion. But there were many exceptions to this rule,

for example in the Nord, Cher and Marne *départements* and, as a result, the difference between the commitments of pieceworkers and labourers remained vague in practise and difficult to determine in the event of a dispute. In essence, the two contracts were often combined, thus leaving the parties the possibility of emphasising one or another aspect of the relationship depending on the particular situation.[36]

Lastly, domestic servants were most closely tied to their masters. This was not due to the work they performed (e.g. domestic chores) but rather to their residence and commitments. In the anthology of local customs in Chatillon-sur-Seine, a domestic servant was defined as a person who hires out his labour, who is committed to serve someone, who belongs to the household, who takes part in the master's work, who lives with the master, and who receives wages from him which are designated as *gages*.[37] In the Orléans region, domestic servants were "wage-earning servants (*à gage*) who helped the master in agricultural labour and were housed and lived in his home."[38] The length and continuity of the commitment were also commonly mentioned in the anthologies of customs.[39]

What defined domestic servants and differentiated them from other agricultural wage earners was the nature of the contract, i.e. the content of the commitment, which was almost always tacit and which could not be broken "except for the most serious reasons." Domestic servants were subject to their master's will, which meant they "owed all [their] time to the master for any labour demanded." This subordination to the "master's will" resulted in making the promised *gages* a lump sum. Of course, the master did not know the value of the service on which he could count, but "the servant cannot know the amount of work that will be required of him, nor the quality of the benefits in kind that he will be granted." These mutual uncertainties were the source of numerous cases of "infidelity" (on the part of the domestic servant) or of "exploitation and bondage" by the master, as they were described to justices. The master could discharge the domestic servant without notice or compensation for "dishonesty", "disobedience", "forgetting duties", cursing or acts of violence. The domestic servants, for their part, complained of poor or inadequate food.[40]

In any event, problems arose most often with regard to the *gage*. Most practises allowed the master to withhold wages equivalent to the amount of work due from the wage earner. However, if the wages (*gages*) were inadequate, the master's claim was not covered; this led to the proposal, renewed in 1848, to extend the worker's booklet (*livret ouvrier*)[41] to agricultural labourers; but the measure failed to pass. On the other hand, if the domestic servant demanded compensation, he had no other recourse but the justice of the peace. This threat was frequently brandished but far less frequently carried out. Bills were presented in 1848, 1849 and 1850 to change the condition of domestic servants, which the bills' promoters viewed as a throwback to domestic service under the old regime or even as "slavery". However, these bills also failed to pass, and the counter-argument that "the domestic servant voluntarily subordinates himself to the master" prevailed.[42]

The situation changed during the second half of the century when the rate of disputes increased[43] and the demand for agricultural wage earners and domestic servants intensified due to emigration to the cities. Employers accused the justices of the peace of being "on the side of labourers and domestic servants"[44] – just as manufacturers during the same period accused the magistrates on industrial tribunals of being biased against them.[45]

In short, before the revolution, the status of French labourers and domestic servants resembled bondage; considerable limits on mobility and high service requirements were

the norm, along with pronounced inequalities of status between working people and their masters. Labour was assimilated to service provision. In the nineteenth century, although domestic servants and labourers were held far more accountable than their employers for breach of contract, they were no longer governed by criminal constraints but merely by civil law. This marked a fundamental difference from the pre-revolutionary period[46] – but did this also hold true for the colonies?

The invention of engagisme

Engagisme has received less attention than either Anglo-Saxon indentured service or slavery in the strict sense. One of the rare works devoted to French *engagisme* was undertaken by Debien, who combed the notary archives in Normandy and Brittany as well as the French West Indies archives.[47] Certain aspects of white *engagisme* in Canada were also discussed by Louise Dechêne,[48] a work which was later summarised by Fréderic Mauro.[49]

In the French colonies, the contract of *engagement* or indentured service was developed in the seventeenth century. It was initially intended for white settlers whose transport expenses were advanced by employers or their middlemen in exchange for a commitment to work for several years. The *engagés* were subject to criminal penalties and could be transferred along with their contract to other masters. Owing to the close resemblance between wage earners and domestic servants, especially under the *ancien régime*, and the survival of forms of domestic service into the nineteenth century, the contract of *engagement* should not be understood in opposition to these other labour relationships but rather as an extension and radicalisation of them in the colonial situation. In other words, instead of using our own categories to contrast "free" wage work in France with slavery and indentured service in its colonies, the contract of *engagement* was considered by the actors at the time as an expression of free contract and the penalties for breach of contract were also seen as quite similar to those applied to labourers. Indeed, the notaries of Normandy in charge of drafting the first contracts of *engagement* in the seventeenth century explicitly relied on two already existing contracts: the agricultural journeyman's contract and the sailor's contract. These contracts provided for a particular status of the hired person who offered his services and all his time to his master. The agricultural journeyman transferred exclusive ownership of his time and services to his employer; the sailor's contract extended the duration of this sale with special clauses related to voyage expenses.[50] As Debien noted, these contracts "are reminiscent of contracts to farm uncultivated land in France and the ties between the first *engagés* and their masters were rather like those between tenant farmers and our rural domains. The oldest contracts of *engagement* were thus the ones that still had some connection to rent paid by tenants to feudal lords and leases for tenant farming."[51] It is no accident that contracts of *engagement* explicitly mention hiring for service: the *engagé* rented his services, i.e. the totality of his time to his master, and it was difficult to terminate a contract, especially for the *engagé*.[52] Similarly, contracts of *engagement* explicitly evoked apprenticeship contracts: the same requirement to provide for the care of the *engagé* and the apprentice was assigned to the master as to a good head of the household, the same expenses in case of illness, and the same word in the margins: bondage.[53]

However, two clauses differentiated the apprenticeship contract from the contract of *engagement*: the act of apprenticeship emphasised training in a trade, whereas in the contract of *engagement*, the *engagé* first owed his labour to his master who, in exchange,

was to teach him about colonial farming. It was also the master who gave a lump sum to his *engagé* and not the other way around as in the case of the apprentice.[54] Sometimes the close relationship between *engagement* and apprenticeship was explicit and the expression *engagement-apprentissage* appeared. In this case, the *engagé* departed and returned with his master to work on all "his affairs, trade and commerce". These *engagés* were not apprentice-settlers but apprentice-merchants, without wages. Indeed, the father or mother of the *engagé* paid a lump sum to the merchant or the settler.[55] The overwhelming majority of the contracts studied by Debien concern fatherless *engagés*. And finally, the contract of *engagement* also borrowed from the sailor's contract, clearly stipulating the length and type of service required and, above all, the penalty for desertion.[56]

Sometimes the *engagement* involved a contract of association between two *engagés* or between an *engagé* and the captain of a ship. In the second case, the *engagé* offered his service to the captain, who covered the cost of ship's passage. Once arrived, the captain could sell the engagé and his debt to a master or share the labour services (or the income generated from them) with this latter. In the case of association, on the other hand, the two *engagés* shared the capital and the labour; they called each other "my mate", the association usually but not necessarily ending when one of the associates married.[57] In general the *engagés* were not allowed to marry without authorisation of the master, but an *engagé* had the right to redeem his indenture and could oblige his master to agree to do so. Differences nevertheless appear in this overall context between the *engagés* "with no trade" and those who left as doctors, carpenters, etc. The latter committed themselves for three years instead of five; they received wages but they were not subject to the servitude clauses mentioned for the others.

Finally, in addition to the trade involved, our understanding of contracts of *engagement* should be qualified according to the destination (French West Indies, Canada or the Indian Ocean) and the historical period. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the contract of *engagement* concerned mainly whites who went to the French West Indies and Canada but also to the Indian Ocean.[58] From La Rochelle alone, 5200 *engagés* left for the French West Indies between 1660 and 1715. This figure is far below the 210,000 indentured Britons who left for North America between 1630 and 1700.[59] Indeed, in Great Britain as in France, identifying wage earners with domestic servants enabled not only the rise of industry but colonial expansion. The indenture contract (bondage in exchange for advance payment of transport expenses by the master or the middleman), usually considered by historians to be a form of forced labour, did not fall into this category until the middle of the nineteenth century. To the contrary, until that point, ever since the seventeenth century, indenture had been viewed as the expression of free contract; the individual bound by the contract was just a servant whose travel expenses were paid in advance and who committed himself for a longer period than a labourer but a shorter one than a domestic servant in the strict sense. Like the others, however, he owed all this time to his master, who could sell the indentured servant along with any debts he still owed to someone else. As the master in Great Britain had the right to recover fugitives, so too were indentured servants who fled subject to criminal penalties in the colonies. Without the Masters and Servants Acts, indenture would have been impossible.

At the same time, masters in the colonies gradually obtained even broader rights than in Great Britain. Among other things, they could exercise corporal punishment and authorise the marriage of indentured servants.[60] An innovation occurred around the middle of the eighteenth century in the American colonies, the magistrates deciding that

indentured servants could be subject to criminal penalties but not Native Americans. This was the first colonial innovation in relation to English case law. Indenture contracts nevertheless continued to provide for criminal penalties for whites until the 1830s. For the others, i.e. Indians, Africans and Chinese, indenture contracts and the corresponding forms of servitude continued to be practised until the early twentieth century – in other words, several decades after the abolition of slavery.[61]

Engagés from Asia and Africa in the Indian Ocean – eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

Many scholars assert that white *engagisme* can be situated in the initial colonial context, i.e. prior to the rapid development of plantations, when the practise was to use slaves of colour. This interpretation, while not incorrect, must be qualified; in fact, *engagisme* did not disappear with slavery but continued during and most of all after it. In this case, it is important to account for how legal institutions were passed on, how they were applied to whites and people of colour, and the economic significance of *engagisme*. To examine these aspects, I will focus on Reunion Island. Indeed, for a very long time the history of slavery in the Indian Ocean was influenced by the history of the transatlantic slave trade. In reality, there were major differences between them. First of all, the Indian Ocean region formed a type of overall economy well before the Atlantic Ocean region. Trafficking began among Indians, Arabs and Africans as early as the seventh century;[62] in this context, slavery and the slave trade developed before their transatlantic counterparts and continued well beyond them (until the twentieth century). The slave trade in the Indian Ocean was also multidirectional; over time, its direction and principal destinations changed and it involved not only men but women as well. The forms of slavery were therefore multiple and varied; there were palace slaves, soldier slaves, female and child slaves, and slave labourers in agriculture and manufacturing with equally diverse statuses.[63] From this point of view, the meaning of slavery in the Indian Ocean only becomes intelligible when it is viewed outside the categories of ancient or North American slavery. It often entailed mutual forms of dependence in which one individual (or a group or caste) of inferior status was under obligation to another with superior status, who in turn was under obligation to his superior. Consequently, the forms of status obligation, bondage and temporary slavery (for debt, etc.) coexisted with forms of hereditary slavery similar to those in North American.[64] The interaction among the forms of bondage and the notions of indenture and *engagement* exported by the Europeans make this an interesting case.[65]

Indeed, the Mascarene Islands were an exception insofar as they were the only ones to develop a plantation economy and forms of slavery similar to North American slavery, this dominating other forms of dependence.[66] On Reunion Island, alongside the use of slaves in the strictest sense,[67] *engagés* of colour were employed in the eighteenth century and even moreso in the nineteenth. This immigration was partly linked to the need for artisans (Indian carpenters and masons) but above all to the demand for additional labourers at a time when, under pressure from the English, the price of slaves was constantly rising and "rumours" of the abolition of slavery in France and its colonies were growing.[68] In all, about 160,000 slaves are estimated to have been imported to the Mascarene Islands prior to 1810.[69] They came primarily from Madagascar (70 percent), followed by Mozambique and East Africa (19 percent).[70] In the early eighteenth century, France played a central role in organising that slave trade in East Africa which was intended for the Mascarene Islands.[71]

After the Napoleonic Wars, although France officially reintroduced slavery, English pressure resulted in certain slave importations assuming the form of contracts of *engagement*. It was in this manner that an estimated 45,000 illicit slaves were imported to Reunion Island between 1817 and 1835.[72] Taking into account official censuses and disguised importations, between 48,900 and 66,400 slaves are believed to have arrived in Reunion between 1811 and 1848. According to Allen, about 300,000 slaves are said to have been imported to the Mascarene archipelago between the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. Unlike the eighteenth century, this time East Africa and Mozambique were the main source of supply (60 percent), with the rest coming from Madagascar (31 percent) and the countries of southern Asia (9 percent).[73] These networks, as we shall see, were to remain in place after the abolition of slavery.

Under these conditions, the distinction between slave and *engagé* was difficult to determine. The fragile dividing line was noticeable when they departed and when they arrived. A ship's captain transporting Indians to Reunion Island would often resort to fraud; contracts of *engagement* to Singapore were signed but the *engagés* ended up being sent to Reunion.[74] It was not only a question of fraud; some of the Indian *engagés* already belonged to castes and/or had experienced relationships of servile dependence that, in their eyes, were not very different from contracts of *engagement*.

Once arriving on Reunion Island, there was no legal or factual dividing line between *engagement* and slavery. The reports drafted by the Interior Director and the Governor, as well as correspondence with the ministries concerned at the time, manifestly show that the French colonial administration not only encouraged the Indian *engagés* and tried to establish rules of law that were sufficiently clear to avoid trouble but that they were also concerned with actual enforcement of these laws.[75] These attitudes intersected with those of the abolitionist movement: the "liberation" of labour was considered by some English administrators as a sign of real progress not only in an economic but also a political and moral sense.[76] All the same, translating those principles into action remained difficult. During the first half of 1830, Indian *engagés* numbered about 3,000.[77] The legal rules in force provided that the *engagés* should receive food, lodging and wages.[78] In practise, however, the employer-landowners seldom complied with the rules and in the event of a dispute or a problem with the administration, the settlers justified withholding the wages of the Indian *engagés* by claiming that they had failed to fulfil their commitments. The arguments invoked were quite similar to those used with regard to the labour of domestic servants in France at end of the nineteenth century.

Does this mean that rules of law had no impact and consequently there was no real distinction between the conditions of these *engagés* and those of real slaves?

The bonded servants and *engagés* did have rights, however much they may have been flouted. How those rights were emphasised depended not only on the wording of the laws but also on enforcement procedures (e.g. burden of proof, a method of written and oral evidence that radically shifted the weight of possible intimidations). Although domestic servants in France also lived in a state of inequality in relation to their masters, they nevertheless enjoyed the support of justices of the peace, an advantage that Indian *engagés* lacked on Reunion Island. However, the situation of the latter was less dramatic than that of real slaves. Indeed, the *engagés* resisted not only by fleeing (runaways), reducing their labour and rioting, but also by multiplying their lawsuits, which were undoubtedly more frequent than those of slaves during the same period.[79] Faced with the unfavourable attitude of the magistrates and the administration, Indian *engagés* formed a trade union in

which the members with the best mastery of the French language played a highly active role in formulating appeals, intervening with the authorities, etc.[80] Some trials resulted in favourable decisions for the Indians, who were then able to recover their wages or leave without having to pay "compensation" to their masters. Debates arose among the settlers and rumours spread of increasing appeals by the *engagés* that would inevitably lead to the breakdown of the whole social order. In 1837, the trade union was prohibited.[81]

It was at this point that the *engagés*, like agricultural wage earners in France, discovered another weapon: competition among employers. If they did not like their working conditions, they simply left their employers and went into the city where they worked as domestic servants. They became "fugitives" and "deserters";[82] the use of these terms in ordinary as well as legal language at the time clearly conveys the link between white *engagés* and soldiers, on the one hand, and runaway slaves on the other. More concretely, many landowners did not demand the return of their runaway *engagés*; they knew perfectly well that it was in the interest of many of them to appropriate *engagés* or even slaves belonging to other settlers. This opportunistic behaviour was prompted by various motives: some could not afford to buy slaves; others, including some of the large plantation owners, proposed better conditions than small landowners, thereby helping to crush them in a process ranging from unfair competition (as described by the law) in the area of slavery and *engagement* to the abolition of slavery, which was decidedly favourable to large landowners.[83] Yet the lack of cooperative agreements between estate owners opened up the possibility for workers to move from one estate to another while benefiting from their new master's protection.

Not only competition between planters and estate owners but also different attitudes among colonial rulers helped to reinforce the immigrants' resistance. Some rulers, such as Governor Pujol, requested legal protections for immigrants like those already in place in Mauritius;[84] other colonial administrators and plantation owners thought this state of affairs was due to Indian indolence rather than to contracts of *engagement* and lack of cooperation among landowners. Other solutions were then considered, starting with the importation of Chinese *engagés*. A new decree was adopted in 1843 to regulate these *engagés*: their contracts were supposed to last at least five years and the minimum age of the *engagé* was set at 16; the landowners had to agree to pay wages and the return trip to China; ill treatment or a two-month delay in wage payments was sufficient grounds for the administration to nullify a contract.[85] By tightening the legal rules in favour of the *engagés*, the administration hoped to solve the problem of labour shortage and those social issues raised by the Indian *engagés*. However, once again, estate owners seemed unwilling to comply with the rules.[86] As a result, the few dozen Chinese who arrived soon adopted the same attitude as the Indians: they protested against their living conditions and overdue wages; they started legal proceedings or left their employers.[87] Thus, barely three years after the decree regulating the importation of Chinese *engagés*, there was issued a new decree prohibiting Chinese *engagés*, who were now seen as troublemakers.[88] It was in this context that slavery was abolished in France and its colonies. Did this step mark a new departure or did it simply consolidate existing practices under a new name?

Engagisme after slavery

In 1847 there were a total of 6508 *engagés*, Indians, Chinese, Africans and Creoles combined.[89] The lack of available labour force encouraged several landowners to call for

the arrival of additional *engagés*, but this time from Africa, especially since France was moving towards the abolition of slavery. Indeed, as in the British Empire in the 1830s and 1840s, the abolition of slavery in the French colonies in 1848 was followed by a revival of *engagés*. While only 153 African *engagés* entered into service in 1853, thereafter, on average, about 4000 Africans were imported each year between 1851 and 1854; 10,008 were imported in 1858 and 5027 the following year.[90] In reality, recruitment in India, Madagascar, Mozambique and the eastern coast of Africa relied on networks that had been in place since the eighteenth century and it employed the same practises as the slave trade. It often took place violently, sometimes with the help of local tribal chiefs.[91] The annexation of Mayotte in 1841 opened up new labour supply sources in the Comoros Islands themselves as well as in Madagascar and the East African coast. Using the slave trade system already developed in the region with the rise of Islam, French traders, helped by local sultans, began importing *engagés* from Gabon, Zaire and West Africa.[92]

Between 1856 and 1866 some 8000 *engagés* passed through Mayotte, almost all of them from Mozambique, on their way to Reunion Island.[93] In 1853, France built new centres in Gabon and Senegal to buy *engagés*. There were also "prior redemptions" (the term given to such purchases) in Madagascar, Zanzibar and Mozambique, causing conflicts with the Portuguese and the English – officially the disputes were over the protection of *engagé* rights, but in reality the issue was one of controlling and dividing up the workforce among their respective empires.

Similar trends were in play in relation to Indian *engagés*, who were in principle under the surveillance of the British administration; in practise, however, the kidnapping of adults was regularly denounced.[94] In all, 43,958 Indian *engagés* would arrive on Reunion Island between 1849 and 1859.[95]

France officially abolished these purchases in Madagascar at the end of the 1880s; however, not only did they continue, but the shortage of labourers was so great on Reunion Island that France decided to annex Madagascar in order to specifically meet the demand.[96] A secret agreement was signed between France and Portugal in 1887 and again in 1889, Reunion Island becoming one of the accepted destinations for *engagés* from East Africa and Madagascar.

Thus, the market for *engagés* was far from being "free", not only because of diplomatic and political interference but also because of the way it worked. In the early 1850s, whereas the rules adopted in France were increasingly favourable to workers (e.g. the law prohibiting child labour, the abolition of a criminal charge for forming workers' coalitions), the Second Empire imposed tighter restrictions on emancipated slaves and *engagés*. A contract of *engagement* was imposed on all workers in the colonies; the legal rules governing the *livret ouvrier* were widely implemented and enforced.[97] Anyone without fixed employment (defined as a job lasting more than one year) was considered a vagrant and punished as such.[98] The penalties were considerable, but the law was also frequently circumvented through fictitious contracts of *engagements* that some – especially women – signed with landowners who were interested in having occasional labourers.[99]

In principle, *engagés* had the right to go to court and denounce cases of mistreatment and abuse. We have seen that under slavery those rights had been largely ignored. Abolition did not much change those attitudes; in practise, it was extremely difficult to make use of the rules, above all because colonial law courts were in the hands of local elites. Thus, when immigrants addressed courts to denounce abuses, they were often sent

back to their employer who, at best, punished them and docked their wages for insubordination; in the worst case, the employer would sue them for breach of contract and slander. In the face of these difficulties, workers sometimes joined together to denounce illegal practises; but they risked being sentenced by the judge and the police to two months of forced labour in a work-house for illicit association and breach of the peace.[100]

Following protests by Indian immigrants and British consuls, in the late 1850s a union for the protection of immigrants was permitted. It was granted the authority to inspect estates and was supposed to offer legal protection to immigrants. However, the union performed its mission poorly, at least until the late 1860s; inspections seldom took place and legal assistance was offered only to those immigrants who had completed less than five years of a renewed contract. This approach provoked a counter-reaction on the part of immigrants and the British consul, but the initial decisions of the courts validated the conservative interpretation and rejected claims denouncing unequal treatment under the law.[101]

The legal disputes mainly concerned health care, contractual performance and physical violence. Until adoption of the 1898 law on labour accidents, except in cases where French employers were proven to be at fault, these latter were not held responsible for the injuries of their workers. In "hiring for service" contracts, this attitude was justified by the fact that day labourers were under short-term informal contracts. As for *louage d'ouvrage*, workers were considered independent artisans and as such were personally responsible for any injuries and casualties suffered. Finally, servants in husbandry had severe constraints placed on their mobility, but at least they benefited from health care. In the colonies, indentured immigrants under the concessionary regime were immediately assimilated as servants in husbandry and were therefore supposed to benefit from health care provided by their employer, statutes and contracts explicitly providing for this obligation.

This solution was adopted within the context of broader agreements with Britain on the circulation of labour in the Indian Ocean region. Britain demanded the provision of health care on plantations in exchange for liberalizing Indian immigration to Reunion Island; however, on Reunion Island other official provisions added that workers would only benefit from health care if they could demonstrate that they had complied with all the health and technical prescriptions detailed in the estate regulations and in official statutes.[102] In practise, health care provision was poor; medical services simply did not exist on plantations and injured and sick workers were not only mistreated but their wages were even reduced.[103]

And what about broader legal protections of immigrants?

Summaries of judicial statistics on Reunion Island are not available. We must rely on our own detailed archival cases and monthly reports made by justices of the peace and appeals courts. Contract renewals, wage payments and corporal punishment were the most common issues in the law suits filed by *engagés*. Unlike slaves, *engagés* had the right to return home; terms were negotiated in the contract, which was supposed to comply with general provisions of the law. In practice, however, repatriation was difficult. During the 1850s and 1860s, one third of indentured immigrants returned home (mostly Indians). This percentage was close to that in Mauritius, the Caribbean, Surinam and Jamaica at the time, but it was far from the 70 percent repatriation recorded in Thailand, Malaya, and Melanesia. Distance and the cost of transport were only two of the variables affecting repatriation; politics and concrete forms of integration were also important factors.[104] On

Reunion Island, in particular, urban traders and certain colonial officers encouraged *engagés* to return home. The former group argued that once the immigrants had completed their commitment they then settled in towns and engaged in illegal trade and unfair competition. Colonial administrators were inclined to support this view: the defence of public order required the repatriation of immigrants.[105]

In contrast, several employers and estate owners, especially small ones, were hostile to the re-settlement of immigrants in town or their repatriation and pushed for the renewal of contracts. Their attitude can be explained by the fact that, unlike large estate owners, they faced increasing problems in finding the financial resources, networks and diplomatic support for new recruits. They therefore made use of every legal and illegal means to retain workers at the end of their contracts. In particular, they seized immigrants' wages and *livrets* and added strong penalties whenever possible ("laziness" and failure to accomplish assigned tasks in due time were the most common arguments for applying penalties). Hence, the worker's "debt" was never repaid and the contract was protracted. Day-labour standards and objectives were gradually raised so that few workers could meet them; they were thus subject to stiff penalties while working eighteen to twenty hours a day instead of the ten mentioned in contracts and official rules.[106] And if all this were not enough, employers did not hesitate in using physical force to make workers renew their commitments.

These practises had been informally denounced since the 1850s; it was not until the 1860s that they were brought before the courts, under pressure from British diplomats and French central government authorities.[107] Even then, lawsuits often dragged on for years and involved only a very small percentage of workers. At a time when there were several thousand workers on the island, local court records list only a few dozen cases per year of contractual abuses and illegal wage retention. Even in these few cases, employers were merely forced to render their workers due wages with no damages or interest; though many immigrants were also granted permission to terminate (illegal) contracts and abuses with no payment of penalties.[108]

Beside contracts and wages, corporal punishment and violence were the most common crimes brought before magistrates. In the late 1860s and 1870s, special investigative commissions were set up, most often in response to British diplomatic pressure. Their archives testify to widespread corporal punishment – but also to the resistance of members of the commission in acknowledging its existence. In most cases, abuses were described as "exceptional", though in fact they were commonplace – even in the case of the death of brutalized workers, employers were only sentenced to one month of prison.[109] In first-level courts, throughout the 1870s, only between one and seven employers were sentenced each year for the infliction of injuries and other violence. At the appeals court level the figure dipped to one per year, the sole exception being four individuals convicted in 1875, but this a single lawsuit and the three people receiving sentences were themselves immigrants working as supervisors.[110]

On the other side of things, every year employers sued several hundred workers for breach of contract. Sentences were usually favourable to the plaintiffs and the workers had to face heavy monetary penalties, which often translated into forced labour. Every year, immigrants were also dragged into court for robbery, the sentences very tough – e.g. five years of forced labour for a stolen chicken.[111]

Theft was mentioned in one case where Chinese coolies were sued after refusing to allow their employer to "safeguard" their savings. The police confirmed that they had

found an "unjustified" amount of money in their barracks; the coolies claimed it was their savings, with the employer claiming it belonged to him. The coolies were sentenced to five to seven years of forced labour.[112]

In sum, after the abolition of slavery, on Reunion Island access to justice was extremely limited for immigrants, and their living conditions were incredibly harsh. Legal redress for labourers and their employers was unequal, the abuses, corruption or simply partisan attitudes of local officers extremely widespread. Yet *engagés* were not slaves and the differences became more pronounced over time. This was due to several factors, not least of which was the endurance of the immigrants themselves, who continued to denounce abuses despite the difficulties they faced in doing so, and their engaging in passive resistance as well as absconding and forming groups and pursuing lawsuits through the courts. These approaches met with increasing "benevolence" on the part of colonial elites, in some instances because they firmly believed in freedom and/or the virtues of the free market, while others were responding to political pressure from Paris and London. Britain was doubtless inclined to protect Indian immigrants on Reunion Island not only for humanitarian reasons but to guarantee a labour force for British employers in India and other areas of their Empire. Whatever the rationale for Britain's action (likely a combination of both motives), the final outcome was increased legal protection for immigrants. Unfair competition between small and large estate owners and between rural and urban masters on Reunion Island were also contributing factors. Major employers were much more favourable than small ones to a fair labour market insofar as they benefited from economies of scale in the recruitment and exploitation of workers.

A third factor affecting immigrant conditions was the decline of sugar prices on the international market. In the early 1840s the average producer price of sugar was some 39 English pounds a ton. By the 1870s it was 22 pounds a ton and, as the glut grew in the 1890s, it fell by 12 pounds, reaching a low 9.60 pounds in 1896.[113] Small producers tried to cope with this trend by imposing increasingly harsh labour conditions, which provoked massive absconding (actually the transfer to large estates) and worker resistance. Many *petits blancs* sold their properties and moved to the highlands,[114] where they were joined by immigrants and former slaves who began buying land or more often cultivating it under new forms of renting.[115]

Conclusion

French colonies were not only the land of slavery but they were hothouses of those certain forms of bondage inspired by inequalities of status still entrenched in France at the time. In particular, on Reunion Island, the *engagés* and indentured servants were possible because "wage earners" in France were in fact often service providers similar to domestic servants. Status inequalities in France served as the model for those in the colonies, but in both cases the *engagés*, bonded labourers, domestic servants and wage earners were expressions of free contract. While relying on older institutions and practises, new institutions and forms of labour were introduced in the seventeenth century: indenture contracts, contractual forms of domestic service, apprenticeship and *engagement* in the colonies. Indeed, territorial and colonial expansion, along with the growth of agriculture and trade, followed by proto-industrial and later industrial development, gave rise to a complex overall dynamic.

Increasingly large population shifts took place within empires, between one empire and the other, and between city and country. It is therefore important to draw a distinction between living conditions and legal rights (as well as the possibility of their exercise). In the areas studied as a whole, there were status differences between domestic servants and property owners, between laborers and their employers, between *engagés* and indentured labourers, and between servants and apprentices and their masters. These differences in status were not only produced by the colonies; they existed in Europe as well and were hardly an expression of the "old regime". On the contrary, such status differences persisted through supposed political and economic revolutions. The existence of certain rights attributed to the *engagés* (with a notable difference between white and non-European *engagés*) is important because it allows us to distinguish the figures of ideal cases such as former slaves or North American chattel slavery from "free wage earners". An *engagé* was not a slave – he was subject to forms of bondage that were not formally or necessarily hereditary, even though the debts from such bondage were quite frequently passed on to the descendants. Unlike traditional slave status, however, the transfer of *engagé* debt was never automatic and this made all the difference in the evolution of post-slavery forms of labour in the twentieth century.

Thus, it is on the basis of this observation that our view of the comparative evolution of economic and legal labour systems should be revised. From an economic standpoint, "forced" labour has traditionally been associated with pre-industrial economies and the colonies. The history we have just recounted calls into question these clear-cut divisions. In the colonies it would be a mistake to associate forced labour and slavery with the plantation economy and to conclude that emigration, prior to plantations, consisted in colonisation by white settlers and that later on, with the advent of mechanised labour on the plantations, recourse to slavery no longer made sense. On the contrary, we have seen that those conditions pertaining to the bondage of whites in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were quite harsh and did not improve until the arrival of *engagés* and slaves of colour (and even then with notable exceptions such as child vagrants). Prior to this shift, the formal abolition of slavery was above all the result of a political movement and only partially related to technological changes on the plantations, which remained labour-intensive and resorted to *engagés* whose living conditions (but not their status) closely resembled those of slaves.

Similarly, economic growth in France was widely based on labour until well into the nineteenth century. That is why, in this case too, the constraints on mobility continued throughout the first industrial revolution – the worker's booklet, criminal penalties, and the conditions of domestics and laborers confirm this continuity.

The evolution that we have presented here did not necessarily correspond to a passage from "constraint" to freedom, which is a rather Eurocentric view and should therefore be re-examined. In particular, the official abolition of slavery in the French colonies was important, if only so as to eliminate any form of dominance through status or heredity. This change was simultaneously accompanied by the introduction of extremely restrictive forms of contract and status with regard to the rights of immigrants. The forms of domestic service, criminal penalties and rules for the colonies were reinforced at the very moment when labour law in Europe was becoming more favourable to wage earners. Following attempts in the late1840s to extend the rights of European workers to "apprentices", former slaves and immigrants in the colonies - rights which were widespread in France – the pronounced trend thereafter was different. Whereas labour in France received

increasing protections, the legal and real conditions of indentured servants and immigrants in the colonies remained problematic. The status of immigrants and workers in the colonies (in relation to their employers) was out of step with the new labour regulations introduced in France between the 1890s and the First World War. It was precisely the evolution of labour law, child protection and collective bargaining agreements in France, culminating in the rise of the welfare state, that changed the framework for defining labour in the colonies. Beginning in the 1890s, the emergence of new legal notions of labour in France lent support to widespread discussions regarding labour protection in the colonies as well. These discussions bore no fruit until the interwar period – with creation of the International Labour Organisation and the signing of labour agreements. Once again, as in the periods we have studied, their practical application was neither uniform nor seamless. On the one hand, resistance from colonial lobbies and even local elites in the colonies and later in former colonies delayed and severely restricted the enforcement of legal rules governing labour in these regions; on the other hand, the movement in defence of labour conditions in Europe and its colonies continued undeterred. In the twentieth century, as in the past, not only the conditions but the very definitions of labour in Europe and its former colonies remained closely linked.

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Notes

1. I acknowledge my debt to the editor and two anonymous referees for their valuable comments and suggestions. I also thank Kevin MCaleer (Wissenschafts Kolleg, Berlin) for revising my English.
2. Useful bibliographies can be found in Scott, Holt, Cooper, McGuinness, *Societies*; Scott, "Defining the Boundaries"; Miller, *Slavery and Slaving*; Drescher and Engerman, *A Historical Guide*; Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Les traites*; Marcel Dorigny, Gainot, *Atlas*. As regards the definition of slavery, see Meillassoux, *Anthropologie*; Finley, *Esclavage moderne*; Meyer and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*; Williams, *Capitalism*; Bush, *Serfdom*; Engerman, *Terms of Labor*; Klein, *Breaking*; Patterson, *Slavery*; Lovejoy, *Transformations*.
3. Brass and van der Linden, *Free*.
4. The amount of recent work on these subjects is immense, so I will give only a few examples. For servants and indenture, see Steinfeld, *The Invention*; Bush, *Servitude*; Galenson, *White Servitude*; Northrup, *Indentured*.
5. Emmer, *Colonialism*; Engerman, *Terms of Labor*; Cooper, Holt and Scott, *Beyond Slavery*.
6. On France, Régent, *La France*.

7. Sonenscher, *Work and Wages*; Davis, "A Trade Union"; Kaplan, *La fin*; Sewell, *Gens de métier*.
8. Steinmetz, *Private Law*.
9. Cooper, *From Slaves*.
10. Fillot, *La traite*; Gerbeau, "*Engagés*"; Gerbeau, "Covert Slaves"; Fuma, *L'esclavagisme*; Weber, "L'émigration", *Etudes;* Payet, *Histoire*.
11. Benton, *Law*; Craton, *Empire*; Galanter, *Law*; Hay and Craven, *Masters*; Watson, *Slave Law*.
12. Coornaert, *Les corporations*; Thompson, *The Making*; Sewell, *Gens*.
13. Sonenscher, *Works*; Minard, *La fortune*.
14. Cottereau, "Droit"; Deakin and Wilkinson, *The Law*; and Steinmetz, *Private Law*, 2000.
15. Domat, *Les lois*, vol. 1; Pothier, *Traité*.
16. Sonenscher, *Works*, 70.
17. Sonenscher, *Works*, 75.
18. "La domesticité est une sorte d'esclavage." See the *Encyclopédie méthodique*, vol. 9, 15. See also Maza, *Servants*; and Gutton, *Domestiques*.
19. Cottereau, "Droit".
20. Ibidem.
21. Moriceau, "Les Baccanals".
22. Maza, *Servants*; Hoffman, *Growth*.
23. Mayaud, "Salariés".
24. Hoffman, *Growth*, 45–46.
25. Rozier, *Cours complet* vol. 8: 353. I thank Gilles Postel-Vinay for this reference.
26. Collins, "Migrant Labour "; Postel-Vinay, "The Dis-integration".
27. Rozier, *Cours complet*, vol. 8, 353; Hoffman, *Growth*.
28. Crebouw, *Salaires*; Crebouw, "Droit".
29. Archives Nationales, Paris, Henceforth: AN series C (Parliamentary archives), from 844 through 858: "Parliamentary enquiries of 1848"; AN C from 1157 through 1161: "Parliamentary enquiries of 1870".
30. Hilaire, *Introduction*, 107–111.
31. *Usages locaux*; Bertrand, *Usages locaux*; Dumay, *Usages locaux*; Mosse, *Les usages locaux*; Limon, *Recueil*; Watrin, *Département*.
32. AN F 12 (ministry of industry and trade), from 1516 through 1544: "Maximum: tableaux dresses en l'an II"; AN F 10 (ministry of agriculture), 451–2: "Fixation des salaires agricoles, an II–III".
33. Rouet, *Justice*.
34. In French legal and economic language, the wages of servants and servants in husbandry are called *gages*; these indicate the monetary component of their remuneration as distinct from food and housing provisions. Thus *gages* are clearly distinguished from wages, these last designating only wage labor. It will be interesting to study when and why the English language adopted the word wages to indicate both configurations – this despite the evident legal, economic and social differences between a domestic servant and a wage earner.
35. Farcy, *Guide*.
36. AN F 10 452 "Fixation des salaires agricoles", an II, an III. Also Clément, *Essai*
37. Crebouw, *Salaires*.
38. Carrier de Ladeveze, *Notice*.
39. Crebouw, "Droit", 185.
40. *Recueil des usages locaux en vigueur dans le département de la Vienne* (Poitiers: 1861); *Recueil des usages locaux du département d'Indre-et-Loire* (Tours 1909); Carrier de Ladeveze, *Notice*.
41. The *livret ouvrier* was a discharge certificate; it had to certify an engagement for a specific job and its completion (*quittance*) or to acknowledge that the worker had not yet paid off advances received as wages and that his debt remained to be deducted from future wages by the new employer.
42. AN C 846–850: "Parliamentary enquiries of 1848".
43. Crebouw, "Droit".
44. Crebouw, "Droit".

45. Cottereau, "Droit".
46. Dewerpe, *Le monde*; Lequin and Delsalle, *La brouette*; Le Goff, *Du silence*.
47. Debien, *Les engagés*.
48. Dechêne, *Habitants*.
49. Mauro, "French Indentured Servants".
50. Debien, *Les engagés*.
51. Debien, *Les engagés*, 45.
52. Archives Charente maritime, Minutier Teuleron, 1638–1680, in particular the groups of documents from 1638, 1641, 1649, 1651, 1666–1667, 1670, and 1671. See also the Bibliothèque nationale, Section of manuscripts, "Nouvelles acquisitions de France", 9328, which has copies of documents on immigration to the colonies that pertain to inhabitants, *engagés* and slaves.
53. Debien, *Les engagés*, 46–7.
54. For treatments of apprenticeship contracts, see Sonencher, *Works*; and Kaplan, *La fin*.
55. For example, see ACM the Grozé minutes, 28 May 1692; and the Rivière minutes, 31 May 1684.
56. ACM Ex Moreau minutes, 19 and 25 April 1664.
57. Régent, *La France*, 24.
58. Dechêne, *Habitants*.
59. Galenson, *White Servitude*.
60. Galenson, *White Servitude*.
61. Steinfeld, *The Invention*.
62. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation*; Chaudhuri, *Asia before Europe*.
63. Clarence-Smith, *The Economics*; Campbell, *The Structure*; Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*.
64. Watson, *Asian*; Scarr, *Slaving*.
65. Chakravarti, "Of Dasas": 40–42, 51–54; Vink, "The World's".
66. Campbell, *The Structure*.
67. Fillot, *La traite*, Fuma, *L'esclavagisme*; Weber, "L'émigration indienne"; Allen, "The Mascarene Slave-Trade".
68. Fillot, *La traite*.
69. Fillot, *La traite*, 54–69.
70. Allen, "The Mascarene", 36.
71. Alpers, "The French Slave Trade".
72. Schuler, "The Recruitment "; Alpers, *Ivory*; Gerbeau, "Quelques aspects". See also Maillard, *Notes*; Thomas, *Essai*.
73. Allen, "The Mascarene", 37–38.
74. The National Archives (Kew), henceforth TNA, CO (Colonial Office), 415/9/A.221, 1827.
75. CAOM 30 COL 117, 160, 639, years 1823–1836. See also the Archives départementales de la Réunion (ADR), in: 57 M1, for example: "Exposé de la situation intérieure de la colonie en 1832 par le directeur de l'intérieur" and "Rapport sur les différents services de la colonie" from 1828.
76. Drescher, *Capitalism*; Brion Davis, *The Problem.*
77. Maillard, *Notes*, 190.
78. *Bulletin officiel de l'Ile Bourbon*, arrêté du 3 juillet 1829.
79. Vaughan, *Creating*.
80. Archives départementales de la Réunion (ADR) 168 M 3.
81. Fuma, *L'esclavage*, 116.
82. CAOM FM SG/Reu c 380 d 3288, c 370 d 3180.
83. ADR 168 M 3, "Lettre du commissaire de Saint-Paul, le 14 septembre 1842" and "Séance de travail de la commission de surveillance des indiens engagés, le 4 mars 1831", as quoted in Fuma, *L'esclavage*, 116 and 122.
84. CAOM, FM SG Inde 464, d. 590, lettre 26 February 1848.
85. *Bulletin officiel de l'Ile Bourbon*, "Arrêté du 10 novembre 1843", 354.
86. CAOM FM SG/Reu c 406, c 432 d 4603 à 4606 (Chinese immigration).
87. Fuma, *L'esclavage*, 129.
88. *Bulletin officiel de l'Ile Bourbon*, arrêté 2 July 1846.

89. *L'indicateur colonial*, 12 April 1845.
90. CAOM, *Réunion, tableau de l'immigration africaine à la réunion de 1848 à 1869*, C 454, d 5042 à 5074. See also Huang, *Histoire économique*.
91. Schuler, "The Recruitment"; Renault, *Libération d'esclaves*.
92. Ainouddine, "L'esclavage "; M'Trengoueni, "Les différentes formes".
93. Ainouddine, "L'esclavage", 102.
94. Fuma, *Esclaves et citoyens*; Chaillou, *De l'Inde à la Réunion*
95. Weber, "L'émigration indienne".
96. Schuler, "The Recruitment", 140.
97. *Le Moniteur de la Réunion*, 3 July 1852.
98. *Bulletin officiel de l'île de la Réunion*, 13 February 1852.
99. Accounts of litigation can be found in U 339, 349 at the Archives départementales de la Réunion (ADR). On women, see Fuma, *Esclaves*.
100. CAOM FM SM/Reu c 379 d 3211 and c 383 d 3323.
101. CAOM FM SG/Reu c 384 d 3361.
102. CAOM FM SG/Reu c 384 d 3341, reports of the syndic of immigrants, 1858 and 1859 to 1864.
103. Ibid.
104. Northrup, *Indentured*, 129–132.
105. CAOM FM SG/Reu c 382, some dozens files, and c 379.
106. CAOM FM SG/Reu c 379 d 3211.
107. CAOM FM SG/Reu c 382 d 3324, 3310, 3311, 3318.
108. CAOM FM SM SG/Reu c 379 d 3217, 3210.
109. CAOM FM SM SG/Reu c 382 d 3323.
110. CAOM FM SM SG/Reu c 379 d 3203.
111. CAOM FM SG/ SG Reu c 385 d 3367.
112. Justice cour d'assise, Saint-Denis, 3e session 1868 CAOM FM SG/SG Reu c 385 d 3367.
113. Northrup, *Indentured*, 31; Allen, *Slaves*, 23.
114. CAOM FM SG/Reu c 400 d 3688; and c 514 d 5970. See also Bourquin, Prudhomme and Gerbeau, *Histoire des petits-blancs*.
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