

des pistes de réflexion utiles pour les débats récurrents que les responsables politiques sont amenés à traiter lors de certaines périodes festives de l'année dans le champ de l'espace public ?

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Abbé Casimir DUGOUJON. *Lettres sur l'esclavage et l'abolition dans les colonies françaises, 1840-1850*. Documents établis et introduits par Nelly SCHMIDT, avec la collaboration technique de Roger LITTLE. (Autrement mêmes). Paris, L'Harmattan, 2015. 21,5 × 13,5 cm, 254 p. € 32, € 24,99 (.pdf). ISBN 978-2-343-07468-9, 978-2-336-39223-3 (.pdf).

N. S.'s contributions to slavery studies have been nothing short of outstanding. After the painstaking research that brought to light the comprehensive survey, *L'Abolition de l'Esclavage. Cinq Siècles de Combats, xvr-xx^e siècles* (Fayard, 2005), and a reference study on slavery in the French colonies in the Caribbean, *La France a-t-elle aboli l'esclavage? Guadeloupe-Martinique-Guyane, 1830-1935* (Perrin, 2009), among others, N. S. now provides slavery researchers with an excellent edition of Abbé Casimir Dugoujon's *Lettres Sur l'Esclavage et l'Abolition dans les Colonies Françaises*, first published in 1845. It is a magnificent work of scholarship.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part is an elaborated historical contextualization of controversies revolving around slavery and abolition in France during the 1840s. The second part is a careful edition of the most relevant correspondences of Abbé Dugoujon in the context of his campaign against the abuses of the French colonial rule in Guadeloupe, where, despite the abolition rhetoric, slavery persisted with the knowledge and endorsement of the colonial authorities. N. S.'s work is a specialized source edition, which facilitates the understanding of the intricate contours of the clashes between a disgruntled field missionary and the colonial authorities in Guadeloupe on account of slavery. *Lettres sur l'Esclavage* are, essentially, testimonies based on *in loco* observations. A perceptive field missionary, Dugoujon quickly realized the considerable gap between the discourses and the practices regarding the abolition of slavery in the French Caribbean. Unwilling to be the complicit of the colonial authorities, the apostolic prefect of Guadeloupe resorted to writing (namely to publications in the influential Parisian newspaper *L'Univers* and in the *Revue des Colonies*) to boldly denounce the abuses he had become very familiar with in his line of work in the Caribbean.

To Dugoujon's eyes, Guadeloupe remained a 'pays des chaînes et du fouet' because colonial authorities had little interest in changing the state of affairs there in order to promote the amelioration of the life conditions of those they claimed had been set free from bondage. The *Lettres sur l'Esclavage* leave no room for doubt that the French prelate managed to corroborate his claims with unequivocal

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evidences. Dugoujon's courageous denounces bought him influential enemies within the colonial administration. His behaviour was viewed as 'an act of open rebellion to authority'. The clashes with authorities eventually forced the missionary to leave Guadeloupe in 1841, where he would return only in 1849, after the Propaganda Fide accepted his appointment to be the apostolic prefect on 25 April 1848. Dugoujon's ferocious testimonies did not infuriate only the secular authorities. Even Roman Catholic personalities known for their commitment to the improvement of the lot of the native populations, such as François Libermann, the founder of the Spiritans, considered Dugoujon's criticisms radical and saw him no more than a troublemaker.

N. S.'s edition of Dugoujon's *Lettres sur l'Esclavage* is very commendable not only for the quality of the edition but also, or especially because of the nature of Dugoujon's criticism against the lethargy of the colonial authorities in the Caribbean to harmonize the rhetoric and the practices in the abolition process. Dugoujon's fierce criticisms to the persistence of slavery in the French Caribbean remains an unequivocal proof that the attitudes of the French Roman Catholic clergy towards slavery in the French colonies knew significant variations in space and in time. It is true that most of 19th century French missionaries were keen to do the Republic's bidding and cooperated with the colonial authorities even at the cost of turning a blind eye to the atrocities of the colonial rule (as many missionaries of other nationalities did for their respective countries). In Central Africa, for instance, the famous Cardinal Lavigerie and the Spiritan Prosper Augouard took nationalist stances. They were instrumental in the consolidation of French's territorial claims in the context of the 'scramble' of the 1870s and 1880s and preferred to remain silent on whatever misdeeds that could compromise French interests in the region. The attitudes of connivance and complicity with the colonial rule regarding slavery and other atrocities in the 19th century are, however, not to be generalized. There were outspoken exceptions whose testimonies deserve to be publicized for the sake of the accuracy of historical analysis. Hence, N. S.'s edition of Dugoujon's *Lettres sur l'Esclavage* is opportune and specialized editions of these highly relevant source materials should be encouraged.

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Voici un livre composé de chapitres écrits par des auteurs différents sur la réception de Newman, de sa pensée, de son action et même de sa personnalité, depuis la période où il était le chef du Mou-

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