

**ARGUMENTS AGAINST SLAVERY IN FRANCE DURING THE RESTORATION: FROM ART TO
POLITICAL ECONOMY**

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INTRODUCTION

My recent research interests have focussed on French liberal thought during the Restoration period, 1815-1830, and the July Monarchy, 1830-1848. In my thesis I examined the work of two liberal journalists and academics, Charles Comte and Charles Dunoyer, who opposed Napoleon in the last years of the Empire because of his militarism and his suppression of constitutional freedoms, and who equally opposed the restored Bourbon monarchy for its attempt to undo the liberal gains of the Revolution and to avoid the limits placed on absolute royal power by the Charter of 1815.¹ It became clear to me as I proceeded with my research that one of the key issues which concerned liberals in the Restoration period was the problem of slavery. It was not just a matter of concern with the moral issue of the right of one individual to own, use and dispose of another, although this obviously clashed with the liberal principle of individual autonomy and freedom. It also raised a number of important problems concerning international relations in particular with

¹David M. Hart, *Class, Slavery and the Industrialist Theory of History in French Liberal Thought, 1814-1834: The Contribution of Charles Comte and Charles Dunoyer* (PhD thesis, King's College Cambridge, 1990) submitted in May 1990.

England, the very existence of the French Empire itself, the class structure and power of the planter class and those merchants involved in the slave trade, and for political economists the theoretical issue of the relative economic efficiency of slave labour vis-à-vis free wage labour in general.

I want to spend the first part of this paper discussing the historical background to the problem of slavery in France. Then I would like to examine the consequences of the return of the French colonies after the Treaty of Paris in 1814 and the reluctance of the restored monarchy to end the slave trade. One consequence was the revival of the abolitionist movement as both an organised movement and as a cultural and intellectual phenomenon. The latter can be shown in fields as diverse as art and political economy. In this respect I will examine the abolitionist sympathies of the painter Théodore Géricault, in particular in the painting the "Raft of the Medusa," and then the debate which took place in the 1820s between French political economists about the profitability of slave labour vis-à-vis free wage labour

THE GENERAL PROBLEM OF SLAVERY IN FRANCE, 1755-1848

The Restoration was not the first time slavery had been an issue in France. It had first aroused controversy during the Enlightenment and it continued until slavery was ultimately abolished in 1848. The injustice of slavery had been denounced during the Enlightenment with articles in the *Encyclopédie* by the Chavalier de Jaucourt (on "Slavery" (1755) and "The Slave Trade" (1765)), and in some searing criticism by Voltaire in *Candide* (1759) and the historian of colonialism the Abbé Raynal in *Histoire philosophique des deux Indes* (1772), to mention only a few more famous examples. The major lobby group for abolition was the "Société des amis des noirs" which had been founded by Clavière and was active between 1788-1793. Its members included a number of leading liberals who were part of the Girondin faction during the French Revolution. Although the Society and the Girondins were crushed by the Terror they had been able to change French public opinion enough to

lead to the abolition of slavery on February 2, 1794.

Unfortunately, the slaves' freedom did not last long. As the war against the French revolution expanded, the French colonies were seen to be a fair target for the British Navy. In order to bolster the resolve of the planters to resist the British attempt to destroy the French Empire, Napoleon decreed the reimposition of slavery in the remaining French colonies in May 17, 1802. This marked the end of the French abolitionist movement until it was revived in the early 1820s with the "Society for Christian Morality." In the more repressive years of the Napoleonic Empire abolition was seen as a pro-British plot to deprive France of its colonies and to weaken the Empire economically. This pro-British spectre continued to haunt the French abolitionists for the next 46 years. The main source of abolitionist activity during the late 1790s and the Napoleonic period was the "Coppet Circle" at Madame de Staël's chateau in Coppet, Switzerland. Exiled liberal opponents of Napoleon such as Madame de Staël herself and Benjamin Constant, and other liberals interested in slavery such as Simonde de Sismondi kept the abolitionist movement alive before its resurrection in the Restoration. Madame de Staël contributed to the debate about slavery with an anti-slavery novel *Mirza* (1795), about a highly cultivated and civilised freed slave; her famous history of the French Revolution *Considérations sur la Révolution française* (1818) in which she defended the violence of the slave revolt in Ste. Domingo as a justifiable reaction to the harsh repression they suffered under; and a translation she and her daughter did of William Wilberforce's history of the slave trade (1814), in which she tried to defend the French abolitionist movement against the charges that it was a pro-British front group to destroy the French Empire.

Slavery became an issue again in the Restoration with the return by Britain of certain French colonies in the Caribbean and West Africa which had been taken during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. According to the first Treaty of Paris of May 30, 1814, England returned all French colonies except Tabago, St. Lucia, Mauritius, and Malta, and France promised to end the slave trade by 1819 to follow the English example of 1807. However, in spite of signing this treaty, the French government had no heart in stamping

out the slave trade for a number of reasons. Firstly, the restored monarchy and the conservatives who supported it saw nothing wrong with slavery. It was essential, they believed, to the prosperity of the colonies and was an important source of trade and taxes for the metropole. Secondly, it was seen as an onerous burden imposed by "perfidious Albion" to destroy the last vestiges of the glorious French Empire. Thus, the re-establishment of slavery in the colonies was seen as an important way to rebuild French pride and at the same time to spurn the British. Thirdly, the planters and merchants in the slave ports were an important source of support for the restored Bourbon monarchy which needed their support in the attempt to resurrect as much of the old regime as it could. The crown was thus unwilling to antagonise this class by following the letter of the Treaty of Paris and actively pursuing and arresting those involved in the slave trade.

As the liberal political philosopher Benjamin Constant pointed out in newspaper articles in *La Minerve* in the late 1810s and in the book *Commentaire sur l'ouvrage de Filangieri* (1822) the French government was violating international law by turning a blind eye to the continuing existence of the outlawed slave trade. Constant claimed that the government knew all the times of departure of slave ships from French ports such as Nantes and deliberately tolerated it by refusing to act on this information. Furthermore, Constant believed that the ineffectual laws banning the trade had led to a worsening of the condition of the slaves. In order to escape pursuit and the confiscation of their cargo by the vigilant British Navy and desultory French navy the captains of the slavers sometimes dumped their chained-up cargo overboard. As Constant observed:

Since the slave trade was prohibited the vessels which are used in this commerce and which are constructed in such a way as to be able to escape more easily from any pursuit, are able to squeeze in a narrower space the captives, who nevertheless are much greater in number. The fear of inspections forces the captains of these vessels to lock up their prey in closed boxes where the eye of the inspectors cannot discover them. And when discovery is unavoidable, these boxes and the victims that they hide from view are thrown into the sea. (Commentaire, p. 5)

To avoid the increasing maltreatment of the blacks in the middle passage Benjamin

Constant advocated the vigorous enforcement of the anti-slave trade law and the imposition of much harsher penalties, even going so far as to advocate the death penalty for those involved in the slave trade.

As a reaction to the government's open toleration of the outlawed slave trade, a new abolitionist society was established in 1822, the so-called "Society for Christian Morality." The Society was founded by a group of aristocratic liberals which included François Guizot, Benjamin Constant, Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, Charles Comte and Charles Dunoyer, the Duc d'Orléans (future King Louis Philippe), and the Duc de Broglie who became the leader of the abolitionist movement in the Parliament. The strategy of the Society was to lobby parliament and the government, to sponsor essay competitions on abolishing slavery, and to popularise the abolitionist cause in a variety of ways. For example, the Society unsuccessfully tried to borrow from the tactics of the more popular and successful British anti-slavery movement. In May 1825 the Society tried to get up an anti-slavery petition in Paris with dismal results. August de Staël, Madame de Staël's son, used Clarkson's tactic of visiting slave ports such as Nantes in order to find documented proof of the continuing slave trade. This proof was then passed onto the royal family in the hope that it would put pressure on the government to do something. The result was the first of a series of ministerial committees to investigate the slave trade which, much to the frustration of the abolitionists, only led to further parliamentary committees and eventually to bureaucratic oblivion.

In its efforts to arouse the apathetic French public to support abolition, the Society distributed translations of English anti-slavery material (by leading abolitionists such as Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce) which stressed the horrors of the slave trade and the immorality of the whites who were involved. The aim was to shock the complacent French public into supporting abolition and to pressure the government into enforcing the existing measures against the slave trade. An example of the type of propaganda material used by the society to shock people is the plan of the slaver "The Brookes" issued by the

Society in 1822.² Apparently, it had been designed specifically for the trans-Atlantic slave trade with space for some 450 slaves but, as the Society pointed out, it was often used to carry up to 600 slaves in shocking conditions. From the design one can see that there were two vertical decks throughout most of the ship, increasing to four towards the stern. Horizontally, the slaves were laid head-to-toe four deep across the ship and presumably shackled individually with a long chain passed between each slave thus linking them together for the periods (i.e. night and during storms) spent below deck.

ABOLITIONIST SENTIMENT IN THE ART OF THÉODORE GÉRICAUT: "THE RAFT OF THE
MEDUSA" (1818-1819)

The visual depiction of the cruelty of the slave trade was not limited to the propaganda of the Society of Christian Morality. The artist Théodore Géricault was drawn into the abolitionist movement between 1818 and 1823 at just the same time as liberal opposition to the continuation of the slave trade and the government's complicity was growing in strength. One of his earliest works (1818) is a lithograph of a boxing match between what appears to be an equally matched white man and a black man with obvious abolitionist connotations.³ But his best known work dealing with the problem of slavery and the slave trade is the "Raft of the Medusa" (1818-19) about a shipwreck following the government's attempt in 1816 to recover the colony of Senegal. In June 1816 an expedition of 4 ships, headed by the frigate *Medusa* under the command of Captain Chaumareys, and having on board the new governor of the colony, military personnel, civil servants and settlers, set off to reestablish control of the colony. Unfortunately, the incompetence of the ex-emigre captain led to the ship being run aground off the African coast. Since there were not enough life boats aboard, a makeshift raft had to be made for 152 people. An attempt

²*La traite des noirs au siècle des lumières*, ed. Isabelle et Jean-Louis Vissiere (Paris: A.M. Métailié, 1982), pp. 40-41. See Appendix of this paper.

³Boime, p. 60.

was made to tow the raft behind the life boats but this proved impossible and the raft was cut adrift without navigation instruments or food. After 12 days spent adrift from 5-17 July 1816 only 15 people were found alive by a British ship the *Argus*. Some time later, 5 of these 15 survivors also died.

The shipwreck became a political scandal for the Restoration government both because of the resentment felt towards the return to positions of authority of incompetent emigres, such as the captain of the frigate, and opposition to the attempt to restore the French colonies and the system of slavery which sustained them economically. Géricault was moved by the event to paint one of his greatest works. First hand testimony of the event was available to Géricault from two survivors, the ship's engineer Alexandre Corréard and the surgeon Jean-Baptiste Henri Savigny, who attested to incidents of madness, suicide and cannibalism. Interestingly, the fact that a black soldier, Jean Charles, also survived gave Géricault the inspiration to make him the focal point of the painting, thus linking the work to the problem of slavery. The painting is made up of a human pyramid on the makeshift raft. At the base of the pyramid are the dead and dying. At the pinnacle of the pyramid is the black man (most unusual in 18th and 19th century art) who is signalling to the rescue ship. The position of the black man is a complete reversal of the traditional subservient position of blacks in European paintings and is itself a statement of Géricault's radical antislavery position. Furthermore, one might interpret the survivors on the raft as a microcosm of "shipwrecked" post-revolutionary French society, broken by the upheavals of the revolution and the Restoration, and corrupted by the efforts to restore slavery and other aspects of the old regime.⁴

Géricault returned to the problem of slavery a few years after completing the "Raft of the Medusa." His unfinished monumental depiction of the slave trade entitled "The Slave Trade" (1822-23) draws attention to the maltreatment of the slaves as they are herded towards the slave ships waiting off the west coast of Africa for the middle passage to

⁴Boime, pp. 52ff.

America. In one of the sketches Géricault made for this large work we can see a "human caravan" of slaves chained together which has been brought from the interior to the coast of Senegal for loading on board ship.⁵ The social art historian Albert Boime, who has studied this sketch in some detail, believes that this work shows the extent to which Géricault had been influenced by and supported the abolitionist movement. He had been impressed with the abolitionists' stress on the horrors of the separation of slave families and pointedly places a cruel looking European slave trader between two anguished and sensitive-looking blacks - a black man being flogged and his wife pleading for his life before being separated and then taken on board ship. Concerning their facial expressions Boime notes that:

Another critical feature of Géricault's project further indicates his knowledge of the writings of Wilberforce and Clarkson: the facial expressions of the victims and their oppressors. Although the main study is a fairly rough sketch, therein are three carefully completed heads of black prisoners, one female and two males. Their physiognomies attest to their humanity and their vulnerability: they reveal compassion for one another in consoling gestures and expressions, with the central male gazing at his taskmaster with an expression of pity mingled with perplexity. By contrast, the heads of the slavers - although less realized - are all bestial; the eyes are lozenge-shaped and lack pupils, and the mouths are turned down in malevolent grimaces. This sharply drawn contrast between the inhumane and inhuman slavers and the intelligent, deep-suffering slaves invoked the observations of abolitionists that participants in the *traite* lose their moral sense and devolve into "monsters."⁶

THE DEBATE ABOUT THE PROFITABILITY OF SLAVERY AMONGST FRENCH POLITICAL ECONOMISTS IN THE 1820S

Perhaps less surprising than finding abolitionist sentiment in art, is to discover these new concerns about slavery and the slave trade in the late 1810s and early 1820s in the domain of political economy. Most political economists at this time were liberals and they

⁵Albert Boime, *The Art of Exclusion: Representing Blacks in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), pp. 51ff.

⁶Boime, pp. 61-2.

naturally shared the liberal support for the abolition of slavery. The political economists' contribution to the debate about slavery was to raise issues such as the economic viability of plantation society as a whole, the economic relationship between the colonies and the metropole, the place of slave societies in the economic evolution of the modern world, the class structure of plantation and slave societies, and most importantly the profitability of slave labour vis-à-vis free wage labour. Unfortunately I cannot discuss all these interesting issues here, but I would like to summarise the research I have done in my dissertation on this topic.⁷

The period of most active discussion about the economics of slavery was the decade between the appearance of the fourth edition of Jean-Baptiste Say's classic *Traité d'économie politique* in 1819 and his more popular work the *Cours complet d'économie politique pratique* in 1828. Between these two end points the debate included a critical response to Say's *Traité* by an English abolitionist Adam Hodgson, the work of the Russian political economist Henri Storch on the related problem of the economics of serf labour (who wrote in French), and the historical and sociological work of Charles Dunoyer and Say's son-in-law Charles Comte.

In the 18th century the debate about slave labour was too often limited to a discussion of the suitability, or rather unsuitability, of Europeans working in tropical climates. It was assumed that, since blacks came from the tropical part of Africa, they were racially better suited to working on the plantations in the Caribbean. It was also assumed that Europeans from temperate climates were incapable of working as farmers in this part of the world. A new dimension to the debate opened up in the late 18th century with Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776). Smith shifted the debate away from racial characteristics and focussed instead on the different incentives to labour provided by coercion (serfdom or slavery) and free wages. In Book I, chapter viii, paragraph 41 of the *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith discusses the problem of the comparative cost of "the wear and tear" of free labourers and

⁷See chapter three of my thesis "Comte, Dunoyer and the Political Economists on Slavery: The Debate about the Profitability of Slave Labour in the 1820s," *Class, Slavery, and the Industrialist Theory of History*.

slaves. He believed the latter's "wear and tear" was borne directly by the slave master and that this cost was not kept to a minimum because of the bad management practices of "a negligent master or careless overseer." The "wear and tear" of the former was borne partly by the employer who, by paying subsistence or above subsistence wages, covered some of this cost. However, what tipped the balance in favour of free wage labour over slave labour was the capacity of wage labourers to manage better and hence keep to a minimum the cost of maintaining themselves. In Smith's words "the strict frugality and parsimonious attention of the poor" meant, in the last analysis, "that the work done by freemen comes cheaper in the end than that performed by slaves."⁸ The debate between the British abolitionists and the French political economists had followed the precedent set by Smith in phrasing the question in the following manner: is the labour performed by slaves less costly than the labour performed by free men? This was the question the early Say, Hodgson and Storch were trying to answer. Comte and the later Say rejected this question as too narrowly defined, or "peu philosophique" as Comte put it.⁹

The most important figure after Smith was Jean-Baptiste Say whose economic and sociological writings were to influence Comte and Dunoyer so profoundly. In the early editions of the *Traité d'économie politique* Say had argued that slavery, though immoral, was in fact very profitable. Even as late as 1819, when the fourth edition of his *Traité* appeared, Say was arguing that slave labour was considerably cheaper than free labour. Say explains this phenomenon by the fact that black slaves can survive with only the clothes on their backs, the simplest of food and meanest lodgings, whereas free labourers need to earn enough to support their wives and children at a much higher standard of living. Whatever the economic needs and desires of the black slaves may be, it is the master who is able to enforce savings upon them and keep the cost of their labour to a bare minimum. Thus plantations in Santo Domingo are so profitable that they can repay their purchase

⁸Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of nations*, ed. R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner (The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith reprinted Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1981), vol. I, pp. 98-99.

⁹Comte, *Traité de législation*, p. 415.

price in six years, whilst farms in Europe require twenty five or thirty years in which to repay their purchase price. Although, according to Say, slavery is enormously profitable for the plantation owners, it is not because they are industrious or provide a service to the consumers in the metropole. They are profitable because they are exploitative. They exploit the black slaves by forcing them to work for little or no return. They also exploit the consumers in Europe by their monopoly of the home market or high tariffs which artificially raise the price of their goods.¹⁰

Four years after the fourth edition of Say's *Traité* appeared, Say's view of the enormous profitability of slavery was subjected to searching criticism by Adam Hodgson, writing on behalf of the Liverpool branch of the Society for Mitigating and Gradually Abolishing Slavery.¹¹ Adam Hodgson readily admitted the important contributions Say had made to the liberal cause but regretted Say's belief that slave labour was profitable. This belief, Hodgson remarked, made the activities of the Society that much harder, since one of the Society's main strategies was the campaign to show plantation owners that it was in their best economic interests to abandon slave labour and gradually adopt free wage labour. That one of the leading liberal political economists took the opposite view was a handicap to the abolitionist cause.

Hodgson began his letter with the following remarks:

It is with much concern that I observe, in your excellent and popular work on Political Economy, the sentiments you express on the subject of the comparative expense of free and slave labour. Accustomed to respect you highly, as an enlightened advocate of liberal principles, and to admire the

¹⁰"Mais ces profits mêmes que prouvent-ils? Que si le travail de l'esclave n'est pas cher, l'industrie du maître l'est prodigieusement. Le consommateur n'y gagne rien. Les produits n'en sont pas à meilleur marché. L'un des producteurs s'engraisse aux dépens de l'autre, voilà tout; ou plutôt ce n'est pas tout; il en résulte un système vicieux de production qui s'oppose aux plus beaux développemens de l'industrie. Un esclave est un être dépravé, et son maître ne l'est pas moins; ni l'un ni l'autre ne peuvent devenir complètement industriels, et ils dépravent l'homme libre qui n'a point d'esclaves. Le travail ne peut être en honneur dans les mêmes lieux où il est une flétrissure. On ne peut maintenir que par des airs d'indolence et d'oisiveté, cette suprématie forcée et contre nature, qui est le fondement de l'esclavage. L'inactivité de l'esprit est la conséquence de celle du corps; le fouet à la main, on est dispensé d'intelligence." Say, *Traité* 4th edition, pp. 301-2.

¹¹Adam Hodgson, *A Letter to M. Jean-Baptiste Say on the Comparative Expense of Slave and Free Labour* (Liverpool: James Smith and London: Hatchard and Son, 1823, second edition). The pamphlet was written as a letter addressed to William Roscoe, President, and to other members of the Liverpool branch of the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery.

philanthropic spirit which pervades your writings, I cannot but regret deeply, that opinions so much calculated to perpetuate slavery should have the sanction of your authority; and that, while you denounce the slave-system as unjustifiable, you admit that in a pecuniary point of view it may be the most profitable.¹²

Hodgson rejected this view primarily because he thought slave labour lacked the economic incentives of free labour, thus making it economically inefficient. Hodgson was convinced that, once the planters began to view their property in a truly commercial light rather than as a way of life, they would gradually recognise that their true interests would be best served by freeing their slaves and re-employing them as wage labourers. Citing the experience of a Joshua Steele of Barbados, Hodgson argues that in the cultivation of food crops the slaves have little incentive to be productive. They perform their work negligently and steal whatever they can get away with, which results in an overall rate of productivity which Steele estimates to be about one third the rate of free labourers.¹³ Joshua Steele had tried paying his slaves for the work they did in an attempt to mimic the incentive effects of free labour. Steele reported that after four years of trying such an experiment his economic return was increased threefold. Costs of supervision dropped and the care and diligence of the slaves in their work increased. Steele's experiment was very important to the cause of the British abolitionists and they used it repeatedly to drive home the point to slave owners that it was in their economic interests to abandon or at least reform the system of slave labour. In later editions of his *Traité* Say disputed the success of Steel's experiment and its usefulness as a model for other slave owners. Nevertheless, Steele provided an example of what an enlightened slave owner might do to increase the productivity of his slaves. Brougham suggested that it might prove to be a way in which slavery could gradually be done away with. In the transition period before the complete abolition of slavery, slaves

¹²Hodgson, p.1.

¹³Other accounts written by slave owners themselves or observers come to similar conclusions. Another commentator Hodgson uses is Dr Beattie, who notes that in the West Indies the same amount of work can be done by half the number of paid free labourers than slaves. In the French colonies an observer (Coulomb) states that slaves can only do one third to one half of the work done by what he admits are reluctant French soldiers and not freely paid wage labourers. These very rough proportions of half to a third are shared by other commentators Hodgson cites in his letter.

might pay a tax or tribute to their master for the right to work on their own account or at market wage rates in his fields. This was also the view of Henri Storch whose work on the Russian serfs provided perhaps the best example of such a halfway house between slavery and free labour. Storch's important analysis will be discussed in more detail below. Hodgson concluded that the transition to free labour might be made via a two stage reform: the first introducing piece work to increase the productivity of slave labour; the second a system of profit sharing with the master via some kind of tax or tribute on their work.¹⁴ Hodgson concluded by summarising his case against arguments supporting the profitability of slave labour:

If then, it has appeared that we should be naturally led to infer, from the very constitution of human nature, that slave labour is more expensive than the labour of free men; if it has appeared that such has been the opinion of the most eminent philosophers and enlightened travellers in different ages and countries; if it has appeared that in a state where slavery is allowed, land is most valuable in those districts where the slave system prevails the least, notwithstanding great disadvantages of locality; and that in adjoining states, with precisely the same soil and climate, in the one of which slavery is allowed, and in the other prohibited, land is most valuable in that state in which it is proscribed; if it has appeared that slave labour has never been able to maintain its ground in competition with free labour, except where monopoly has secured high profits, or protecting duties afforded artificial support; if it has appeared that, in every quarter of the globe, in proportion as the planter rendered attention to economy more indispensable, the harsher features of the slave-system have disappeared, and the condition of the slave has been gradually assimilated to that of the free labourer; and if it has been found, by experience, to substitute the alacrity of voluntary labour, for the reluctance of compulsory toil; and that emancipation has rendered the estates on which it has taken place, greatly and rapidly more productive - I need not, I think, adduce additional proofs of the truth of the general proposition, that slave labour is more expensive than the labour of free men.¹⁵

HENRI FRÉDÉRIC STORCH ON SLAVERY AND SERFDOM IN EASTERN EUROPE - *COURS*
D'ÉCONOMIE POLITIQUE (1823)

¹⁴Hodgson, p. 22.

¹⁵Hodgson, pp. 25-6.

In the same year as Hodgson's letter challenging Say's view of the profitability of slave labour appeared a leading Russian economist's analysis of the economics of serfdom and slavery in Eastern Europe. Henri Storch¹⁶ was a member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences and a pioneer in the collection of economic statistics. He was a fairly orthodox member of the Smithian school of political economy and had the dubious pleasure of teaching the grand dukes (one was to become the Tsar) the principles of political economy. His lectures to the dukes were published in 1815 as the *Cours d'économie politique* and contain much of interest on the economics of serfdom and slavery in Russia and Eastern Europe.¹⁷

¹⁶Henri-Frédéric Storch (1766-1835), a Russian economist noted for his work on the economics of unfree labour, particularly that of serfdom, was born on 15 February 1766 in Riga and died on 13 November 1835 in Saint Petersburg. Storch studied at the universities of Jena and Heidelberg before returning to Russia where he taught belles-lettres from 1787 in Saint Petersburg and exercised various positions in education and government administration. In 1790 he worked for the office of Count Berborodko, the minister for foreign affairs. In 1796 he was elected a corresponding member of the Saint Petersburg Academy of sciences after the publication of the first volume of *Tableau historique et statistique de l'empire de Russie*. In 1799 he was appointed tutor to the daughters of Tsar Paul I and shortly afterwards Storch was made a councillor of the court and an hereditary noble. He became a state councillor in 1804 and head of the Academy's statistical section. He was also appointed to teach political economy by Alexander I to the grand dukes Nicholas and Michael. In 1828 he was promoted to the rank of private councillor and appointed vice-president of the Academy of Sciences, offices which he held until his death. His major theoretical work was the *Cours d'économie politique* which was based upon the lectures he gave to the grand dukes. Blanqui described Storch's economic theories as eclectic but considered his empirical work of great value. In terms of school affiliation he followed closely the writings of Say and Smith. The main issues which occupied him include the distinction between free and unfree labour, the contribution which unfree serf labour made to the national wealth of the Russian empire, the importance of moral (or rather "human") capital to national wealth, comparative banking, and the greater wealth producing capacity of industry and commerce compared to agriculture. Perhaps his greatest contributions to economics were his analysis of serf labour in Eastern Europe and his theory of "nonmaterial production", the latter influencing Dunoyer who used it in his *De la liberté du travail*. The debate between Storch and Say on the issue of immaterial production was conducted in Say's footnotes to the second edition of the *Cours* and in Storch's response *Considérations sur la nature du revenu national* (1824). His major writings include: *Gemälde von St. Petersburg* (Riga, 1793); *Statistische Übersicht der Statthalterschaften des russischen Reiches* (St.Petersburg, 1795); *Tableau historique et statistique de l'empire de Russie à la fin du dix-huitième siècle* (Riga and Leipzig, 1797-1803. French translation 1801, 2 vols); *Cours d'économie politique, ou exposition des principes qui déterminent la prospérité des nations* 6 vols (St. Petersburg: A. Pluchart et comp., 1815) based upon the course he gave to the grand dukes Nicholas and Michael; unauthorized second edition of *Cours d'économie politique* 4 vols. (Paris, 1823) edited by Jean-Baptiste Say with extensive notes and critical commentaries; *Considération sur la nature du revenu national* (Paris, 1824) 5th volume of the *Cours* and a repudiation of Say's unauthorized edition; *Zur Kritik des Begriffs Nationaleinkommens* (St. Petersburg, 1827); *Esquisses, scènes et observations recueillies pendant son voyage en France* (Heidelberg, 1790); *Principes généraux de belles-lettres* (Saint-Petersberg); numerous articles in the *Mémoires* of the Saint Petersburg academy of sciences. Source: article by J.L. in *Nouveau Dictionnaire d'Économie Politique* vol 2, pp. 925-26.

¹⁷Henri Frédéric Storch, *Cours d'économie politique, ou exposition des principes qui déterminent la prospérité des nations. Ouvrage qui a servi à l'instruction de LL. AA. II. les grands-ducs Nicolas et Michel,*

The economic dimension to Storch's analysis was unusual and perhaps quite original in that he stressed the modifications and ameliorations which slave labour had undergone in different parts of the world. Not all slaves were treated like the chattel slaves of antiquity or the Caribbean. He thought it was a mistake to base any economic analysis of slave labour on only these two extreme forms, without taking into account the more moderate slave systems of the Middle Ages and the eastern parts of Europe. As an expert on economic conditions in Russia, Storch was in a position of authority to discuss the variation in slavery which existed there. In particular, he focused upon two special types of forced labour - the modification of slavery which allowed the individual serf to work for himself, free of direct supervision by the master in return for a payment known as the "obroc," and the special class of serfs known as the "peasants of the royal domain" or "crown peasants." In both these cases Storch believed the Russian experience showed both the complexity of the nature of slave labour and a means of gradually abolishing its stricter forms in the Caribbean by following the Russian example of obroc or the institution of crown peasants.¹⁸ The crown peasants tied to the glebe provided Storch with the example of a "halfway house" between slavery and free labour. They were allowed to pay a tax ("cens" or obroc) to the crown, which was determined by the fertility of the soil and to which Storch likened to a form of land rent. Like the other peasants, the crown peasants were also obliged to pay the capitation tax and to serve in the military, but what interested Storch most was that these serfs were allowed to keep whatever surplus they produced after having paid their taxes. Furthermore, they enjoyed the protection of the law and the property they were able to acquire could not be repossessed by their lord. Crown peasants had the right to leave their village upon receiving a passport which was valid for one, two or three years and, with the permission of the commune in which they lived, could move to a free town and engage in free labour there.

ed. J.-B. Say (Paris: J.-P. Aillaud, 1823), 4 vols. Storch's sometimes angry response to Say's editorial comments was published as a fifth volume, *Considérations sur la nature du revenu national* (1824).

¹⁸Storch, Note XIX, "Sur la condition des serfs et des esclaves en Russie," *Cours*, vol. 4, pp. 248-58

The innovation Storch brought to the debate on the economics of slavery was the discussion of what he called the "esclaves censitaires" or slaves who engage in freely paid work with the permission of their masters, on payment of a fee or "cens."¹⁹ In addition to establishing a fixed fee or tax for the right of the slave to work independently of the master, the slave owner could also allow the slave to use part of his land, or he might provide the slave with some capital to begin a small business in manufacturing or commerce. In the latter cases there would also be a charge for rent or interest in addition to the fee or tax paid by the slave to his master. Storch was interested in this more moderate form of slavery, partly because of its widespread use in Russia, partly because he considered it to be an efficient way of ameliorating the worst economic consequences of forced labour, and partly because he thought it could be the best method of gradually abolishing slavery throughout the Western world.

Storch had four reasons why the "esclave censitaire" was a better and more efficient worker than the chattel slave. Firstly, the slave's labour is not as closely supervised and thus the slave's attitudes and behaviour more closely approach that of a free labourer or "du moins lui en laisse l'illusion" of being a free labourer.²⁰ Secondly, the esclave censitaire is able to engage in free labour, that is, he is able to choose his work and to carry it out according to his own interests. With the incentive of self interest now operating the slave can work hard and be inventive. Thirdly, now that the slave is in control of his work he has the incentive and the means to economise or cut costs and thus improve the efficiency of labour. Fourthly, in societies where there are few free labourers, such as Russia or the Caribbean colonies, the censitaire system provides an important source of labour for manufacturing or commercial enterprises which could not be done by chattel slaves. One of the assumptions behind Storch's advocacy of the censitaire slave system is that the rights and obligations of both parties must be recognised in law in order to protect the property produced by the slave from arbitrary seizure by the master. With some guarantee of

¹⁹Storch, *Cours*, vol. 3, book 8, chapter 10, "Des esclaves censitaires et des serfs," pp. 163-69.

²⁰Storch, *Cours*, vol. 3, p. 164.

security for the slave's property enough incentives are in place for the slave to begin the slow economic process of self-improvement.

COMTE'S VIEWS ON SLAVERY IN THE *TRAITÉ DE LÉGISLATION* (1827) AND THE *TRAITÉ DE LA PROPRIÉTÉ* (1834)

Say's son-in-law Charles Comte discovered political economy in 1817 when the journal he and his colleague Charles Dunoyer edited was closed down by the censor. In the period of enforced inactivity he read the classics of political economy and became hooked. The censors again acted against his journal in 1820 in the climate of political reaction following the assassination of the Duc de Berry. Comte was forced into exile in Switzerland where he taught at the University of Lausanne. Comte's contribution to the debate on slavery came in the form of a detailed historical and sociological analysis of the role played by slavery in the evolution of modern society from hunter gatherers to the present. He also had a profound impact on Say who incorporated much of his work in his later writings.

In the *Traité de législation* (1827) dealt with the question of the class structure and the economics of slavery in considerable detail.²¹ Comte rejected the arguments about the

²¹Charles Comte, *Traité de législation, ou exposition des lois générales suivant lesquelles les peuples prospèrent, dépérissent ou restent stationnaire*, 4 vols. (Paris: A. Sautelet et Cie, 1827). A second revised edition was published in 1835 by Chamerot, Ducollet of Paris in 4 vols. to coincide with the publication of its sequel, the *Traité de la propriété*. A revised and corrected third edition was published in 1837 by Hauman, Cattoir et Cie of Brussels. All references are to this third edition of 1837. Comte's book of some 500 very dense pages with two closely printed columns per page is divided up into five "livres" the first of which deals with theoretical questions of law, sociological analysis, and previous all-encompassing social theories which have been used to explain social structure and evolution, pp. 1-69. Book two deals with the nature of law, in particular natural law, and the various schools of legal thinking, pp. 70-127. Book three concerns the different races of mankind, anthropology, and the influence of these factors on the evolution of culture and civilisation, pp. 128-297. Book four deals with theories of climate and its influence on civilisation, pp. 298-358. Book five deals almost exclusively with slavery, its origin, influence on political culture, the economy and the prospects for its abolition, pp. 359-496. The chapters dealing with the economics of slavery are the following: V "De l'influence de l'esclavage sur les facultés industrielle des maîtres et des esclaves," pp. 370-76; VI "De l'influence de l'esclavage sur la partie de la population qui tient le milieu entre les maîtres et les esclaves," pp. 376-79; XV "De l'influence de l'esclavage domestique sur la production et l'accroissement des richesses," pp. 415-18; XVI "De l'influence de l'esclavage sur les arts industriels et sur le prix de la manoeuvre - suite du précédent," pp. 418-25; XVII "De l'influence de l'esclavage sur la distribution des richesses entre les diverse classes de la population," pp. 425-28; XXVI "De l'influence qu'exercent, sur l'industrie et le commerce des

appropriateness of a narrowly based comparison between the costs of slave and free wage labourers. Comte developed at some length the idea that the slave system could only survive economically because it had the protection of tariffs in the home market and subsidies from the home government funded by the metropolitan taxpayers. If it had to compete in a fully free market, slavery's economic inefficiencies would be quickly exposed and the system would collapse, thus rendering the argument about the relative cost of slave labour versus free wage labour irrelevant.

Perhaps the most startling conclusion Comte comes to, after having read Smith, Say, Hodgson, Storch and Sismondi on the profitability of slave labour, is that the very question first asked by Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* is mistaken. When the question is phrased in the way Smith chose to, namely to place oneself in the shoes of the slave owner and ask whether the costs of labour ("wear and tear" as Smith called them) were more or less for free or slave labour, Comte believed the unspoken assumption behind the question was that individual labourers, whether slave or free, were nothing more than machines whose movement could be arbitrarily directed, accelerated or slowed down. Comte rejected this approach as not one which a true philosophe, a true moralist, or a true legislator should take since it was partisan. It took the perspective of the slave owner at the literal expense of the slave labourer. By not asking about the morality and justice of slave labour in the first place, economists who argued purely about the relative costs of the two different forms of labour were like the pirates or highway robbers who weighed up the costs and benefits of a new raid against travellers. Comte rejected this way of calculating costs as immoral laid the blame for the prevalence of naked economic calculation over moral questions of property

nations libres, les privilèges commerciaux qu'elles accordent à des possesseurs d'esclaves - Du système colonial," pp. 462-68; XXVII "Des privilèges commerciaux accordés aux possesseurs d'esclaves des colonies - Suite du précédent," pp. 468-72. Comte's section on slavery in the *Traité de législation* was highly regarded by many French liberals. For example, Simonde de Sismondi described it as this "excellent livre" and "Nous le regardons, en effet, comme le traité le plus complet, le plus savant, le plus philosophique qui ait jamais été écrit sur l'esclavage et sur ses désastreux effets." In Simonde de Sismondi "Des effets de l'esclavage sur la race humaine," *Études sur l'économie politique*, vol. 2 (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1837) p. 382. Likewise Molinari held Comte's work on slavery as a key text: Molinari, Gustave de, "Esclavage," *Dictionnaire de l'économie politique...*, eds. Charles Coquelin and Guillaumin (Paris: Guillaumin, 1852), vol. 1, pp. 712-731.

and justice at the feet of Adam Smith.

As I see it, only pirates or highway robbers discuss amongst themselves whether the return they get in ransoming travellers is better for them than that which they could get in practicing some or other branch of industrial activity. For them, the problem cannot be expressed in this way and they do not intend to discuss the matter in this way as moralists or as legislators might do so. But for civilised (policé) people to raise an analogous question, and to treat it as a science, seems to me to renounce the impartiality which must govern all scientific research and is a retrograde step back towards barbarism. Adam Smith, who in most other matters is so fair, has badly phrased the question and he has led into error almost all those who have treated the question after him.²²

Amore honest way of expressing the same question, Comte thought, was:

...to find out whether the amount of labour one man can extract from a large number of other men by stripping their skin off their backs with a whip is greater than the amount of labour he can obtain from them by paying them a just wage.²³

Not surprisingly few if any of the political economists contributing to the debate expressed the question in this way, even though most of them would have agreed with Comte's sentiments. To Comte the phrasing of the question in the way made popular by Smith was "unscientific" because it was so value-laden and was therefore not likely to lead to a "good solution" to the problem. It seemed to view the problem exclusively from the perspective of the slave owner, who asked himself how he could minimise his labour costs. In fact, Comte surmised that the way the question was phrased suggested that the first writers on the subject must have been slave owners and that it was to further their own interests that they investigated the problem of the economics of slave labour. A fairer and more general question would be to ask all parties to the transaction for an assessment of

²²"Que des pirates ou des voleurs de grand chemin discutent entre eux, si les biens qu'ils acquièrent en rançonnant les voyageurs, leur coûtent plus cher que ceux qu'ils acquerraient en exerçant quelque branche d'industrie, je le conçois; pour eux, la question peut ne pas être éclaircie, et ils n'ont pas la prétention de la discuter, ni comme moralistes, ni comme législateurs. Mais élever une question analogue chez des peuples policés, et en traitant une science, c'est, à ce qu'il me semble, renoncer à l'impartialité qui doit présider à toute recherche scientifique, et rétrograder vers la barbarie. Adam Smith, dont l'esprit était d'ailleurs si juste, a mal posé la question, et il a entraîné dans l'erreur presque tous ceux qui l'ont traitée après lui." Comte, *Traité de législation*, p. 415.

²³"...de savoir si le travail qu'un homme obtient d'un grand nombre d'autres en leur déchirant la peau à coups de fouet, lui coûte plus que le travail qu'il obtiendrait d'eux en leur payant un juste salaire." Comte, *Traité de législation*, p. 415.

their perception of the costs and benefits involved. And this, of course, would involve the slaves as participants rather than as objects or "machines." Comte asks rhetorically why the slaves' costs have never been included in any economic calculation:

Never have enslaved men asked themselves the question whether the paltry subsistence they get in return for their labour costs less in suffering and fatigue than the salary that free workers get for their labour. However, this question is the same as the previous one. There is no difference between the two, except that in the former it is the slave owners who decide whether it is their own interests to pay their workers with lashes of the whip or in hard cash, whilst in the latter it is the slaves who ask themselves which of the two methods of payment is most agreeable.²⁴

A valid scientific inquiry into the problem had to be impartial and could not assume the position of one of the parties at the expense of the other. Thus Comte refused to take the perspective of either master or slave, king or subject, citizen or foreigner in what he wanted and expected to be a scientific analysis of the problem of slavery.²⁵

Of course Comte knew very well that, by rejecting the traditional Smithian approach to the problem and introducing the issue of the perception of costs and benefits of the slave, he was going to the heart of the contradiction and injustice of slavery, namely that a human being could be a form of property and thus be the mute object of a transaction. Comte granted that many slave owners behaved exactly like this, treating their slaves like so many English post-horses whose owners drove to death, since it was cheaper to replace them with fresh horses than to care for them in the long term.²⁶

A slave owner or a pirate might be able and willing to make a calculation such as Smith had in mind, but the independent thinking social theorist was not in such a position. As Comte put it with considerable passion:

²⁴"Jamais des hommes asservis ne se fussent avisés de mettre en question, si la chétive subsistance qu'ils obtiennent pour prix de leurs travaux leur coûte moins de souffrances et de fatigues que n'en coûte à des ouvriers libres le salaire qu'ils obtiennent de leur travail. Cette question est cependant la même que la précédente; il n'y a de différence entre l'une et l'autre, qu'en ce que, dans la première, ce sont les maîtres qui examinent s'il leur convient de payer leurs ouvriers en coups de fouets ou en bonne monnaie, tandis que dans la seconde ce sont les esclaves qui se demandent quel est entre ces deux modes de paiement, celui qui leur convient le mieux." Comte, *Traité de législation*, p. 415-16.

²⁵Comte, *Traité de législation*, p. 415.

²⁶Comte, *Traité de législation*, p. 389, footnote.

But we, who have no schedule (tarif) to determine the value of our fellow human beings; we, who do not know what is the legitimate price to pay to have the power to do violence to men, women, children and women; we, who do accept the view that the largest part of the human race has been created for the pleasure of members of an aristocracy; we, who can only see in the relationship between master and slave the action of force and brutality on weakness and ignorance; we, in whose eyes slaves are just as much human beings as their masters and who ought to calculate the cost of a good, not to one or other individuals but to the entire human race; finally, we, who cannot count as nothing the violence and misery done to the population for the pleasure of more or less numerous aristocracy; we ought to reason differently to the owners of slaves.²⁷

But this outburst did not mean that Comte was not interested in the economic consequences of slavery. His concern, like Henri Storch's, was the overall economic, moral, religious, social and political consequences of slavery - a systemic interest, as it were, rather than an interest in the peculiar problems of the slave owner in balancing his plantation account books by weighing the pros and cons of using slaves or free wage labourers. However unlike Storch, Comte was unwilling to countenance the possibility of paying slaves for their labour as a kind of half-way house between slavery and free labour. The moral imperatives of abolition were too strong for him to accept any form of coerced labour as coolly as Storch, perhaps more realistically, was able to do.

Rather than having a "half-way house" of paid slavery, Comte believed slavery could be ended by a combination of "negative" and "positive" steps which would be in keeping with liberal principles. The negative step involved immediately withdrawing economic privileges granted by the state to the slave owners and thus forcing them to confront market forces. Without the monopoly profits from their exclusive access to the home market and

²⁷"... mais nous, qui n'avons aucun tarif pour fixer la valeur de nos semblables; nous, qui ne savons pas quel est le prix légitime auquel on achète le pouvoir de faire violence à des hommes, à des enfants, à des femmes; nous, qui n'admettons pas que la partie la plus considérable du genre humain ait été créée pour les plaisirs des membres d'une aristocratie; nous, qui ne pouvons voir dans les relations qui ont lieu entre un maître et ses esclaves, que l'action de la force et de la brutalité sur la faiblesse et sur l'ignorance; nous, aux yeux de qui les esclaves sont des hommes aussi bien que les maîtres, et qui devons calculer ce que coûte un produit, non pas à tels ou tels hommes, mais au genre humain tout entier; nous enfin, qui ne pouvons pas ne compter pour rien les violences et les misères auxquelles des populations sont assujetties pour les plaisirs d'une aristocratie plus ou moins nombreuses, nous devons raisonner autrement que des possesseurs d'esclaves." Comte, *Traité de législation*, p. 416.

the subsidies paid by the metropolitan taxpayers for administration and defence, the slave owners would not be able to maintain their system of labour. Cheaper goods grown by producers who did not use slave labour, the prospect of higher local taxes to pay for local administration, and the threat of slave uprisings without the comforting presence of French soldiers and sailors, the slave owners would be forced to free their slaves and introduce wages in order to compete. If they could not compete because of their lack of management skills and "industrial" values necessary to be an efficient producer, then Comte was happy to see them go bankrupt and be replaced perhaps by free and independent black producers using land that once belonged to their masters for more productive purposes.²⁸ Comte found that future quite an enticing one, if it could be achieved immediately before the slaves lost their patience. Not only would the slaves be freed, but the burden on the metropolitan consumers and taxpayers would be lifted if colonial tariffs and other subsidies could be eliminated.

The positive step to end slavery involved the extension of the protection offered by the legal system to include blacks as well as whites. Slavery to Comte was much more than an economic system for the exploitation of the numerous "working class" by the minority "aristocratic class." One of its essential features was a legal system and the property rights which derived from this legal system, which favoured the class of slave owners at the expense of those who were owned. At the core of this legalistic view of slavery was the idea that slavery was a legal privilege accorded to those who were considered to have full rights acknowledged by the law. A slave on the other hand, either had no rights as a person at all or had very limited rights (such as some restrictions as to the kind of punishment which a slave owner could inflict on him or her) which were very difficult to enforce in a society where most of the public officials, including the judges, were either slave owners themselves or relatives of slave owners. Ultimately, the legal difference between a slave and a slave owner was that the latter had the right in law to own another human being,

²⁸Comte, *Traité de législation*, p. 468.

whereas the former was in fact that type of property. Comte's third way to end slavery was to end this discrimination in law between slave owners and slaves by making all human beings equal under the law. Only in this way could blacks enjoy the benefits of property ownership themselves and the tranquility and repose the rule of law should make possible to all. Comte's legalistic view of slavery and how the liberation of the slaves could be achieved comes across clearly in the following passage:

What is it to free an enslaved man? Quite simply, it is to remove him from the violence and caprice of one or more individuals and to subject him to the regular action of the public authority. In other words, it is to prevent a man who is called a master inflicting extortion, violence and cruelty on others, who are called slaves, with impunity. To free a man is not to open the door to trouble and disorder but to repress these things. Disorder exists everywhere where violence, cruelty, debauchery has no limit. The most frightening disorder rules wherever the most numerous part of the population is at the mercy of a few men who can abandon themselves to all manner of vices and crimes. That is to say, wherever slavery exists. On the other hand, order rules wherever no one can commit extortion, injuries, violence with impunity; where no one can fail in their obligations to others without facing punishment; and where each person can fulfil their duties without being punished. Order is liberty.²⁹

CONCLUSION

Comte's analysis of slavery in the *Traité de législation* had considerable impact on

²⁹"Qu'est-ce qu'affranchir un homme asservi? c'est tout simplement le soustraire aux violences et aux caprices d'un ou de plusieurs individus, pour le soumettre à l'action régulière de l'autorité publique; c'est, en d'autres termes, empêcher un homme qu'on appelle un maître, de se livrer impunément envers d'autres qu'on appelle des esclaves, à des extortions, à des violences, à des cruautés. Affranchir des hommes, ce n'est pas ouvrir la port au trouble, au désordre, c'est les réprimer; car le désordre existe partout où la violence, la cruauté, la débauche n'ont point de frein. Le plus effroyable des désordres règne partout où la partie la plus nombreuse de la population est livrée sans défense à quelques hommes, qui peuvent s'abandonner sans réserve à tous les vices et à tous les crimes, c'est-à-dire partout où l'esclavage existe. L'ordre règne, au contraire, partout où nul ne peut se livrer impunément à des extorsions, à des injures, à des violences, partout où nul ne peut manquer à ses obligations sans s'exposer à des châtiments, partout où chacun peut remplir ses devoirs sans encourir aucune peine; l'ordre, c'est la liberté." Comte, *Traité de législation*, p. 479. Comte gives another definition of enslavement along similar lines: "L'asservissement d'un homme à un autre n'étant autre chose qu'un privilège d'impunité accordé au premier pour les crimes dont il peut se rendre coupable à l'égard du second, l'affranchissement n'est pas autre chose que la révocation de ce privilège. Déclarer que, dans tel pays, l'esclavage est aboli, c'est déclarer tout simplement que les délits seront punis sans acception de personnes; établir ou maintenir l'esclavage, c'est accorder ou garantir des privilèges de malfaiteur. Cela est si évident, que, pour abolir complètement la servitude dans tous les lieux où elle existe, il souffrirait de juger tous les faits de même nature, d'après les dispositions des mêmes lois." Comte, *Traité de législation*, p. 480.

Jean-Baptiste Say's *Cours complet d'économie politique* which appeared in 1828. Say strengthened his argument that the issue of tariff protection for the slave economies was more important than the problem of the comparative costs of free and slave labour. Furthermore, the discussion of the nature of class exploitation in the colonies and the problem of the growing indebtedness of many plantations owed much to Comte's pioneering work, whilst Say's confidence in the spread of "republicanism" weakening the political power of the slave states obviously drew upon Storch for its support. For reasons of space it is impossible to go into any details about Say's final word on the question of slavery, except to say that the debate among the abolitionists and the political economists had raised many problems which Say had not discussed in his earlier works. He had been forced to confront these problems with the result that he had drifted much closer into the position of his son-in-law, Charles Comte, with his class analysis of slavery.