Résumé

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When Great Britain acquiesced to colonial demands and authorized the transporting of free Black emigrants from the West Coast of Africa to the British West Indies in 1840, English abolitionists who disapproved of this project predicted that Britain's decision would cause considerable embarrassment for Her Majesty's government in foreign countries such as France. England had abolished slavery in her colonies in 1834 and was trying to persuade other powers to join her in repressing the transatlantic slave trade, but she was now adopting a policy encouraging Africans to emigrate to English sugar colonies desperate for new laborers. British humanitarians were fully aware that France and other nations could not fail to see similarities between the new British project and the slave trade: uprooted Africans liberated from slave ships by English cruisers were to be transported on British vessels to colonies where they would work as contract laborers for former slave owners. Abolitionists prophesied that England's pursuance of an African emigration policy would both tarnish Britain's image as a self-effacing humanitarian power and set an example which other less disinterested nations might follow, giving impetus to the continuation of slavery and the slave trade. As Thomas Clarkson pointed out, England's crusade against the slave trade would suffer because of the difficulty in dissuading France and other States 'from going to Africa for labourers' when 'we go there for labourers ourselves'.

James Stephen, Permanent Under Secretary for the Colonies, was convinced that the British government's African emigration policy would destroy England's 'moral ascendency' and 'would be misrepresented by foreign States as a disguised resumption of the British slave-trade'. In 1840 even Lord Russell, who by 1841 was prepared to encourage African emigration, had reservations about transporting former slaves to the West Indies, because England's 'whole policy in putting down the slave trade would be exposed to suspicion and we [would] be told that we were indirectly recruiting our own possessions with compuls-

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*Cahiers d'Études africaines* 69-70, XVIII-1-2, pp. 201-213.
sory labour by the very means which we employed to suppress the traffic of other nations'.

British opponents of their government’s projects to re-stock the West Indian colonies with ‘free African labourers’ were quick to point out the unfavorable international repercussions which Britain’s emigration policy might entail.

Although historians are becoming increasingly aware of the many problems surrounding England’s African and Indian labor emigration programs in the mid-19th century, little is known about the reception of these policies in other countries, such as France. At first glance it appears that following 1840 French governments and public opinion responded as British abolitionists had foreseen, condemning England’s projects on the one hand and encouraging imitation of her actions on the other. Upon closer examination, however, it becomes apparent that France’s reaction to Britain’s African emigration system during the entire two decades of its duration was extremely diverse and complex. Throughout the period 1840-1864 the French tended to judge Britain’s policy not on the principles or moral judgments involved, but according to their varying perception of their own interests. In other words, the French response to Britain’s scheme for African emigration depended invariably upon France’s sentiment at any given time toward Great Britain, slavery and the slave trade, and the possibility of African emigration to French colonies. Accordingly, an examination of France’s reaction to Britain’s African emigration projects sheds considerable light upon the development of French attitudes toward these major issues facing French colonial policy in the mid-19th century.

Following the abolition of British slavery in 1834 and the termination of ‘apprenticeship’ for former slaves in 1838, British colonial interests bemoaned the lack of dependable workers on plantations and clamored for new sources of labor. The British government finally acceded to these demands in 1840 and 1842, when it approved a series of measures enabling private shippers under different degrees of government control to transport to the West Indies and British Guiana former slaves who had been liberated from slaving vessels by Royal Navy cruisers. As Sierra Leone and Saint Helena became crowded with freed slaves, ‘liberated’ Africans were encouraged to emigrate as ‘voluntary’ workers to the labor-starved tropical colonies. As soon as the British emigration program was adopted, enrollment of Africans began in earnest. Although


the peak period for emigration was 1848-1850, over one-fourth of the total number of 36,120 Africans who entered the British West Indies from 1841 to 1867 were introduced between the years 1841 and 1844.5

Officials of the July Monarchy in France closely followed these English colonial developments. Nevertheless, it appears that the first official French response to England's recruitment projects was elicited only in reply to British criticism of France's own emigration policy. By the early 1840's France's program of recruiting Africans had already been in effect for approximately two decades. As of 1828 the French colony of Senegal had permitted its residents to buy and liberate from slavery African captives who were then employed at menial tasks as *engagés*, or indentured laborers, for a set number of years; between 1823 and 1844 slightly over 3,000 *engagés* seem to have been enrolled by these methods.6 Similarly, the French government had authorized the purchase of African slaves to staff its colonial battalion in Senegal as early as 1819, and by the early 1830's this recruitment program had also been extended to cover French forces in Guiana and Madagascar. In fact, France's military enrollment scheme had always been quite limited in scope; enlistment of Blacks was most active in 1828, 1831, 1836, and 1839, but total recruitment prior to 1841 appears to have numbered less than 450.7 Still, an incident involving French military recruitment of Blacks attracted English attention in 1840 when a British cruiser seized the *Sénégambie*, a vessel chartered by the French government to carry African recruits to Guiana. The *Sénégambie* affair led to British charges that the French ship's actions constituted slave trading and French countercharges that France's enrollment of Africans 'was identical' to Britain's policy of seizing Blacks from slave traders for transportation to the British West Indies as laborers.8 The French government's first official reaction to the British project for African emigration was to invoke the British example to justify France's own actions. This was to set the tone for much of the ensuing Franco-English debate over the question of African emigration.

The *Sénégambie* incident constituted a diplomatic issue between Paris and London in 1840 and 1841, but the French public and press displayed little interest in either the seizure of the *Sénégambie* or the larger problem of African emigration until the 'right of search' dispute erupted upon

5. ASIEGBU: 190.
7. France, Archives des Affaires Étrangères (henceforth referred to as FAAE), Mémoires et documents, Afrique 28, Apr. 30, 1841, Duperré, Minister of the Navy and Colonies, to Guizot, Minister of Foreign Affairs. French military recruits enrolled in this fashion were declared to be free men immediately after their purchase from slave merchants, but were obliged to serve for seven or fourteen years under the colors. For more detail, see the articles by Zuccarelli & Claude Faure, 'La garnison européenne du Sénégal et le recrutement des premières troupes noires, 1779-1858', *Revue d'Histoire des Colonies françaises* VIII, 1920, 3e trim.: 5-108.
8. FAAE, Afrique 28, Apr. 30, 1841, Duperré to Guizot; July 23, 1841, Duperré to Guizot.
the scene in early 1842. The mutual right of British and French naval units to stop and search each other's merchant vessels off the slave coasts in an attempt to extirpate the slave trade had been established by conventions signed between France and England in 1831 and 1833. Then, after these agreements had been operative for ten years, in early 1842, French opinion reacted to disclosures about abuses perpetrated by English cruisers upon French freighters during the search process by turning against the right of search conventions. Convinced that the British were using the agreements of 1831-1833 to harass and disrupt French trade with Africa, French pressure groups and public opinion in general obliged the Soul-S-Guizot government to refuse the extension and renewal of the right of search conventions. One of the examples which Frenchmen cited to demonstrate the high-handedness of British search procedures was the case of the Sénégambie, whose seizure suddenly attracted French attention. The Sénégambie case had been brought out into the open in connection with the right of search controversy; and it was the Sénégambie incident which first focused French attention upon British African emigration projects in the early 1840's.

The press in both Paris and French port cities hastened to make comparisons between the Sénégambie affair and England's African emigration program. The Courrier de la Gironde (Bordeaux) noted the incongruity of England capturing the Sénégambie for slave trading when the English themselves 'use slaves that they take off of slave ships' as agricultural workers in British colonies. The Courrier français (Paris) defended the Sénégambie's mission in light of similar British actions, while the Sémaphore de Marseille maintained that England's recruitment schemes showed how hypocritical the British were in this matter. The Commerce (Paris), the Indicateur (Bordeaux), the Gazette de France (Paris), the Quotidienne (Paris), and the Presse (Paris) all charged that the British were doing exactly what they had accused the Sénégambie of doing; as the Presse remarked, 'what the English condemn in others they practice every day on their own account'. Two Parisian newspapers even asserted that Great Britain recruited Africans in a 'less


10. Le Courrier de la Gironde, May 24, 1842. Le Courrier de la Gironde, L'Indicateur, Le National de l'Ouest, Le Journal du Havre and Le Mémorial de Rouen were consulted in the Bibliothèque municipale of the city in which they were published; Le Sémaphore de Marseille, La Presse, Le Siècle, Le Constitutionnel and Le National were studied on microfilm; all other newspapers, unless otherwise indicated, were examined at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris.

11. Le Courrier français, Apr. 12, 1842; Le Sémaphore de Marseille, Apr. 27, 1842.

12. Le Commerce, Jan. 16, 1843; L'Indicateur, May 1, 1842; La Gazette de France, May 2, 1842; La Quotidienne, May 2, 1842; La Presse, May 3, 1842.
honorable and humane manner’ than France, because England was embarked upon a large-scale program ‘to provide at low cost for her colonies the workers that she forbids others’ to enlist. The fact that England’s African emigration policy came to light in connection with the Sénégal affair and right of search crisis assured it a hostile reception in France during the early 1840’s.

French opinion was so stirred up against England at this time that even when French parliamentarians and newspapers refrained from discussing Britain’s emigration policy in direct connection with the Sénégal question, their antagonism to England’s procedures remained constant. In the Chamber of Deputies a representative, M. de l’Espinasse, contended that England was sending off ‘ships full of supposedly free negroes with which she was populating her colonies’. The National de l’Ouest (Nantes) uttered similar sentiments when it asserted that seizing slaves from other nations’ slave ships and sending them to England’s sugar islands was ‘an ingenious means of repopulating’ British colonies. The Journal du Havre categorized the British system as a ‘legalized slave trade’, and the National (Paris) insisted that the English had instituted a slave trade ‘under another name’. The Patrie (Paris) also stressed the semantics involved in the issue by insinuating that England no longer called the Africans she transferred to the West Indies ‘slaves’ but ‘decorated them with the name of “workers” ’. French disapprobation of England’s procedures was stimulated further by a speech made in the British House of Commons on March 22, 1842 by the Colonial Secretary, Lord Stanley, which advocated emigration as a means of saving the colonies and civilizing Africans. Upon hearing of Lord Stanley’s statement, the Commerce exclaimed: ‘This is what the English mean by abolishing the slave trade. They will no longer go to Africa to buy “slaves” but “emigrants” ’. As the Charivari (Paris) remarked with irony, Stanley’s discourse showed that the English merely were intending to ‘change a substantive. Slaves would simply become emigrants’. By late 1842 even Victor Schoelcher, the leading French abolitionist and a staunch defender of England’s altruistic intentions in abolishing slavery and the slave trade, had come to the conclusion that England’s denouncement policies were a variant of the slave trade. Clark-son, Stephen, and Lord Russell had been correct in prophesying that England’s adoption of an African emigration project would be soundly censured in nations such as France.

As the British abolitionists had also foreseen, there was another facet

13. Le Siècle, Apr. 13, 1842; Le Constitutionnel, Sept. 21, 1842.
15. Le National de l’Ouest, Jan. 16, 1843.
17. La Patrie, Mar. 6, 1842.
to the question of France’s reaction to the new English method of procuring laborers for the West Indies. Elements within France began to study the English innovation in light of France’s own colonial needs and to suggest that it might be wise to apply the large-scale English recruitment system to France’s tropical possessions. Already on January 21, 1842, before the Sénégambie case had gained notoriety, the French Minister of the Navy and Colonies, Admiral Duperré, notified a French parliamentary commission examining the question of slave emancipation that ‘For some time several requests have been addressed to my department to obtain authorization to enroll free Blacks in Africa and transport them to our colonies as workers or cultivators, after the fashion of what is now being carried out in Sierra Leone in an attempt to augment the agricultural laborer population of Britain’s possessions.’ He added that the English could not object if France’s recruitment of Africans, like Great Britain’s, was carried out under government auspices. In early June another senior French official, Alphonse de Moges, commander of France’s anti-slave trade squadron in the West Indies, noted that England had set an example for transporting African laborers and that France should reserve herself the right to undertake a similar program to provide much needed workers for French Guiana. In the autumn of 1842 Duperré pleaded with François Guizot, foreign Minister in Marshall Soult’s cabinet and the de facto head of the French government, to consider establishing an emigration program along the same lines as that of Great Britain. By late 1842 and early 1843, elements of the French press were also stressing the advantages which would accrue to France’s colonies if Paris were to approve of a British-like emigration project. The Mémorial de Rouen, mentioning the French and English efforts to enroll Africans, supported the formation of an international system to supply labor to tropical colonies. The Gazette de France, which had denounced the British emigration plan in the spring of 1842, now suggested that France follow example and provide workers for her colonies by ‘the free emigration of Blacks’. Throughout 1842 French hostility to England’s emigration projects outweighed

21. France, Archives Nationales, Section Outre-Mer (hereinafter: FOM), Généralités 122 (1879), Jan. 21, 1842, Duperré to the Broglie commission.
22. Ibid., Généralités 159 (1312), June 5, 1842, de Moges to Minister of the Navy and Colonies.
23. FAAE, Afrique 28, Oct. 28, 1842, Duperré to Guizot. The French, like the British, were entitled to use Africans liberated from slavers as laborers in their colonies. As Serge DAGET has pointed out (‘L’abolition de la traite des Noirs en France de 1814 à 1831’, Cahiers d'Etudes africaines XI, 1971: 56), the French law of March 4, 1831 repressing the slave trade provided that slaves freed as a consequence of French naval action against slavers on the seas were to become engagés under government jurisdiction for a period of seven years. However, French naval and colonial officials in the 1840’s seem to have placed little importance upon this means of obtaining black laborers for France’s colonies, undoubtedly because after the early 1830’s French cruisers seized a very limited number of slave vessels and freed few slaves.
25. La Gazette de France, Jan. 19, 1843.
French interest in imitating them, but some French Statesmen and publicists saw the British experiment as an expedient which could be adapted to France’s colonial needs.

Officials within the French ministry of the Navy and Colonies carried on into 1843 their efforts to press for an English-type emigration system for France’s colonies. Already in 1842 the French naval ministry had sent a ship to Sierra Leone to observe at first hand British methods of recruiting free Africans. In communicating with Guizot in early 1843, Duperré insisted that it was imperative ‘to continue to observe what is happening in this respect in the English colonies’. A memo drawn up for the use of the naval and colonial ministry in 1843 indicated that the French government was keenly scrutinizing English developments in the field of emigration. It contended that England had commenced her recruitment of Africans too late to save her sugar colonies from economic disruption and that France should not repeat this British error; instead, France should embark upon an African emigration program even before the abolition of slavery in French colonies. Admiral Roussin, who replaced Duperré as naval and colonial Minister in May 1843, ordered his slave trade squadron commanders to observe but not interfere with British ships transporting Africans to the West Indies, for France ‘herself would one day need to use similar measures for her own colonies’. When Admiral Mackau, former governor of Martinique and a spokesman for French colonial interests, replaced Roussin as naval Minister later in 1843, he informed Guizot that he believed France should try to come to an agreement with Great Britain concerning emigration ‘to make French colonies enter into the same path’ as their English counterparts. Throughout 1843 the French naval and colonial office made a concerted effort to try to persuade the Soult-Guizot ministry to follow example and adopt a voluntary African emigration plan to assist France’s colonies.

Despite the determined campaign by top echelons within the naval and colonial ministry, France refrained from adapting the English recruitment plan to her own colonial situation in the early 1840’s. This decision was due primarily to the unwavering opposition of the French foreign ministry to any participation by France in African emigration. Guizot made it abundantly clear that he opposed France’s recruitment and transportation of Africans to the West Indies because such actions resembled the slave trade and were contrary to France’s treaty commitments. Even Duperré had been obliged to concede that France’s

26. FAAE, Afrique 28, May 17, 1842, Duperré to Guizot.
27. Ibid., Afrique 29, Feb. 3, 1843, Duperré to Guizot.
28. FOM, Généralités 122 (1079), undated memo traceable by internal evidence to 1843.
29. FAAE, Afrique 29, May 19, 1843, Roussin to Commander of West Indian Station.
30. Ibid., Dec. 16, 1843, Mackau to Guizot.
31. Ibid., Afrique 28, Apr. 12, 1842, Guizot to Duperré.
position on African emigration was much more delicate than England’s, for slavery still existed in France’s colonial possessions and it was difficult to argue that Blacks recruited in Africa would be treated as free men after their arrival in the West Indies.\(^{32}\) In the end, Guizot’s position prevailed. The French naval and colonial office temporarily ceased making representations in favor of emigration. Following the Sénégambie affair the French government suspended the shipment of African immigrants by sea; in 1844 colonial officials took the further step of terminating the recruitment of *engagés* in Senegal.\(^{33}\) Moreover, by the mid-1840’s the right of search dispute between France and Great Britain was settled by the abrogation of the conventions of 1831-1833 and their replacement in 1845 with a new treaty calling upon France to visit and search her own merchant vessels on the high seas. With the eclipse of the right of search controversy and the decision by France to end the enrollment of *engagés*, French attention turned away from England’s African recruitment system. The same French newspapers which had been eager to condemn England’s emigration projects in 1842-43 rarely mentioned them between 1845 and 1848. The French naval and foreign ministries also appear to have lost interest in a topic which no longer had any immediate relevance for France; relatively few surviving documents in either the French foreign or naval and colonial archives for the period 1845-48 refer in any way to African emigration to the West Indies. Immediately prior to 1848 England’s emigration plan had become a dead issue in France. Then, events in 1848 suddenly revived French interest in obtaining African laborers for the West Indies and Guiana, and, consequently, in imitating English efforts along these lines.

After the February Revolution toppled the July Monarchy and established the Second Republic, one of the first major decisions made by the new republican government was to abolish slavery in French colonies.\(^{34}\) Having carefully studied the situation in England’s colonies after British emancipation, French officials were well aware that a new source of manpower was needed to sustain production on French colonial plantations. Once again the French ministry of the Navy and Colonies focused its attention upon precedent in African emigration. As the French naval Minister explained to his colleague in the Foreign Office, ‘France was in an entirely new position’ *vis-à-vis* the African

\[^{32}\] FOM, Généralités 122 (1079), Jan. 21, 1842, Duperré to the Broglie commission.


emigration question now that slavery had been abolished in French colonies. At the same time, he noted that England’s own recruitment program seemed to be taking on a new turn; the English for the first time were permitting enrollment of Africans elsewhere than in Sierra Leone and Saint Helena by extending recruitment to the Kroo Coast (present day Liberia). Furthermore, British colonial assemblies were now advocating that the supply of African emigrants be augmented by permitting recruiters to buy slaves, free them, and then transport them to the West Indies. All of these developments determined the French naval Minister, Verninac de Saint-Maur, to ask Jules Bastide in the French Foreign Office about ‘England’s latest word on the question of recruitment by purchasing Blacks and redeeming them from slavery’. Verninac de Saint-Maur added that the moment for considering this was especially propitious because French planters on the newly acquired island of Mayotte desperately needed agricultural workers. French naval and colonial authorities, once again using English developments to justify their actions, were prepared to open a new era of African emigration to France’s tropical colonies.

The efforts of the French naval ministry were seconded by a report from a governmental committee, appointed in the autumn of 1848 and presided over by the abolitionist Duc de Broglie, which recommended that France resort to emigration to maintain production in her colonies. The naval and colonial Minister acted late in 1848 to lift the suspension on transporting African laborers by sea and permit a limited number of free Africans to be introduced into Mayotte. In 1852 the French Republic took the further step of publishing decrees to authorize and regulate emigration to France’s other tropical colonies. Although these decrees dealt with emigration in general and did not specify any particular area for recruitment, a report in 1853 from Théodore Ducos, French naval Minister, to the Emperor Napoleon III clearly indicated that France envisaged immediately enrolling free Blacks on the African coast and eventually carrying on recruitment by redemption from slavery. As under the July Monarchy, the French foreign ministry, headed at this time by Drouyn de Lhuys, displayed reluctance to approve of any form of African emigration which might alienate France’s ally England—this was the period just preceding the Crimean War—but in the autumn of 1853 the Emperor intervened in favor of Ducos to overrule his foreign Minister’s objections. As a result of England’s strong
protests, the French government began by authorizing only the recruit-
ment of free Africans. Nevertheless, when the supply of free Africans
proved entirely insufficient, in late 1856, the Emperor’s government
approved of the purchase of African slaves and their transformation into
emigrants. This program of recruitment by purchase from slavery
began in 1857, but it immediately evoked such strenuous opposition
from British authorities that Napoleon III’s government was obliged to
reconsider its policy. In late 1857 France entered into negotiations with
Great Britain to obviate the need for enrolling redeemed African slaves
by obtaining contract coolie labor from India.41 By late 1861 London
and Paris agreed that France would cease to enroll Africans as of 1862;
at the same time French authorities, under British supervision, would
commence the recruitment of coolie workers. In 1862 France’s policy
of recruiting African emigrants by redemption from slavery came to an
end, but not before approximately 20,000 Africans had been introduced
in this fashion into the West Indies and Guiana.42
Throughout the period from 1848 to 1862 the French government
continually invoked England’s precedent in constructing its own large-
scale African emigration projects. As the need for more colonial workers
became increasingly apparent after 1848 and as more requests from
colonial officials for renewed emigration began flowing into the naval
and colonial ministry in Paris, the French government progressively
revived its interest in England’s emigration plan. A report from a
French naval captain in 1849 advocated African emigration to France’s
colonies and reminded the government that production was being sus-
tained in England’s colonial possessions as a result of African workers
having been introduced there by British emigration efforts.43 The
French colonial office was quick to pick up and exploit this argument
in its dispute with the French foreign ministry over the advisability of
proceeding with African emigration. Citing France’s growing need for
colonial laborers, the French naval Minister assured his colleague that
England could not object to France recruiting free Africans, because
‘England herself […] gives us an example in this respect’.44 Ducos
insisted that it was absolutely essential for France to adopt an emigration
policy which had served as ‘a means of salvation for several English
colonies after slave emancipation’.45 When the French foreign
Minister demurred, Ducos implied that it was not even necessary to
consult England before inaugurating a program of voluntary African
emigration; the British government, after all, had not requested French
assentment before launching its own plan for enrolling African workers.46

41. FOM, Généralités 124 (1866), Nov. 12, 1858, Note on immigration.
42. Ibid., Généralités 118 (1911).
43. Ibid., Généralités 126 (1896), May 31, 1849, Observations on different
points of the West Coast of Africa by Captain Gabet.
44. Ibid., Généralités 131 (1127), Nov. 18, 1852, Ducos to Drouyn de Lhuys.
45. Ibid., Oct. 19, 1853, Report to the Emperor.
46. Ibid., Oct. 13, 1853, Ducos to Drouyn de Lhuys.
Fortified with the knowledge that the Emperor was prepared to accept even the purchase and redemption of slaves, the French colonial Minister attempted to persuade his associate in foreign affairs that England’s longstanding methods of recruitment in Sierra Leone were themselves not beyond reproach.\(^{47}\) The French Minister of the Navy and Colonies was prepared to avail himself of every possible argument concerning British emigration in paving the way for France’s adoption of recruitment by purchase from slavery.

Once France had resolved in 1856 to resort to purchasing and liberating slaves for transportation to the West Indies, French spokesmen again strove to justify France’s decision by referring to England’s actions. The French colonial ministry declared that it had only authorized recruitment by redemption when England refused France the right to enroll coolie emigrants in India.\(^{48}\) A colonial representative from French Guiana, Le Pelletier de Saint-Rémy, published a pamphlet in which he endeavored to place the entire responsibility for France’s new emigration program upon Great Britain by insisting that ‘this idea of having recourse to recruitment by redemption […] is totally a concept of British origin’.\(^{49}\) Defenders of France’s emigration plan also developed a more potent argument to account for France’s decision to buy slaves for transportation to the colonies. Before 1856 French authorities had readily admitted that British enrollment methods were governed by safeguards which guaranteed that only free Blacks were embarked upon ships for the West Indies.\(^{50}\) After 1856 French officials and publicists attempted to prove just the opposite, that British enrollment of slaves liberated from seized slaving vessels was tantamount to recruitment by redemption from slavery. A long memo drawn up by the naval and colonial ministry in the autumn of 1857 asserted that France was just following Great Britain’s example; English emigration had been truly free only until 1849, when British officials began to oblige liberated Africans in Sierra Leone and Saint Helena to emigrate.\(^{51}\) The Parisian newspaper, L’Union, developed the same theme, insisting that emigration to the British West Indies, ‘which at first was supposed to have been free, was transformed later, around 1849, into forced recruitment’ because Africans were embarked after that date ‘without their consent being obtained’.\(^{52}\) A pamphlet published in 1858 by a French sea-captain engaged in the French recruitment scheme was even more blunt in its accusations. Captain Simon cited sources showing that what France was doing was the same thing England had been doing for years; the French bought their Blacks on

\(^{47}\) FOM, Généralités 131 (1127), Dec. 23, 1853, Ducos to Drouyn de Lhuys.

\(^{48}\) Ibid., Généralités 124 (1086), Nov. 17, 1857, Note.


\(^{50}\) FOM, Généralités 131 (1127), Oct. 19, 1853, Report to the Emperor.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., undated memo traceable by internal evidence to late 1857.

\(^{52}\) L’Union, Dec. 14, 1858, FOM, Généralités 124 (1085).
land while the English seized theirs at sea and forced them to emigrate. The newspaper the Courrier de Marseille expressed similar sentiments, affirming that French agents bought their engagés, while the British obtained theirs free of charge: 'We do not know whether the English procedure is more moral; it certainly is more economical.' The Marseille company of Régis frères, which recruited by purchase from slavery most of the Africans imported into French colonies between 1857 and 1862, was understandably envious that England 'finds the means of taking [Africans] without paying'. Régis also criticized the British emigration system on other grounds, asserting that the English easily could have extinguished the slave trade off the Congo but refrained from doing so in order to seize more slave ships and gain more emigrants for England's colonies. Similar accusations were echoed in a dispatch written by the French colonial Minister, Prince Jérôme Napoléon, to the French foreign Minister in late 1859. The French had become involved in procedures which even they at times admitted were of questionable legality and morality. Defenders of France's emigration by redemption efforts were employing every possible argument to vindicate French actions by referring to supposed or real British precedents.

The intensity of French criticism of England's African emigration projects varied in direct proportion to France's own involvement in questionable enrollment procedures. In the early 1860's, as in the mid-1840's, the French government moved away from an active African emigration policy. When this occurred, as in the mid-1840's, France lost interest in recruitment of laborers on the West coast of

54. Le Courrier de Marseille, May 2, 1857, FOM, Généralités 131 (1129).
55. FOM, Généralités 90 (835), undated letter traceable by corroborating evidence to 1859, Régis to Minister of the Navy and Colonies.
56. Ibíd., dispatch dated Nov. 1859, Prince Jérôme Napoléon to French foreign Minister.
57. In the 1840's the French naval and colonial ministry readily conceded that recruitment by purchase from slavery was 'a variety of slave trading' (ibíd., Généralités 122 (1079), undated memo traceable by internal evidence to 1843). Even Admiral Mackau had avowed that buying slaves to free them was 'purely and simply the slave trade' (FAAE, Afrique 29, Mar. 20, 1844, Mackau to Guizot). In the 1850's most French officials understandably abstained from drawing comparisons between France's emigration plan and slave trading. However, Faidherbe, the governor of Senegal, delivered a blistering indictment of France's actions in 1858, stating that recruitment by redemption was 'not a disguised slave trade but an undisguised one,' and insisting that 'France had a more noble role to play than depopulating' Africa (FOM, Généralités 124 (1089), Nov. 20, 1858, note from Faidherbe to Napoléon III on slavery in Africa). Among French newspapers publishing in the 1850's only the monarchist leaning Assemblée nationale (Paris) appears to have been hostile to France's emigration projects. This hostility, brought to the attention of the French Minister of the Interior by the French colonial Minister, Admiral Hamelin, in June, 1857, undoubtedly was a factor leading to the disappearance of this newspaper in early July (ibíd., Généralités 131 (1129), June 10, 1857, confidential letter from Hamelin to Minister of the Interior).
Africa. To be sure, in 1862 the newspaper the Moniteur de la Flotte (Paris) rebuked the British for continuing African emigration even though the French had renounced this expedient.\textsuperscript{58} As late as 1863 a French colonial office memo suggested that England’s enrollment of liberated Africans was not a voluntary process.\textsuperscript{59} Nevertheless, these were isolated comments. Beginning in the early 1860’s France’s attention was focused upon Indian labor emigration, and French spokesmen for colonial interests no longer needed England as a scapegoat for France’s African emigration projects. By 1864 the winding down of the Cuban slave trade and the growing need for workers in Africa brought a virtual end to both English enrollment of Africans for transfer to the West Indies and to French interest in this disguised form of slave trading which the French themselves had been so anxious to imitate.

Throughout the entire period of its existence, England’s African emigration policy had been closely scrutinized and commented upon by elements of the French government and public. Invariably, whichever reaction Frenchmen made to Great Britain’s African emigration endeavors depended largely upon France’s own fluctuating interest. British abolitionists had been correct when they had prophesied in the early 1840’s that England’s precedent would evoke criticism of English policies at the same time that it encouraged other nations to undertake actions which resembled overt slaving activities. The French did not fail to avail themselves of England’s example as justification for constructing and carrying out an African emigration program which amounted to little more than legalized slave trading.

\textit{Ottawa, 1977}

\textsuperscript{58} Le Moniteur de la Flotte, Feb. 15, 1862, FOM, Généralités 90 (835).
\textsuperscript{59} FOM, Généralités 90 (835), Nov. 23, 1863, Memo on African emigration to English colonies.