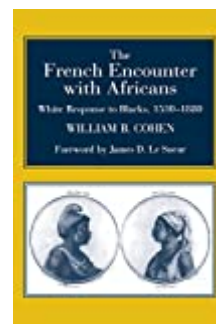
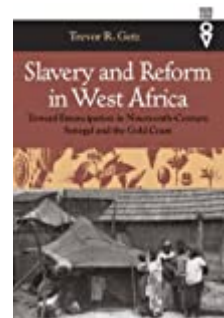


William Cohen. *The French Encounter with Africans: White Responses to Blacks (1530-1880)*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980. xxx + 361 pp. \$24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-253-21650-2.



Trevor R. Getz. *Slavery and Reform in West Africa: Toward Emancipation in Nineteenth-Century Senegal and the Gold Coast*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004. xx + 257 pp. \$65.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8214-1520-7.



Reviewed by Leland Barrows (Voorhees College)

Published on H-Africa (April, 2005)

The Chicken and the Egg or the Egg and the Omelette: Considerations on the Image of Africa and the Realities of Slave Emancipation and Legitimate Trade

We have here two examples of very different kinds of historical writing, albeit on related subjects. The first book, by Cohen, is the work of a mature scholar. It is a broad synthesis derived mostly from intellectual history that analyzes the French view of Blacks over a three-hundred-and-fifty year period. The second book, by Getz, is his revised University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies doctoral thesis. Titled "The Most Perfidious Institution: The Slow Death of Slavery in Nineteenth century Senegal and the Gold Coast," it earned him

his doctorate in history in 2000. Like the original, the revised version is a short, targeted monograph, an exercise in comparative history, which presents and interprets the dynamics of the European-imposed suppression of the Atlantic slave trade followed, some years later, by the European-imposed emancipation of slaves in two distinct nineteenth-century protocolonial areas in West Africa: French Senegal (excluding Casamance) and British Gold Coast.

Both books purport to be revisionist. The first one, however, is spectacularly so. Its author challenges the reputation that France had gained for itself (particularly among Anglo-Saxons and African Americans and Afro-West Indians) by the first decades of the twentieth century for being a country virtually bereft of race and color prejudice, a perception, indeed, that had come to form an integral part of the French self-image. The second book, the revisionism of which is more subtle, applies the broad sweep of such an author as Martin Klein in his *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and the methodologies of those who contributed to Suzanne Miers and Martin Klein, eds., *Slavery and Colonial Rule in Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), to the complex socio-economic and political realities of the Southern Gold Coast and Senegal north of the Gambia River. It shows how slavery persisted and even thrived, thanks to the initiatives and connivance of both masters and slaves as well as colonial officials in both settings well beyond the conventional dates given for the ending of slavery in the colonies of Great Britain and France, 1833 and 1848, respectively.

While Getz does not take direct aim at a national myth, he does add considerable evidence of the unintended perverse results of the hopes for and the realization of "legitimate trade" as defined by European abolitionists such as Thomas Fowell Buxton, whose *African Slave Trade and Its Remedy* (1840; 2nd. ed. London: Frank Cass, 1967) was influential in Great Britain as well as in France. As an aside, Getz also suggests that the Gold Coast elites who generated the Mankessim Constitution, the Fante Confederation (1868-1873), and the Accra Native Confederation were, in large part, slave owners who wished to conserve at least indigenous slavery (pp. 97, 113). This finding is a surprise to those who view the Fante Confederation, in particular, as the first step towards modern, liberal, constitutional, and independent government in Ghana where slavery, of course, would not be tolerated, and as a precursor of the Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Association, founded in 1897, that would be known for its strong antislavery stance.

It would seem that the French authorities in Senegal, even more than the British authorities in Gold Coast, allowed, indeed, collaborated in, the continued existence if not the expansion of indigenous slavery in Senegal, particularly in the protectorate areas—where most of the indigenous populations lived—until as late as the 1905 decree abolishing slavery in French West Africa.

Can the laxness (or "pragmatism") of French policy, as perceived by Getz, be at least partially explained by the deeply ingrained negative view of Africans and Afro-Caribbean peoples that Cohen identifies as a significant thread running through French intellectual history from the sixteenth century onward? (Never mind certain socio-economic realities characteristic of plantation slave societies and the precariousness of the French presence in Senegal during most of the period under study.) Or was the problem in the French case, like in that of the British, simply one of maintaining the commercial profitability and the political stability of the respective colonies by relying on the support of local slave-owning elites?

Professor Cohen's study has been around for some time. First published in 1980, it was intended to be a French-focused equivalent to Philip Curtin's *The Image of Africa: British Ideas in Action, 1780-1850* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1964). Cohen's inspiration germinated while he was preparing his doctoral thesis at Stanford University on the French colonial service.[1]

The present paperback edition of *The French Encounter with Africans*, published in 2003, is identical to the original of 1980 except for the addition of a foreword by Professor James D. Le Sueur of the University of Nebraska. The latter explains how groundbreaking the first edition was even if its central thesis, which postulates a "consensus [existing] in French thought, which relegated the black to a position of inferiority," was vigorously rejected by such knowledgeable French critics as the historian Emmanuel Todd.[2] Given the growing French preoccupation, since the initial publication of the book in 1980, with immigration from the former French colonies, Indiana University Press found it appropriate to republish Cohen's book. (Never mind the fact that this particular debate in France is mostly concerned with immigration from North Africa even if it has been punctuated from time to time by widely publicized mass expulsions of Malians and other Africans from the former French colonies and their forced repatriation in chartered aircraft) and the general hardening of attitudes, not only in France but in other European Union countries, regarding immigration not only from the Third World but also, since 1990, from such Eastern European countries as Romania. Also, republication of this book would serve as a suitable memorial to its author, given his untimely death in November 2002 as the result of a freak accident. As Professor Le Sueur claims, Cohen has taught the French as much about their long history of racism as Robert O. Paxton has about their more recent collaboration with

Nazi Germany and their contributions to the holocaust during the period of the Vichy regime (1940-1944).[3]

If we are to believe Professor Cohen, the “impulse to inequality” goes back a long way in the history of French thought, having even been influenced by the negative views about Sub-Saharan Africa and its inhabitants of the third-century geographer, Solinus (p. 1) and by Christian traditions equating blackness with sin, dirt, and the devil. This “impulse to inequality,” once established, was confirmed and reinforced by the first contacts of Frenchmen with West Africa, particularly Senegal, in the development of slave-worked plantation colonies in the Caribbean and elsewhere, and the corresponding Atlantic and Indian Ocean slave trade. Early French observers, it seems, were shocked by the blackness of African skin and the general appearance of Africans as well as by their social customs, apparent religious practices, and material culture.

The *philosophes* of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, in their search for a science of man, gave theoretical underpinning to an assumed black inferiority. Theories regarding the “Chain of Being,” although posited according to the Church-imposed theory of the monogenism of human creation, placed the black African on the bottom rung of the evolutionary ladder—or at the extreme end of a postulated chain of progressive degeneration—just above the orangutan, wrote Jacques Philibert Rousselot de Surgy around 1763 (p. 87). For some Enlightenment era thinkers, Voltaire among others, the specific physical characteristics of Blacks seemed to be a self-evident argument in favor of polygenism, a theory postulating the separate creation of the races of humankind, leading to the conclusion that Blacks were a separate, not fully human, species. Polygenism had the added attraction, among the more anticlerical French thinkers, of standing in opposition to the Church-backed monogenism, according to which all humanity was descended from Adam and Eve.

Theory and practice intermingled in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries in three venues: the French West Indies, Senegal, and France. The perceived exigencies of intensive sugar production by slave labor and the presence of Whites in Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Saint-Domingue, as a very small but dominant minority in a slave plantation society, led to stringent racially exclusive laws (despite the relative humanity of the 1685 Black Code), intended to guarantee the efficiency of the slave production system and the dominance of the white planters. Even though the presence

of Blacks in France at the time was minuscule, a perceived growing fear of “disorders” and miscegenation led to laws in 1738 and 1777 that vastly restricted the presence of blacks in France. Only in the tiny French settlements in Senegal, particularly the islands of Saint-Louis and Goree, where French survival depended on the maintenance of good relations with the surrounding African polities, did a strong but *de facto* degree of racial tolerance and a sentiment of equality evolve along with an influential, politically dominant, and culturally French mixed-race population.

The French situation in the West Indies also gave rise to a large mixed-race population but with the opposite result of increasingly stringent regulations intended to prevent White-Black unions, to exclude the children of such unions, even when free, from the rights and privileges of French citizens and from positions of authority in these colonies, and to keep the Blacks separate and in bondage. The intent was to safeguard the operation of what was probably the cruelest but most efficient slave system in the New World, based as it was on the practical, if perverse, application of certain physiocratic theories relating to efficiency in agriculture, particularly in the case of Saint-Domingue (Haiti). It is not surprising that disgruntled mixed-race persons like Vincent Oge and Andre Rigaud laid the groundwork for the slave rebellion of 1791 that led, eventually, to Haitian independence in 1804. Quoting J. Fouchard (1972), Cohen remarks that the white planters “had dug their graves with their penises....”

Although the urge to colonial expansion in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries that Cohen describes in chapter 7 was mostly driven by mercantilist and population theories, French theories of colonial expansion, he writes, also reflected French ideas of Black inferiority, of persons who, because of their “backwardness,” would benefit from White French domination. Indeed, the first French abolitionists, Abbe Henri Gregoire and Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours, among others, became ardent expansionists. For such a *philosophe* as Antoine-Nicolas Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet, “European colonial expansion [was] proof of human progress”, a process that could not help but to raise the cultural level of Africans (p. 177). The blueprint for French expansion into the Western Sudan via the Senegal River was set during the Old Regime by Andre Brue, Louis Moreau de Chambonneau, Demonique Harcourt Lamiral, and others. It is not at all clear, however, that these persons were particularly motivated by ideas of black inferiority.

Still, the heritage of assumed inferiority carried over into the nineteenth century where it contributed to and reinforced French theories of scientific racism that evolved from a preference among French anthropologists for physical rather than for cultural anthropology (pp. 219-220). As Cohen writes, "In an era worshipping scientism, the claims racism made of being supported by the findings of science furthered its spread and rooted it firmly in French culture" (p. 210). The unprecedented rate of technical progress in nineteenth century Europe and the United States came to be viewed as proof of the racial superiority of Whites. According to Cohen, one outcome was a less powerful nineteenth century abolitionist movement in France than in Great Britain (where it had strong religious endorsement) and a degree of doubt as to whether the freeing of slaves would actually be of benefit to them—given their assumed inferiority. Of course, as Cohen further points out, the loss of Saint Domingue, particularly the perceived brutality towards Whites of the rebelling former slaves, stimulated negrophobia in France (just as the Algerian War of Independence is said to have brought in its wake increased anti-Arab prejudice in France). Still, when final slave emancipation came to France in 1848, its terms were ideologically determined by the discourse of a liberal *bourgeois* revolution. It mandated the immediate transformation, by parliamentary fiat, of all slaves on French territory to the status of free citizens of the French Republic. The achievement was remarkable, however much Victor Schoelcher and other French abolitionists might have condemned slavery more for negating the idea of civic freedom than for being a serious violation of human rights.

When in the course of the nineteenth century France developed its second colonial empire, "white domination was ... still regarded as a natural result of the perceived inequality between Europeans and Africans," even if France could marshal the same political, strategic, economic, religious, and humanitarian justifications for empire as those formulated by Great Britain and the other colonial powers of the era (p. 282).

But does Cohen's detailed examination of the racist thread in French history reveal any striking differences between France and other European countries in terms of racial intolerance? This reviewer thinks not, for a reading of Philip Curtin's *Image of Africa* and of David Brion Davis's *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966) reveals that French racial attitudes towards Africans, both negative and positive, were little different from those of other Europeans. So far

as the specific problems of plantation societies are concerned, a reading of Winthrop Jordan's *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969) reveals that the racial attitudes of white Frenchmen in the French sugar islands were not much different from those of their North American counterparts. In both cases, it seems that the economics of slave plantation systems destroyed most if not all chances for inter-racial tolerance.

What Cohen has done is to challenge a central myth regarding French color blindness, one that is, however, of relatively recent vintage. For the good treatment that African-American GIs received in France during and after the First and Second World Wars and the lionization in France of such black American entertainers as Josephine Baker and Sydney Bechet were, after all, twentieth century phenomena. The same is true of the 1950 quotation that Cohen has taken from Henri Blet's *France d'Outre-Mer: l'Oeuvre coloniale de la troisieme republique* (Grenoble: B. Arthaud, 3 vols., 1946-1950) to the effect that "Frenchmen have never adopted the racial doctrines affirming the superiority of Whites over men of color" (p. xvi). If, at the time that these remarks were penned, the African-American novelist Richard Wright could state that "There is more freedom in one square block of Paris than in all of the United States" (Cohen, p. 285; quoted from Roi Ottley, *No Green Pastures*, 1951), his comment accurately reflected the reality of his experience of the United States as compared to his experience of France. Of course, it is necessary to add the caveat that Wright and other African-Americans who had settled in Paris in the 1950s were warned by the French authorities that if they made any utterances against French efforts to suppress the ongoing Algerian rebellion they would be expelled from France.

And too, the French, at least from the era of the French Revolution onward, permitted the emergence of a small but very visible number of blacks or mixed race persons who played major roles in French culture, politics, and the military. One immediately thinks of Alexandre Dumas, father and son, nineteenth century novelists and playwrights, but there was also the grandfather, Alexandre Davy Dumas, the Mulatto general from Saint-Domingue, who had a successful career in the French army, distinguishing himself in Napoleon's Egyptian campaign despite the fact that Napoleon "appears to have suffered from a genuine racial phobia" and who, after Haiti had won its independence from France, would order the *Ecole polytechnique* in Paris "to dismiss its black and colored students" (pp. 119-120).

Moving ahead to the height of French colonial expansion in Africa, one can cite the case of another Mulatto general, Alfred Dodds of Senegal, who led the French conquest of Dahomey (1892-1894) and, before retirement, served as military governor of Paris; and the case of the black governor of Chad, Felix Eboue, from French Guiana, who was the first French colonial governor to give the Free French of World War II some territory when, in August 1940, he rallied Chad to General Charles de Gaulle who appointed him Governor General of French Equatorial Africa.

The above-mentioned success stories were certainly not unknown to Professor Cohen. Likewise, in his analysis of the thoughts on race of Georges-Louis Leclerc Comte de Buffon, Abbe Antoine-Francois Prevost, Charles de Secondat Baron de Montesquieu, Condorcet, and many others, Cohen shows that these thinkers, even if they did, from time to time, draw certain negative conclusions as to Black and African capabilities, more often than not wavered between negative and positive, often, finally, coming down on the positive side. When evoking Arthur de Gobineau, the central theoretician of French racism in the mid-nineteenth century, Cohen points out that this personage "was irritated that his work was used to support proslavery opinion in the United States" and that despite his insistence on Black inferiority, Gobineau believed "that race-mixing was necessary for the creation of civilization (p. 181); the artistic abilities of the blacks [being] necessary to fertilize the European imagination" (p. 218). What is upsetting (and what seems to have annoyed reviewers of his book, like Professor Emmanuel Todd), is that although Cohen marshals evidence pro and con in terms of his thesis, he persists in maintaining his verdict of guilty even though he could have derived the opposite verdict from substantially the same body of evidence.

Cohen's thesis as to the relative racial tolerance and intermingling characterizing relations between Frenchmen and Africans in Senegal, resulting from the precariousness of the French presence, dependent for survival on Africans, appears to underpin Getz's picture of a colonial administration that, at the start of the nineteenth century, was less than keen about having to end the Atlantic slave trade and then of slavery itself because of ties of blood and of economic and political interest to local slave-owning Euro-African and indigenous elites. Given the importance of slavery to both groups, its role in the local economy, and the wish of the metropolitan government to ensure peace and prosperity, and, once expansion got underway after 1854, the need to placate newly

acquired slave-holding indigenous allies, both the colonial government and the Paris authorities contrived to delay the full application of the Emancipation Decree of 1848.

That negative racial theories were not part of the French equation in Senegal seems to be confirmed by the existence of a similar paradigm in the Gold Coast, even after the 1874 application by the local British governor, George Strahan, of the British Emancipation Act of 1833 to British colonial and protected territories in this territory. Indeed, a rather passive form of emancipation was adopted in Gold Coast, the so-called Indian model, which left indigenous slavery in place in the so-called protectorate for many years, thus avoiding problems with indigenous allies or any disruption of the local economy, dependent to a greater or lesser extent on unfree labor.

Getz intends his study to be a contribution to the growing body of studies on slavery and emancipation in Africa. Its "most important feature ... and greatest innovation," he says, is that it is a comparative study of two regions that "underwent comparable transformational processes resulting in both divergent and similar results" (p. xvi).

Comparative studies in history, like interdisciplinary studies in all fields, are in vogue even if both varieties are more easily talked about than actually executed. Getz, this reviewer understands, was influenced by a comment made by the historian Paul Lovejoy, to develop a comparative study on slavery and emancipation in West Africa, rather than one strictly on the Gold Coast. According to Lovejoy, in *Transformations in Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), the many local studies on slavery in Africa that had recently appeared had suffered "from a failure to place the particular case in the context of Africa as a whole, or even in specific regions in Africa" (p. xiii). So Getz added a Senegalese component to a very competent study of problems of slavery and emancipation in nineteenth century Gold Coast and thus has derived valid comparative conclusions about the two situations in West Africa.

Getz begins by introducing the reader to the particularities of the two regions under study as well as to the institutions and the effects of the Atlantic slave trade prior to its "criminalization," at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He then turns to the immediate effects of criminalization and suppression in both regions, phenomena that he labels as the "crisis of abolition."

How did French and British officialdom and traders

and the African elites linked to them adapt to the new situation? In Senegal, French attempts to develop plantation agriculture in Walo, next door to Saint-Louis, from 1822 to 1831, failed. In the Gold Coast, production of palm oil, albeit by slaves, as a response to the call for “legitimate trade,” was more successful. And a contract labor scheme (*regime des engages a temps*) introduced by the French in 1823, evolved into a *de facto* slave system, including transportation to the West Indies and to Reunion, that lasted until 1846.

Chapter 3 deals with the special situation of the Gold Coast following the 1833 Parliamentary Act abolishing slavery in much of the British Empire (the crown colonies).[4] Given the situation here in which Britain could only claim sovereign rights in the coastal forts that it occupied, the Act could not be applied in Gold Coast until 1874. In the intervening period, the British government, that, in 1828, had transferred responsibility for the administration of the Gold Coast forts to a London Committee of Merchants (similar to the situation before 1821), resumed direct control over them in 1843. The British, both formally and informally, extended their influence and administration in the Southern Gold Coast, purchasing the Danish forts in 1850, attempting to exchange forts with the Dutch in 1867 so that both powers could hold unbroken stretches of the Atlantic coastline, and finally, because of African opposition to this exchange, buying out and taking over the Dutch forts in 1872. At the same time, the British had to operate in a complex African-defined socio-political situation of interacting coastal African polities and to contend with the power of Ashanti, the major African polity to the North, that they defeated militarily in the so-called Serengeti War of 1873-1874. In this complex situation, the British authorities could do little to end indigenous slavery in the Gold Coast, nor did they really wish to do so until goaded into action by increasingly militant abolitionism at home.

Chapter 4 deals with the effects of the Decree of April 27, 1848, abolishing slavery in all French territories everywhere and conferring French citizenship on the former slaves. Embodied in the Decree, which was promulgated in Senegal on August 23, 1848, was the provision that merely setting foot on French territory conferred immediate liberty. What then would happen if the thousands of captives in the independent African polities within the French sphere in Senegal were to escape to Saint-Louis, Goree, or to the few French posts in the hinterland and claim their freedom? Obviously, without a revolution in the French-African relationship, this aspect

of the 1848 Decree could not be applied in Senegal any more than could the British 1833 Act be applied in Gold Coast. Thus, chapter 5 explains how the French authorities in Senegal during the period of expansion associated with the administration of Governor Louis Leon Cesar Faidherbe (1854-1861 and 1863-1865) managed to emasculate the Act while extending their sway over slaveholding African populations.[5] The British in the Gold Coast would employ similar “pragmatic” means to avoid interfering with indigenous slavery and its role in the economy of the Gold Coast.

Given the stepped up pressure coming from London to extend the Emancipation Act into a strengthened British protectorate system, chapter 6 describes how the so-called Indian model of emancipation was applied and assesses the results that it yielded. According to this model, slaves would have to take the initiative themselves to obtain freedom by going to a colonial magistrate to have themselves declared free. Thus they themselves became responsible for their own emancipation, a situation providing a “formidable roadblock against wholesale emancipation...” one that allowed the colonial administration to have its proverbial cake and eat it too. Examining this ambiguous situation, Getz identifies the role of the slave owners themselves in “reevaluat[ing] their relationships with their masters through individual solutions negotiated largely outside the formal judicial system” (p. 112).

In the case of French Senegal, as we see in chapter 7, the retrenchment, associated with the administration of Francois-Xavier Michel Valiere from 1869 to 1876 that followed the expansionist administrations of Governors Faidherbe and Jean-Marie Emile Pinet-Laprade, gave way, in turn, to renewed French expansion under the nascent Third Republic and an expansionist governor, Louis-Alexandre Briere de Lisle, who took over in 1876. At the same time, renewed abolitionist pressures came from Paris, spearheaded by a Protestant Pastor, Villegier, and the old 1848 abolitionist, Victor Schoelcher. Republican-sponsored expansion, the abolitionists felt, must also include renewed efforts to stamp out slavery wherever it existed in the French empire.

Examining the spate of administrative slave freeing that followed in the 1880s, Getz argues that they resulted much more from the actions of slaves and owners themselves than from any deliberate efforts in favor of emancipation on the part of the French administration. The latter continued, as in the past, to avoid any frontal attacks on indigenous slavery, even to the point of disannexing

territories like Walo and Dimar, near Saint-Louis, giving them protectorate status, so as to shield their slave-owning and peanut-cultivating inhabitants from the full force of French antislavery legislation. Such situations prevailed until the 1905 decrees abolished slavery in most of French West Africa. Even then there would be exceptions, as in Mauritania, where the French administration was still tolerating indigenous slavery in the 1950s (Getz, p. 190).

A final chapter on the eradication of the mostly Dioula-operated overland slave trade into Gold Coast and Senegal from the far interior of West Africa argues that the British in the Gold Coast were more successful in suppressing this trade than the French in Senegal. By the 1890s, so Getz's argument goes, the British Gold Coast frontiers had been more-or-less set, thus permitting the British to consolidate their rule and to make a concerted effort to end slavery. The French, on the other hand, were still conquering the much larger area of what became French West Africa, albeit now operating far beyond the borders of Senegal. They still needed to mollify slave-owning African allies in protectorate relationships with France by leaving indigenous slavery as untouched as they could get away with doing.

The reader of this book is left with the clear understanding that the course of emancipation in Senegal and Gold Coast was driven by a number of factors of which "the impact of European metropolitan initiatives [was] just the beginning of [the] story" and certainly had very little to do in the case of the French experience in Senegal with any perceived notions of African inferiority (p. 180). For both France and Great Britain, "to please audiences at home, slavery had to be abolished. But to keep colonies safe and profitable, slave owners could not be alienated" (p. 183).[6]

Both books are fascinating and informative additions to the history of French (and English) relations with Africa and Africans. Although Cohen's writing style and anecdotal approach make for a pleasant reading experience, one must not forget that he remains very selective regarding his elucidation of given French authors and thinkers and their ideas, always hammering away at his basic thesis that the French conception of the Black person has always been far more negative than positive. Time and again, however, when he can demonstrate that given thinkers were ambivalent about blacks or may have changed their views for the better over time or as the result of personal contacts with blacks, particularly in Senegal, Cohen still never fails to stress the negative

rather than the positive feelings about Blacks of these thinkers. Thus his basic thesis appears, in part, to be forced, if not flawed.

On the other hand, Getz has developed a fully sustainable thesis, even though his social science-influenced writing style lacks the polish of Cohen's style, and his politically correct approach to the spelling of certain (but not all) Senegalese personal and place names may annoy certain readers.[7] It is also clear that Getz has a better mastery of colonial Gold Coast/Ghanaian history than he has of colonial Senegalese history as proven both by the more ample listing of British/Gold Coast archival materials in his bibliography than of similar materials concerning France and Senegal and, unfortunately, by the large number of errors appearing in his treatment of the French/Senegal component of his study.[8]

Regarding the mechanics of publication, both books embody the annoying characteristic that extensive sets of bibliographical and explanatory notes are printed, in separate sections, at the ends of the respective texts rather than at the bottom of the relevant pages. Such a presentation is hardly acceptable given the page-formatting possibilities offered by computers and publication software. Moreover, Cohen's book lacks a bibliography, and Getz's book, although providing one, omits the dates of publication of the published materials that he cites in his notes.

Still, this reviewer recommends both books to interested readers but with the caveat that of the two, Cohen's book will appeal to the broadest readership and will provide the most entertaining reading experience.

Notes

[1]. Cohen published this thesis in 1971 as *Rulers of Empire: The French Colonial Service in Africa* and followed it up in 1977 with a volume on the career and the writings of Robert Louis Delavignette (1897-1976), considered to have been one of the most humane and enlightened of twentieth-century French colonial administrators (*Robert Delavignette on the French Empire*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

[2]. Todd, in a review published in *Le Monde* (19 February 1982) wrote that "L'ouvrage est construit comme un dinosaure. Le corps est gros, la tete minuscule; les faits sont nombreux, la reflexion est mince", and that Cohen "...est surpris en flagrant delire historique, souffrant simultanement de simplicité conceptuelle et d'amnesie factuelle".

[3]. At the moment of his fatal accident, Professor Cohen was completing a book on *The Algerian War in French Memory and Politics, 1962-2002* that, if posthumously published, will no doubt attempt once again to remind the French that—like Monsieur Jourdain—they have been speaking in prose all their lives.

[4] We note that in his listing of those British Crown colonies to which the 1833 act was applicable, Getz has failed to include Jamaica that at the time was the wealthiest of the British West Indian possessions. He has also omitted Canada—surprising for an American scholar given the importance of Canada as the terminus of the Underground Railroad, a role it acquired thanks, in great part, to the act in question.

[5]. The essence of Faidherbe's pragmatism is captured in his 1855 instructions to Captain Jean Parent, the newly appointed Commandant of Bakel: "*Favorisez l'évasion et recueillez comme hommes libres, dans nos établissements, les esclaves des pays avec lesquels nous serons en guerre. Rendez au contraire scrupuleusement ceux des pays avec lesquelles nous sommes en paix,*" from ANS 3B77, piece 9, October 3, 1855, quoted in note 30, p. 129, of Andrew F. Clark, *From Frontier to Backwater: Economy and Society in the Upper Senegal Valley (West Africa), 1850-1920* (Lanham and Oxford: University Press of America, 1999).

[6]. This simple statement of pragmatism reminds the reader of the case of Abbe Henri Gregoire, a founder in 1788 of the *Société des Amis des Noirs*, who, at the start of the French Revolution, as Cohen reminds us (p. 14), argued that in Saint-Domingue the sizeable free Mulatto population "should be given rights as good loyal slave owners, on whom the whites could depend against slaves." Likewise, as Cohen also indicates, Leger Felicite Sonthonax, the French Jacobin Commissioner in Saint-Domingue, decreed the liberation of the slaves on August 29, 1793, five months before the National Assembly in Paris abolished slavery in all the French colonies. Sonthonax hoped to rally the majority population of the island to France given that the White slave owners, who had formerly been supported by the Old Regime against all the other social categories in Saint-Domingue, were resisting revolutionary France and were preparing to hand over the colony to the British, as the planters had done in Martinique, hoping that the British would help them retain slavery.

[7]. Like many Anglo-Saxon writers on Senegalese history, Getz has a problem with the conventional French spelling of Senegalese place names and names of histor-

ical personages, never mind the fact that the official language of Senegal is French. Also, as he explains (pp. xix-xx), he supports the efforts of post-independence Africans "to reclaim their own locales and histories," and thus favors "the spellings preferred by African academics of note"—Professor Boubacar Barry in the case of Senegalese history. True, in 1971 the Senegalese government approved a set of rules for the phonetic spelling of Senegalese names using the Latin alphabet (*Journal Officiel de la République du Senegal* 116 (1971): pp. 623-628), but it has not been widely used by Senegalese and other francophone scholars who generally prefer the traditional French spellings. Barry, it should be added, although francophone, is not Senegalese but Guinean, originally from Fouta-Djalon. A better guide to Senegalese spelling might have been the usage of the Senegalese archivist, Oumar Ba, as demonstrated by his edited and published compilation of documents on the French invasion of Cayor, *La Penetration française au Cayor du regne de Birima N'Gone Latyr a l'intronisation de Madio-dio Deguene Codou* (Dakar: Oumar Ba, 1976).

And Getz himself is very inconsistent. While he insists on spelling Cayor "Kajoor," and its national hero, Lat Dior, "Lat Joor," he adopts the traditional spelling for Gandiole, the Cayor village facing (from time to time) the moving and hard-to-cross bar at the mouth of the Senegal River, rather than "Ganjool," the revised spelling. Likewise, he accepts "Baol" rather than "Bawol" as the correct spelling of the name of the Woloff polity in which the founder of the Mourides, Ahmadou Bamba, was born. Yet he refers to the traditional ruler of Baol as "*teen*" rather than as "*teigne*."

Even in dealing with the analogous problem of spelling in anglophone Gold Coast/Ghana, Getz has found it necessary to spell Akwapim "Akuapem," but to retain the traditional orthography for Akwamu. If it is really essential for Professor Getz to decolonize the orthographies of Senegal and Ghana, despite the official languages being French and English, respectively, why has he not been consistent the way Philip Curtin was in preparing his *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975)?

[8]. Although it would go beyond the scope of this study to list all the errors that appear in Getz's book, a few representative examples will be pointed out in what follows.

We note, for instance, on p. 33, that in referring to Baron Mackau's inspection mission to Senegal of 1819, here and everywhere else in his text, Getz misspells

Mackau's name, rendering it as "Mackam."

Colonel Julian Schmaltz, the first Restoration governor of Senegal (1817-1820), never held the title of Baron, even though Getz attributes it to him. Contrary to what Getz tells us on p. 36, Baron Jacques-Francois Roger was not the "first French commander and administrator of Senegal." Counting as of the Restoration, Roger was the third, Schmaltz being the first, and Jean-Baptiste Lecoupe (1820-1821), the second. Roger was definitely the first civilian French governor of Senegal in the post-1817 period, serving from 1821 to 1827, not Rene Servatius, Governor from 1888 to 1899, as Getz claims (p. 144).

Given the dates of Roger's governorship of Senegal, 1821-1827, it is surprising to see Getz refer to Roger's "official memoirs," dated 1821, in which he purportedly "retrospectively noted" the important role of the gum trade (p. 37). Getz has misunderstood the meaning, in French, of "memoire," which in the context in which Roger was writing refers, not to an elder statesman's reflections on his life's achievements (which Roger, at any rate, would not have written at the *start* of his mandate as governor), but to the sort of "state of the colony" report that a governor might write for his minister on taking over or on leaving. A few pages later, Getz again misspells the name of a French governor, Jean-Guillaume Jubelin, who served in 1827 and 1828, writing it as "Jean Quillaume Jubelu."

It is also surprising to learn, again on p. 42, that in 1828 a group of merchants urged Governor Jubelin to set up a peanut oil press in Saint-Louis even though it was not until the late 1830s and early 1840s that the French had begun to be interested in the commercial possibilities of the peanut. (Worth reading on the economic development of Senegal in the nineteenth century is Roger Pasquier's gargantuan University of Paris 1987 *doctorat d'etat* thesis, "Le Senegal au Milieu du XIXe Siecle: La Crise Economique et Sociale"). The origins of the development of peanuts as an export crop are amply traced on pages 222-238.

In general, Getz wants to attribute to Senegal an earlier commercial development of peanuts as an export cash-crop than seems to have been the case. He claims that "by 1840 the administration had begun to grant

groundnut concessions to habitants," citing an 1848 report by M. Herice on improvements to be made in the Colony of Senegal (p. 42). Herice's report had been published in 1847 as *Memoire presente a M. le Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies sur quelques ameliorations a apporter a la Colonie du Senegal* (Paris: Plon FrÃres, 1847). In it, the author does plead for the granting of agricultural concessions, but not necessarily for the cultivation of peanuts. Herice particularly promotes the agricultural development of Sor Island, opposite Saint-Louis to the East, so as to provide occupational outlets for the young *habitants* who were being squeezed out of the gum trade. He envisioned truck farming, as a means to supply Saint-Louis with vegetables, and cash cropping. But in regard to the latter possibility, although Herice cites peanuts as a possible cash crop, he stresses the need to produce indigo and cotton, still, and for several years to come, official French priorities (Herice, pp. 13-20).

A final example of confusion leading to error is Getz's reference, on p. 163 to Jaureguiberry, the commandant of Podor from 1866 to 1868, to whom he refers in note 14 on page 230 as the "later Governor and Minister of the Navy." This Jaureguiberry, however, was a different person. He was Pierre Jaureguiberry, a nephew of Jean-Bernard Jaureguiberry, the governor of Senegal, who had served from 1861 to 1863 and who would serve twice as Minister of the Navy and Colonies in 1879 and 1880 and again in 1882 and 1883. Also, just as Rene Servatius was not the first civilian governor of Senegal, the Direction of the Interior that Servatius created was not the first attempt on the part of the French authorities to set up such an organizational unit in Senegal. During his governorship, Jaureguiberry had attempted to do the same thing with a result that was equally short-lived. He had also hoped to staff the French posts in Senegal with civilian commandants, but his nephew, Pierre Jaureguiberry, the Commandant of Podor mentioned by Getz (and confused with his uncle), was the only civilian administrator Governor Jaureguiberry could find who was willing and able to assume such duties. (See Yves-Jean Saint-Martin, *Le Senegal sous le Second Empire: Naissance d'un empire colonial, 1850-1871* [Paris: Editions Karthala, 1989], pp. 481-482, and Leland C. Barrows, "Trois Biographies Senegalaises," in Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies_ 19.1 [2001-2002]: pp. 79-85.)

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

<https://networks.h-net.org/h-africa>

Citation: Leland Barrows. Review of Cohen, William, *The French Encounter with Africans: White Responses to Blacks (1530-1880)* and Getz, Trevor R., *Slavery and Reform in West Africa: Toward Emancipation in Nineteenth-Century Senegal and the Gold Coast*. H-Africa, H-Net Reviews. April, 2005.

URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=10397>

Copyright © 2005 by H-Net, all rights reserved. H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for nonprofit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author, web location, date of publication, originating list, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For any other proposed use, contact the Reviews editorial staff at hbooks@mail.h-net.org.