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The politics of punishment in colonial Mauritius, 1766 - 1887¹

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ABSTRACT The history of imprisonment in British colonial Mauritius is intertwined with its political economy, most especially the relationship between metropolitan government and plantation owners. Whether labour were predominantly enslaved, apprenticed or indentured, incarceration was part of a broader process through which the regulation of the colonial workforce was taken from the private to the public sphere and became associated with economic development. Nevertheless, prisoners both challenged and used prison regimes as vehicles for the improvement of their lives. Mauritian jails were intensely political arenas in which the changing nature of colonial relations and the regulation of labour was both expressed and contested.

Keywords: Mauritius, prisons, punishment, slavery, indenture, penal transportation

INTRODUCTION

The island of Mauritius lies in the southwest Indian Ocean, 800 km east of Madagascar. It remained uninhabited until the late sixteenth century when the Dutch established the first of two settlements and named it after Prince Maurice of Nassau. They were plagued with difficulties and abandoned the settlement in 1710. Five years later the French claimed the island, renaming it Île de France, and the first settlers arrived in 1721. The British took the island – which they called Mauritius – during the

Napoleonic Wars. Although the slave trade had been abolished in 1807, at the time the institution of slavery remained central to the island's expanding plantation economy. In 1835 slavery was abolished, but the 70,000 liberated slaves remained tied to their ex-owners through the institution of apprenticeship. Final emancipation came in 1839. Disconcerted at the prospect of employing former chattels as free labour, and faced with an unprecedented labour crisis, Mauritian planters replaced local workers with almost half a million labourers from India under contracts of indenture, radically altering the ethnic demography of Mauritius in the process. By 1861, Indians comprised 62 per cent of the island's population.²

The history of penal confinement in British colonial Mauritius is inextricably linked to this shift in the island's political economy, in particular the changing power relations between local and metropolitan governments and the slave owning and planting classes, in the context of a socially complex and changing population and a massive expansion in the sugar industry.³ Whether labour were predominantly enslaved, apprenticed or indentured, incarceration was part of a broader process through which the regulation of the colonial workforce was taken from the private to the public sphere. Moreover, in combining the removal of offenders from society with the penal display associated with sentences of hard labour, and in using prisoners to construct and repair public works and road networks, penal space was also associated strongly with colonial development. That is not to suggest that prisoners were passive agents in these penal processes, for they both challenged and used prison regimes as vehicles for the amelioration of their working and living conditions. Mauritian jails therefore became intensely political arenas in which the changing nature of colonial relations and the regulation of labour was both expressed and contested.

THE BAGNE

During the first years of French settlement, the punishment of the enslaved, whether local, African or Indian born, was largely a private affair. The Code Noir – a set of legislation that aimed to bring slavery into the public arena and make slaves subject to criminal law – came into force in 1723, but had little effect with regard to the private punishment of minor infractions.⁴ It was not until the second half of the eighteenth century that there were changes in this respect. In 1766, shortly before control of the island passed from the French East India Company to the French government, the Conseil Supérieur of Île de France created a Bagne at Trou Fanfaron in the harbour area of the island's capital Port Louis where slaves served sentences of imprisonment and hard labour. Gendered forms of penal display were central to the Bagne regime. Men worked at outdoor road labour, in chains and iron collars weighing up to fourteen pounds, whilst women broke stones indoors.⁵ As in later colonial regimes, this was a deliberate attempt to shield from public view female penal labour.⁶ The Bagne also held slave deserters (maroons) who if they were unclaimed by their owners became state property. Colonists feared marronage greatly, and its potential social and economic consequences loomed large. Their general alarm drove the creation of armed *détachements* to hunt fugitives down and the infliction of corporal punishments like branding, flogging, mutilation or even death.⁷ The Bagne had a third function as a place where the enslaved could go and lodge complaints against their owners, though the odds were stacked against them and the vast majority of claims were declared unfounded.⁸

After the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, during the British period the Bagne was also used for the imprisonment of 'Liberated Africans' – also known as

'Prize Negroes' – who although freed as illegally traded slaves were forcibly apprenticed to employers for periods of up to fourteen years.⁹ Further legacies of the French administration were another small jail in Port Louis which was situated near the police office and government house. This Police Prison – sometimes called the Prison du Violon – housed those slaves sentenced to simple imprisonment. There were further civil and criminal prisons attached to the Supreme Court (Palais de Justice).¹⁰ There was no system of penal segregation at this time, though women and debtors were kept separate from other prisoners.

The main purpose of the Bagne was the public regulation and discipline of the institution of slavery. However, exercising colonial administrators was the creation of a space of less eligibility that would not be an attractive alternative to plantation, domestic or other types of slave labour. Changes to the penal regime during the British period were spurred by slave owners' concerns that, despite the brutality of fetters, neck collars and hard labour, the enslaved actively sought imprisonment in the Bagne where they would be better fed than by their masters and mistresses.¹¹ The transfer of punishment into the public arena was certainly unpopular with slave owners, for it removed their autonomy with respect to domestic or plantation discipline. Indeed, in 1827 the government set up an enquiry after complaints by slave owners about their 'daily losses' to the prison. Figures produced in the ensuing report show that 2,764 slaves - about four per cent of the total slave population - entered the Bagne in 1826, about a quarter of whom were women.¹² Their unease was reflected in the fact that, despite the existence of the Bagne, even into the 1830s the punishment of slaves for 'petty offences' remained largely in the hands of their owners.

In the first decades of the nineteenth century the Mauritian population grew rapidly, from 77,768 in 1807 to 92,997 in 1827.¹³ The prison population increased

concurrently. In 1819 William Burke, the Chief Medical Officer, wrote that the jails in Port Louis were in such an appalling condition that it would be more humane to sentence prisoners to death.¹⁴ The question of prison discipline in the colonies generally first exercised the metropolitan government after its 1830s enquiry into British prisons and houses of correction, when it issued a colonial circular calling for details of overseas prisons.¹⁵ By the time the circular arrived in Mauritius, the government had in fact already passed legislation on imprisonment, Ordinance V of 1835. It called for the construction of a new jail in Port Louis, proposed a series of innovations relating to prison discipline including a five-tier system of classification, and created a supervisory prison committee.¹⁶ As a result, in 1839 a new House of Correction based on cellular principles opened in the capital for the reception of locally convicted prisoners and long-term offenders from the districts. By 1839 the final emancipation of some 53,000 ex-slave apprentices together with the arrival of over 25,000 indentured labourers from the Indian subcontinent threatened to overwhelm the available accommodation. With the jail unable to cope with the conviction of even a tiny proportion of the increased population, further additions were made to create a total of 172 cells.¹⁷ At the same time, work began on local prisons to serve each of the island's other eight districts, the largest at the old Powder Mills complex in northern Pamplemousses. In 1858, Ordinance XXXI established district prison committees to oversee them.

‘DORMITORIES FOR THE SURVEYOR-GENERAL’: IMPRISONMENT AND HARD LABOUR

Sentences of imprisonment and hard labour were common during the French colonial period, with the threat of the chain gang part of the colonial penal armoury against slave marronage and other socially destabilising offences. Indeed, the colonial preoccupation with tracking down and putting to work unproductive slaves (and later on apprentices and indentured labourers) might be seen as part of broader practices concerning the need to control and discipline supposedly 'indolent natives', or at the very least 'obstinate idlers'. The association between imprisonment and hard labour continued with Britain's assumption of control of Mauritius, and with the opening of the House of Correction in 1839 labour remained central to both penal intent and display. Most prisoners were employed on public works, including the construction and repair of roads and bridges, military works such as the building of Fort Adelaide (or Citadel) just outside Port Louis and the quarantine station at Flat Island off the northern coast. Locally-convicted prisoners – slaves, apprentices, free creoles (born in Mauritius of mixed descent) and Indian indentured labourers – worked alongside soldiers, government slaves, liberated Africans, free workers, and convicts transported to the island from India (about whom more in a moment). In what had always been an intensely cosmopolitan and creolized society, there were no attempts to segregate free workers, slaves and Indian convicts from prisoners or, except for the preclusion of white prisoners from hard labour, to otherwise racialize the workforce.¹⁸ Neither were distinctions made between prisoners in this respect. By the third quarter of the eighteenth century, the social complexities of this relatively small island were huge – what one jailer in the southern prison at Grand Port described as an impossible mix of nationalities and classes.¹⁹ Unlike in India, however, few concessions were made to prisoners on religious, caste or status grounds.²⁰ The refusal of high-caste Brahmin prisoner Marouden's request for a transfer from Port Louis on the basis that he was

unable to eat the rations provided is one of many such examples.²¹ Neither were Hindu prisoners granted concessions with regard to the caste of the cooks preparing their rations, although they were not forced to eat beef or tripe.²² Moreover, and in stark contrast to the barely contained paranoia that characterized the running of Indian prisons in the years following the mutiny-rebellion of 1857-8, Christian priests moved about Port Louis jail with a remarkable degree of freedom. They even ministered to Hindu prisoners awaiting execution.²³

Depending on the demand for road labourers and finished goods other prisoners were engaged in indoor work, such as stone breaking and oakum picking or more skilled occupations like net, basket, shoe and mat making, tailoring, and canvas stitching.²⁴ The gendering evident in the early nineteenth-century Bagne continued in the penal workplace, though rather than working indoors at stone breaking, in a further development of expressive discourses about the appropriate employment of women, female prisoners were more likely to be kept at 'domestic' labour such as sewing or grinding corn. Whilst putting women to remunerative labour was a motive, such penal organization also expressed metropolitan concerns with the division of gendered private/public workspace. A common lament during the middle of the nineteenth century was that with the decline in the slave, apprentice and creole prison population and the rise in the number of Indians, prisoners no longer had the skills for particular types of prison industry and so profits declined considerably. South Asian migrants were of course mainly cultivators or agriculturalists who had travelled to the island to work on the plantations. Few had experience in other types of work such as sewing and weaving, or the more specialized occupations of blacksmith, mason or cooper. In 1851, when Indians made up about three quarters of the Mauritian prison population, the prison committee put a figure on the effect of the decreasing numbers

of artisans. Between 1846 and 1850, prison receipts fell from £999-19-0 to £284-13-4, most of the latter earned through the sale of broken stones. The annual number of cart loads of stones produced for the municipality correspondingly increased: from 3,883 to 16,893 during the same period.²⁵

Despite concerns about falling prison profits, and the prison committee's occasional calls for the abolition of extra-mural labour on the grounds of good order and discipline, outdoor work attracted little consistent criticism until the mid-1850s when the prison committee argued more forcefully for instructive labour inside jails. This, it said, would be good for discipline and effect moral reform.²⁶ A decade later, penal administrators were beginning to consolidate the view that real hard labour could never exist on the island. This was because of their growing belief that, like the enslaved, Indians bound to contracts of indenture preferred imprisonment to estate labour.²⁷ The Powder Mills prison committee complained of the openness with which prisoners stated that the jails were more comfortable than the estates.²⁸ Indeed, an 1860 memorial signed by twenty planters in the districts of Plaines Wilhems and Moka alleged that imprisonment made Indian labourers insubordinate, for rations were so abundant and work so light that on release they declared that they would do whatever was necessary to return to jail.²⁹ There was perhaps some truth in these perceptions; despite the almost complete lack of surveillance over working prisoners, there were few escapes. One contemporary visitor compared the output of prisoners with that of indentured labourers thus: 'the way in which the men condemned to the roads creep along with their baskets on their heads, and sleepily tilt over the contents at a given spot, at once convinces you on which side the superiority lies'.³⁰ Of significance in this respect is that the Mauritian surveyor general - not the prison discipline committees - had authority over prison gangs once they were out at work.

Inevitably, efficient labour rather than penal discipline was at the top of his agenda. The only involvement the prison committees had was in the punishment of prisoners who absolutely refused to work.³¹ The inspector-general of prisons thus wrote in 1866 that prisons were nothing more than ‘dormitories for the surveyor general’s working parties’.³²

The issue for the Port Louis and district prison committees was that of less eligibility, i.e. the need to create jails that were less attractive than the plantations but did not deprive prisoners of basic food, lodging or health. There was the further issue of how to punish recalcitrant prisoners, for in 1835 progressive legislation had been passed banning corporal punishment in prison. Both plantation owners and penal officials feared that this created jails as places of refuge from the arbitrary violence that some indentured labourers experienced on sugar estates, and thus ameliorated considerably the working conditions of some (incarcerated) labourers. Frequently, prisoners refused to work, and deprived of the array of negative incentives available to overseers on the plantations, there was little their prison overseers could do. With few other weapons at their disposal, the Port Louis prison committee proposed successfully in 1851 that flogging should be reintroduced.³³ Though the maximum number of lashes was set at thirty through 1858 legislation, jail flogging remained in force until it was abolished finally in 1884. And yet there is no question that during this period for some indentured labourers jail remained, as their employers feared, preferable to estate labour. Especially during the early period of indenture when there was a massive sex-ratio imbalance within the indentured community, one of the main deterrents of imprisonment – social dislocation and rupture – had little resonance. On the other hand, labourers benefited considerably from a shorter working day, as time spent getting to and from work were included in the hours of labour. Moreover,

prisoners commonly used the Port Louis prison committee as a conduit for complaints about their contracts, mostly about non-payment of wages as a result of the notorious 'double cut' (the docking of two days' pay for each day off). That the committee ordered full investigations into each case perhaps reveals something of the broader tensions between the British government and the largely French planter class on the island in the treatment of indentured labourers.

The inspector-general's reservations about the usefulness of prison work gangs coincided with further metropolitan enquiries into the management of prisons in the colonies during the 1860s. One of London's main focal points was the penal efficacy of labour. In an interesting departure from contemporary beliefs and practices in Mauritius (as indeed in other colonies) about the desirability of remunerative prison labour, the metropolitan government argued that effective punishment was sacrificed when 'industrial and productive employment is substituted ... for labour strictly penal.' The metropolitan view was that the non-productive crank and the tread wheel were essential to all those condemned to hard labour, and industrial employment should only be attempted during the later stage of long sentences of imprisonment. Even then, economy and profit should be secondary considerations to penal discipline. Industrial labour, the government argued, was altogether 'less penal, irksome and fatiguing'.³⁴ As a result of this intervention the Mauritian government set up a commission of enquiry which toured prisons across the island during the 1870s. This was the spur to the opening of a new central prison with proper facilities for indoor employment in 1887. Situated away from the capital in the more salubrious climate of the highland plateau at Beau Bassin, this was arguably the beginning of the shift from public penal display towards more discrete forms of imprisonment.

Prisoners were kept to indoor work away from the gaze of the capital's inhabitants, and the outdoor work gang was abolished altogether.

The recommendations of the 1865-7 British enquiry on prison discipline departed from extant practices in Mauritius (and indeed elsewhere in the empire) in that it recommended the type of unproductive work usually reserved for prison offences – the crank and the tread wheel – for the early stages of punishment, as well as an additional sanction. The enquiry also mentioned the potential use of shot drill in this respect, and subsequently it was introduced in the House of Correction in 1866 where it became part of the daily routine of all prisoners. Indoor labour thus became a mix of productive and unproductive labour, and so moved closer to metropolitan aspirations. In the colonial context, shot drill had further significance, for it was an intensely theatrical performance through which the balance of power moved away from prisoners as important productive agents and towards their engagement in a useless and demeaning penal ritual. Of those working inside jail, each prisoner was employed at shot drill for a quarter of each hour of the working day. The rest of the hour was to be spent picking oakum or if there was none, 'sitting quietly in their places'. For a band of sixty prisoners, the drill – as the inspector-general of prisons explained - was as follows (Figure I).

Figure 1: Shot Drill

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	189	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64

Each prisoner was placed in one of the spaces (each was five feet square), except numbers 16, 32, 48 and 64, which were left unoccupied. A quantity of shot was placed in front of each prisoner. All the prisoners faced the director of the drill, who stood before spaces one, 17, 33 and 49. He then gave the command 'Lift Shot!' at which the prisoners stooped down and lifted up a shot each, standing 'erect and quietly with the shot in front of the body.' The drill continued:

1. "To the left face". The prisoners face to the left and remain steady.
2. "March". Every prisoner takes 2 or 3 paces to bring him into the space adjoining that which he originally occupied; and without command turn towards the director. Thus no. 15 moves into no. 16, no. 14 into 15 and so on for the first line and so on, similar movements taking place in all the lines simultaneously.
3. "Lay down shot". All the prisoners lay down the shot quietly on the ground and then stand up. The spaces numbered 1, 17, 33 and 49 are now empty.

The director then repeated his commands, substituting 'to the right face' for 'to the left space', to bring the prisoners back to their original spot. These movements backwards and forwards were repeated forty times in fifteen minutes, after which the next band of prisoners took their turn. The inspector-general reported with some pleasure how much prisoners disliked the drill.³⁵

BANISHMENT, EXILE AND TRANSPORTATION IN AN ISLAND COLONY

During the first half of the nineteenth century, there was a further penal option open to the Mauritian administration: the transportation of convicts from Mauritius to Robben

Island, off the Cape (until 1834) or to the Australian penal settlements in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (1834-45). The government shipped over one hundred locally convicted convicts overseas.³⁶ Amongst these convicts were slaves, apprentices, convicts - originally transported from India to Mauritius and therefore sentenced to retransportation - and indentured Indian and Chinese immigrants. Their offences – arson, robbery, assault - reveal many of the social and economic pressures to which the Mauritian workforce was subject. The punishment of transportation itself was a permanent form of social removal that had potentially devastating consequences on the mostly male convicts' families, as revealed in the often desperate petitions submitted to government by their wives, mothers and siblings.³⁷

Mauritius itself was a relatively isolated and sea bound island space that was attractive as a place of banishment, exile or transportation. The first exile to Mauritius was a free man from Martinique who was sent to Île de France from Paris in the 1770s.³⁸ Between 1803 and 1810, with France at war with Britain, the famous explorer Matthew Flinders together with his shipmates and other prisoners of war were held there.³⁹ The Bagne's most famous resident was Ratsitanana, the nephew of King Radama I of Madagascar, who was sent to the island in exile in 1821. Within a few months he escaped, supposedly to lead a slave rebellion. He was tried and convicted, and was executed in 1822. In a powerful visual warning against further anti-colonial intrigues, his head was placed on a stake and put on public display high up in the mountains above Port Louis.⁴⁰ It both symbolized and expressed the anxieties of Mauritian colonists, who were uncertain about the future of the institution of slavery in the aftermath of the abolition of the slave trade. And yet, as Pier Larson has shown, the 'slave conspiracy' of 1822 was in large part a myth borne out of colonial paranoia. Moreover, Ratsitanana himself was an unlikely and improbable

leader. He came from a powerful Malagasy family itself involved in the slave trade.⁴¹ Other exiles included Kandyan aristocrats from Ceylon. One of the men – Ehelepola – cut a dashing figure as he rode around the island on horseback and dined with the governor.⁴² There is still a memorial to him on the island today. Mauritius was also a place to which Indian convicts were transported. When the first British governor of Mauritius, Robert Farquhar, arrived on the island three years after the abolition of the slave trade, in the face of a potentially serious labour crisis he asked the Bengal authorities to send him a supply of convicts. Subsequently the authorities transported almost fifteen hundred Indian offenders, and the Mauritian government assumed responsibility for their cost in exchange for the value of their labour. They were joined by a handful of ordinary offenders from the crown colony of Ceylon.⁴³

THE VAGRANT DEPOT

The introduction of indentured labourers created new law and order concerns in colonial Mauritius, for in the face of often harsh conditions Indians deserted their labour contracts in large numbers. The government's desire to control this new workforce – coupled with assumptions about the 'obstinate idleness' believed to be so central to the Indian 'character' - underpinned the development of vagrancy legislation in colonial Mauritius, as also new penal strategies. As we have seen, there was a long history of slave marronage on the island and so it is perhaps unsurprising that post-emancipation the types of measures used against runaway slaves and apprentices were adapted for the control of Indian indentured labourers. Early ordinances created the offence of vagabondage and criminalized desertion and illegal absence from work.⁴⁴ Vagrancy legislation followed in 1852, 1867 and 1878, the

latter further defining the vagrant as someone with no fixed residence, no means of subsistence and no regular employment.⁴⁵ In practice it created a legal framework that tied workers to their employers by restricting their movement and preventing them from seeking better pay and conditions. It also constituted a new type of prisoner. During this period thousands of vagrants passed through Port Louis jail. Between 1852 and 1862, over 30,000 were committed. In 1863 alone the figure was 7,000 vagrants – almost five per cent of the total male Indian population then on the island.⁴⁶ The scale of the problem was considered such that in 1864 the authorities decided to open a separate jail for the imprisonment of those convicted of desertion: the Vagrant Depot. It is no coincidence that this was a period of major restructuring in the Mauritian sugar industry after both sugar prices and immigration tailed off. As Richard B. Allen shows, at this time of economic distress it was essential to mobilize and control the colony's agricultural labour force.⁴⁷

The Vagrant Depot was from the beginning more than tangential to the history of incarceration and forced labour in Mauritius, for it was situated on the site of the old Indian convict barracks at Grand River, just outside Port Louis.⁴⁸ There was more than a spatial connection to the type of penal discipline employed there too. Convicted vagrants were sentenced to a term at the depot, and were employed at hard labour whilst they were there – mainly stone breaking and carting for road building and mending projects. Initially the inspector-general of police was appointed superintendent in charge of a keeper and staff of police constables. A visiting magistrate carried out weekly inspections. He was empowered to punish vagrants for any misdemeanours. Flogging, solitary confinement and reduced rations were all used for a range of offences including insulting, threatening or assaulting the guard, refusing to work and disobedience of orders. There is some suggestion that discipline

at the depot was more severe than in some of the island's local prisons. One district prison committee certainly expressed this view.⁴⁹ In 1878 the depot was declared part of Port Louis jail and control passed to the Port Louis prison committee. From then on it held petty offenders as well as vagrants. By 1880 its average lock-up was 165 prisoners.⁵⁰ The depot remained open until 1886, when it closed during the more general reform of prisons across the island. Vagrants were then housed either in Port Louis prison or the district jails, at least until the new central prison at Beau Bassin opened a year later. Local planters were perhaps glad to regain control of their vagrants. Indeed, some held the view that they should be made to work in the district in which they were convicted, their labour making up for the losses planters incurred when indentured labourers deserted. Similar opinions were expounded by district prison committees, who for the same reasons were often unwilling to transfer locally-convicted labourers to Port Louis.⁵¹

CONCLUSION

Provoked by ongoing metropolitan concerns about the abolition of outdoor labour, in 1887 the government opened a new central jail in the highland plateau at Beau Bassin. This marked a radical change in the dynamics of incarceration, for together with the concurrent abolition of outdoor prison work gangs the transfer of prisoners out of the Mauritian capital largely removed imprisonment from public view, and so changed the dynamics of incarceration in significant ways. Indeed, it is clear that during the first half of the nineteenth century and despite the British regime's creation of a repertoire of spaces of less eligibility for the control of their workforce, in practice slaves, apprentices and indentured labourers subverted the disciplinary intent of the

colonial jail in ameliorating their living and working conditions. Jails were not closed places of confinement, but permeable institutions through which prisoners moved and worked. As such, incarceration was central to Mauritian politics of labour and migration.

¹ Research for this article was conducted in the National Archives in Kew (NA) and the National Archives of Mauritius (NAM). I would like to thank their archivists and staff, as also Marina Carter, Pier Larson and Satyendra Peerthum. I am also grateful to the Economic and Social Research Council who funded my research in Mauritius during 2004.

² Richard B. Allen, *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Laborers in Colonial Mauritius* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 17.

³ The amount of sugar cane planted between 1810 and 1825 more than doubled, and when preferential tariffs on West Indian sugar were abolished in 1825 production further increased. By 1832 the proportion of land cultivated for sugar was 87%. See Nigel Worden, 'Diverging Histories: Slavery and its Aftermath in the Cape Colony and Mauritius', *South African Historical Journal*, 27 (1992), p. 11.

⁴ Megan Vaughan, *Creating the Creole Island: Slavery in Eighteenth-Century Mauritius* (Durham, 2005), pp. 83-7, 179-80.

⁵ NAM RA352: Report on the mode of treatment of slaves confined in the Bagne Prison, J. M. Mullin, Chief Medical Officer, 26 February 1827.

⁶ Clare Anderson, 'Gender, Subalternity and Silence: Recovering Women's Experiences from Histories of Transportation', in Anindita Ghosh (ed.), *Behind the Veil: Resistance, Women and the Everyday in Colonial South Asia* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 148-9.

⁷ Richard Blair Allen, 'Vagrancy and Labour Control in Mid-nineteenth-century Mauritius', in Vijayalakshmi Teelock (ed.), *The Vagrant Depot of Grand River, its Surroundings and Vagrancy in British Mauritius* (Port Louis, 2004), pp. 38-9.

⁷ Allen, *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Laborers*, pp. 36-7.

⁸ According to the evidence of the few surviving 'Bagne Books' in the NAM ID4 series (1828, 1830-5).

⁹ M. Carter, V. Govinden and S. Peerthum, *The Last Slaves: Liberated Africans in 19th-Century Mauritius* (Port Louis, 2003).

¹⁰ NAM RA543: A. Stewart, Chief Medical Officer, to G.F. Dick, Secretary to Government,

¹¹ Allen, *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Laborers*, pp. 51-2. See also NAM RA280: J. Finnis, Chief of Police, to G.A. Barry, Secretary to Government, 23 February 1825.

¹² NAM RA352: Report on the mode of treatment of slaves confined in the Bagne Prison, J. M. Mullin, Chief Medical Officer, 26 February 1827. Percentage based on the enumeration of registered slaves completed in 1826/7: 69,201. See Allen, *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Laborers*, p. 43.

¹³ Anthony J. Barker, *Slavery and Antislavery in Mauritius, 1810-33: The conflict between colonial expansion and humanitarian reform under British rule* (Basingstoke, 1996), p. 53.

¹⁴ NAM RA142: W. A. Burke, Chief Medical Officer, to Barry, 9 December 1819.

¹⁵ NAM SA22: Colonial Circular on Prisons, 28 November 1835.

¹⁶ NA CO169.2: Ordinance V for the purpose of regulating the internal order and discipline of the prisons, 24 February 1835.

¹⁷ NAM RA1127: Report of the Port Louis Prison Committee, 5 February 1851.

¹⁸ NAM RA673: Report of the Prison Committee for the Year 1841. On Mauritius as a creolized society, see Vaughan, *Creating the Creole Island*, ch. 1.

¹⁹ NAM RA2245: Papers relating to the Prison Enquiry Commission: J. Keating, Jailer Grand Port, to Dempsey, 18 February 1875.

²⁰ David Arnold, 'The Colonial Prison: Power, Knowledge, and Penology in 19th-Century India', in David Arnold and David Hardiman (eds), *Subaltern Studies VIII, Essays in Honour of Ranajit Guha* (New Delhi, 1994), pp. 148-87.

²¹ NAM RA1747: Report of the Port Louis Prison Committee, 23 June 1864, enclosing petition of Marouden, 20 June 1864.

²² NAM RA2244: Papers relating to the Prison Enquiry Commission: J. Keating, Jailer Grand Port, to the Port Louis Prison Committee, 18 February 1875.

²³ NAM RA2244: Correspondence regarding circular on religion in prisons, 28 December 1874. On Indian prisons in the aftermath of rebellion, see Clare Anderson, *The Indian Uprising of 1857-8: Prisons, prisoners and rebellion* (London, 2007), ch. 4.

²⁴ NAM RA1459: Annual report of Port Louis prison, 1856.

²⁵ NAM RA1127: Report of the Port Louis Prison Committee, 5 February 1851.

²⁶ NAM RA1459: Annual report of Port Louis prison, 1856.

²⁷ NAM RA1871: Remarks on the despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, relative to prisons, 11, 14, 15, 18 September 1871, 6 October 1871.

²⁸ NAM RA1127: Powder Mills Prison Committee, 5 April 1851.

²⁹ NAM RA1564: Memorial of 20 planters and inhabitants to the President of the Plaines Wilhems and Moka Prison Committee, 14 March 1860.

³⁰ Charles John Boyle, *Far Away; Or, Sketches of Scenery and Society in Mauritius* (London, 1867), p. 109. See also Clare Anderson, *Convicts in the Indian Ocean: Transportation from South Asia to Mauritius, 1815-53* (London, 2000), pp. 68-9.

³¹ NAM RA1955: Minute as to prison labour on public roads, 9 June 1862.

³² NAM RA1858: Dempsey's report on district prisons, 29 December 1866.

³³ NAM RA1127: Report of the Port Louis Prison Committee, 5 February 1851.

³⁴ *Digest and Summary of Information Respecting Prisons in the Colonies, Supplied by the Governors of Her Majesty's Colonial Possessions, in answer to Mr. Secretary Cardwell's Circular Despatches of the 16th and 17th January 1865* (London, 1867); *Further Correspondence Respecting the Discipline and Management of Prisons in Her Majesty's Colonial Possessions* (London, 1868), quotes pp. 4, 70.

³⁵ NAM RA1858: Port Louis Prison Committee, 17 January 1866 (Dempsey's explanation of shot drill, 8 January 1866).

³⁶ NA CO 172.60: Governor's Proclamation, 24 August 1834 (Blue Book 1834); NA CO 171.12: *Mauritius Government Gazette*, 28 June 1845.

³⁷ Clare Anderson, 'Unfree Labour and its Discontents: Transportation from Mauritius to Australia, 1820-1850', *Australian Studies*, 13, 1 (1998), pp. 116-33; Edward Duyker, *Of the Star and the Key: Mauritius, Mauritians and Australia* (Sydney, 1982).

³⁸ Vaughan, *Creating the Creole Island*, pp. 192-6.

³⁹ Marina Carter, *Companions of Misfortune: Flinders and Friends at the Isle of France, 1803-1820* (London, 2003); Huguette Ly-Tio-Fane Pineo, *In the Grips of the Eagle: Matthew Flinders at Ile de France 1803-1810* (Moka, 1988).

⁴⁰ NAM JB140, JB141, JB146: Trial of Ratsitanana, 1822.

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- ⁴¹ Pier M. Larson, 'The Colonial Street: Ratsitatanina and Mascarene Creolite', forthcoming in *Slavery and Abolition* (2008).
- ⁴² Millewa Adikarange Durand Appuhamy, *Rebels, Outlaws and Enemies to the British* (Columbo, 1990); Millewa Adikarange Durand Appuhamy, *The Kandyans' Last Stand Against the British* (Columbo, 1995).
- ⁴³ Anderson, *Convicts in the Indian Ocean*.
- ⁴⁴ Allen, 'Vagrancy', pp. 35-45.
- ⁴⁵ The legislative history of vagrancy can be found in Saloni Deerpalsingh, 'An overview of Vagrancy laws, its effects and case studies 1860-1911', in Teelock (ed.), *The Vagrant Depot*, pp. 47-54.
- ⁴⁶ Allen, 'Vagrancy', pp. 38-9.
- ⁴⁷ Allen, *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Laborers*, pp. 64-8; Allen, 'Vagrancy', p. 43.
- ⁴⁸ Satyendra Peerthum, 'History of the Vagrant Depot of Grand River North West (1864-1886)', in Teelock (ed.), *The Vagrant Depot*, pp. 88-93.
- ⁴⁹ NAM RA1909: Report of Flacq Prison Committee, 21 November 1867.
- ⁵⁰ NAM RA2369: Port Louis Prison Committee, 22 August 1878; Note of Inspector General of Prisons, 19 July 1880.
- ⁵¹ For instance NAM RA1747: Report of Prison Committee Savanne, 16 June 1864.