

in Louisiana. In Bengal, the soldiers who ran away – often to rival European companies – had the effect of driving wages higher.

Many runaways absconded on their own, but others did so collectively. In the Cape of Good Hope, the enslaved ran away, often with the assistance of other slaves and workers. As Nicole Ulrich points out, “desertion was embedded in social connections forged between labourers” (p. 122). This could include Maroons in the Cape of Good Hope, but also in the United States: the Maroons there sometimes helped the enslaved to hide before they fled to the North. Free black men and women assisted the enslaved to escape, as did sailors on trading vessels who turned a blind eye to slaves who stowed away on their ships. Similarly, members of the free working class in New Orleans worked alongside the enslaved who had escaped from their masters. For Mitchell, city Maroons occupied a borderland space: they could merge into the urban population of the free and the enslaved and often hide under the noses of their owners.

Inevitably, there are problems in trying to deal in one volume with the desertion of the enslaved, the indentured, convicts, soldiers, and sailors. Soldiers and sailors, for example, had a very different perspective than the enslaved, yet their common experiences often transcended their differences. Moreover, there is much in this volume that is new and often revealing. For example, Matthias van Rossum overturns the view of a revolutionary Atlantic and a peaceful Indian Ocean world: he shows that a great number of employees – between fifteen and thirty per cent in 1760 – absconded from the Dutch East India Company. Anita Rupprecht underscores not only the enormous number of liberated Africans who arrived in the Americas – over 180,000 – but also what she terms “the global landscape of colonial apprenticeship”. For these apprentices, running away was a central site of struggle: they saw themselves as being treated far worse than the enslaved.

Linking these categories of workers, then, highlights their common responses to oppression and coercion. These workers shared a desire for autonomy and for control of their lives, and this volume provides abundant evidence of their shared worlds. It is to be warmly welcomed and should encourage further research in this fascinating area.

Gad Heuman

Department of History, University of Warwick
Humanities Building, University Road,
Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom
E-mail: g.j.heuman@warwick.ac.uk
doi:10.1017/S002085902000022X

RØGE, PERNILLE. *Economistes and the Reinvention of Empire. France in the Americas and Africa, c.1750–1802*. [New Studies in European History.] Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2019. xv, 296 pp. Maps. £75.00. (E-book: \$80.00).

The Seven Years' War was the first war that involved four continents, and it marked a watershed in modern history. It ended France's ambitions as a colonial power in North America and India, reduced Spain to a second-rate colonial power, and catapulted Britain to maritime hegemony. According to Jürgen Osterhammel, the Seven Years' War inaugurated a time of

transition, a time that was identified as a *Sattelzeit* by Reinhart Kosseleck.¹ New concepts such as progress, development, civilization, and personhood emerged and old ones such as mercantilist approaches to colonial policies were disavowed. France gave up its large North American possessions for its tiny Caribbean islands Martinique and Guadeloupe, because its priorities shifted from control of resources to enhancing the profitability of its possessions. The lesson European colonial powers drew from the Seven Years' War was that the mercantilist zero-sum ideology came with staggering costs of warfare and that there was the cheaper alternative to outgrow competing European states, namely, to foster economic growth of overseas possessions. Both in France and in Spain, the Bourbon rulers sought to further the agricultural output of their empires. The impressive emergence of Saint Domingue and Cuba as the world's largest sugar producers in succession was a direct result of this reorientation.

It is against this historical backdrop that we must read Pernille Røge's book on the role of the physiocrats. They pivoted French colonial thinking from mercantilism to free trade and agricultural development, from the Caribbean to Africa, and made their mark upon the French abolitionist movement. Living in a country that emerged from the Seven Years' War deeply in debt, François Quesnay – the physician in ordinary to King Louis XV and one of the founding fathers of the physiocrat movement – developed his economic doctrines on the assumption that agriculture was the true and only basis of economic prosperity. The merchant class, in his view, did not produce any economic added value, neither did monopolies. Reasoning from agriculture as the economic basis, Quesnay and his fellow physiocrats rejected slavery as not only immoral, but also economically unwise. Forced labour, arguably, could never be as productive as an independent peasantry that was allowed to reap the fruits of their work. In the same vein, they proposed to emancipate colonial possessions from their tutelage and turn them into full-blown departments of France. If the physiocrat economic principles were good for the French homeland, they ought to be equally applicable and beneficial for its overseas territories. Finally, instead of kidnapping Africans and transporting them to the militarily fragile Caribbean islands, it was much better to encourage African peasants to grow commodities. This all sounds remarkably modern for the mid-eighteenth century, and it was. In her fascinating narrative, Røge convincingly demonstrates that the contours of France's post-World War II overseas policies were shaped in the decades after the Seven Years' War, when the physiocrats were at the height of their influence.

Since the physiocrats developed cures for France's financial predicament, their stance with respect to slavery might have been somewhat watered down in practice, particularly because some of them had links with the French plantation colonies. Nonetheless, in their thinking, Africa would become the non-slavery alternative for commodity production. With an abundance of land and workers, West Africa, where France already had footholds, could produce the commodities and Europe the manufactures. Røge does not mention the fact that the British abolitionists made exactly the same claim for India: it could produce the commodities for industrializing Britain. Both would benefit from such a Ricardian exchange, making a perfect match between economic rationality and humanitarian concerns.

1. Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ, 2014), pp. 47, 59–63.

Abbé Roubaud, the most systematic colonial thinker among the physiocrats, contributed with his design for a French Africa policy to Nicolas Badeau's multi-volume *Histoire générale de l'Asie, de l'Afrique et de l'Amérique*. Roubaud's volume XII in this series appeared in 1771 and, at that time, the author was already convinced that the Americas would steer towards independence. Røge shows how Roubaud's work heavily influenced Diderot's and Raynal's contributions to the highly influential *Histoire des deux Indes*.² Ending slavery in the New World, they wrote in the 1780 edition of their work, did not entail ending the production of coffee, tea, and tobacco as these could be obtained from Africa. On the other side of the Channel, the Quaker abolitionists made exactly the same argument, propagating the consumption of non-slave sugar from India.

The sad historical reality is that, until the very end of the ancien régime, the French pursuits in West Africa overwhelmingly served the purpose of the massive coerced transfer of Africans to the French Antilles and Saint Domingue in particular. The world's largest plantation colony held about 500,000 Africans in captivity when Toussaint L'Ouverture unchained his country in 1791. This in itself would strengthen the abolitionist movement, but also the interest groups striving against abolitionism. As such, this is a well-known story, Røge points out, but what is less known are the physiocrat influences on the most important French abolitionist movement of the late eighteenth century, the Société des amis des noirs. She extensively discusses the famous four-hour-long speech by Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau, at the Jacobin club. At this occasion, he not only defended the Declaration of the Rights of Man, of which he was one of the authors, but also questioned the profitability of the slave trade – directly addressing the opposition of the Bordeaux and Nantes' merchants to abolition – and, last but not least, the benefits of the plantation complex itself for France.

Røge has written an accomplished introduction to a rich eighteenth-century French literature on the abolition of slavery and the relocation of colonial commodity production. While she is keenly aware of contemporaneous discussions in the Anglophone world and she identifies the connections between American, British, and French thinking, her book invites further reflection on this transitional period between the Seven Years' War and the year of revolution 1848, when France abolished slavery and governor Louis Faidherbe extended French control over the hinterland from its few posts in what is contemporary Senegal. Røge's narrative can help us to comprehend this phase, at the beginning of which colonial agricultural capitalism was concentrated in the Caribbean and inexorably linked to the violent process of European nation-building; by 1848, it had fanned out all over the globe, driven by industrial manufacturing, botany, fertilizer, and infrastructural technology.

Ulbe Bosma

International Institute of Social History and Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam
PO Box 2169, 1000 CD Amsterdam, The Netherlands

E-mail: ubo@iisg.nl

doi:10.1017/S0020859020000231

2. Guillaume Thomas François Raynal and Rigobert Bonne, *Histoire philosophique et politique. Des Établissements et du Commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (Geneva, n.d. [1780 edition]).