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THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH

BY FRANTZ FANON

A NEGRO PSYCHOANALYST'S
STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS
OF RACISM & COLONIALISM
IN THE WORLD TODAY

A

Frantz Fanon

THE WRETCHED
OF
THE EARTH

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of the world: « After all, let them bawl their heads off, it relieves their feelings; dogs that bark don't bite. »

A new generation came on the scene, which changed the issue. With unbelievable patience, its writers and poets tried to explain to us that our values and the true facts of their lives did not hang together, and that they could neither reject them completely nor yet assimilate them. By and large, what they were saying was this: « You are making us into monstrosities; your humanism claims we are at one with the rest of humanity but your racist methods set us apart. » Very much at our ease, we listened to them all; colonial administrators are not paid to read Hegel, and for that matter they do not read much of him, but they do not need a philosopher to tell them that uneasy consciences are caught up in their own contradictions. They will not get anywhere; so, let us perpetuate their discomfort; nothing will come of it but talk. If they were, the experts told us, asking for anything at all precise in their wailing, it would be integration. Of course, there is no question of granting that; the system, which depends on over-exploitation, as you know, would be ruined. But it's enough to hold the carrot in front of their noses, they'll gallop all right. As to a revolt, we need not worry at all; what native in his senses would go off to massacre the fair sons of Europe simply to become European as they are? In short, we encouraged these disconsolate spirits and thought it not a bad idea for once to award the Prix Goncourt to a Negro. That was before '39.

1961. Listen: « Let us waste no time in sterile litanies and nauseating mimicry. Leave this Europe where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everywhere they find them, at the corner of every one of their own streets, in all the corners of the globe. For centuries they have stifled almost the whole of humanity in the name of a so-called spiritual experience ». The tone is new. Who dares to speak thus? It is an African, a man from the Third World, an ex-« native ». He adds: « Europe now lives at such a mad, reckless pace that she is running headlong into the abyss; we would do well to keep away from it. » In other words, she's done for. A truth which is not pleasant to state but of which we are all convinced, are we not, fellow-Europeans, in the marrow of our bones?

We must however make one reservation. When a Frenchman,

for example, says to other Frenchmen « The country is done for » — which has happened, I should think, almost every day since 1930 — it is emotional talk; burning with love and fury, the speaker includes himself with his fellow-countrymen. And then, usually, he adds « Unless... » His meaning is clear; no more mistakes must be made; if his instructions are not carried out to the letter, then and only then will the country go to pieces. In short, it is a threat followed by a piece of advice and these remarks are so much the less shocking in that they spring from a national intersubjectivity. But on the contrary when Fanon says of Europe that she is rushing to her doom, far from sounding the alarm he is merely setting out a diagnosis. This doctor neither claims that she is a hopeless case — miracles have been known to exist — nor does he give her the means to cure herself. He certifies that she is dying, on external evidence, founded on symptoms that he can observe. As to curing her, no; he has other things to think about; he does not give a damn whether she lives or dies. Because of this, his book is scandalous. And if you murmur, jokingly embarrassed, « He has it in for us! » the true nature of the scandal escapes you; for Fanon has nothing in for you at all; his work — red-hot for some — in what concerns you is as cold as ice; he speaks of you often, never to you. The black Goncourts and the yellow Nobels are finished; the days of colonized laureats are over. An ex-native, French-speaking, bends that language to new requirements, makes use of it, and speaks to the colonized only: « Natives of all under-developed countries, unite! » What a downfall! For the fathers, we alone were the speakers; the sons no longer even consider us as valid intermediaries: we are the objects of their speeches. Of course, Fanon mentions in passing our well-known crimes: Sétif, Hanoï, Madagascar: but he does not waste his time in condemning them; he uses them. If he demonstrates the tactics of colonialism, the complex play of relations which unite and oppose the colonists to the people of the mother country, it is for his brothers; his aim is to teach them to beat us at our own game.

In short, the Third World finds itself and speaks to itself through his voice. We know that it is not a homogeneous world; we know too that enslaved peoples are still to be found there, together with some who have achieved a simulacrum of phoney indepen-

dence, others who are still fighting to attain sovereignty and others again who have obtained complete freedom but who live under the constant menace of imperialist aggression. These differences are born of colonial history, in other words of oppression. Here, the mother country is satisfied to keep some feudal rulers in her pay; there, dividing and ruling she has created a native bourgeoisie, sham from beginning to end; elsewhere she has played a double game: the colony is planted with settlers and exploited at the same time. Thus Europe has multiplied divisions and opposing groups, has fashioned classes and sometimes even racial prejudices, and has endeavoured by every means to bring about and intensify the stratification of colonised societies. Fanon hides nothing: in order to fight against us the former colony must fight against itself: or, rather, the two struggles form part of a whole. In the heat of battle, all internal barriers break down; the puppet bourgeoisie of businessmen and shopkeepers, the urban proletariat, which is always in a privileged position, the lumpen-proletariat of the shanty towns — all fall into line with the stand made by the rural masses, that veritable reservoir of a national revolutionary army; for in those countries where colonialism has deliberately held up development, the peasantry, when it rises, quickly stands out as the revolutionary class. For it knows naked oppression, and suffers far more from it than the workers in the towns, and in order not to die of hunger, it demands no less than a complete demolishing of all existing structures. In order to triumph, the national revolution must be socialist; if its career is cut short, if the native bourgeoisie takes over power, the new State, in spite of its formal sovereignty, remains in the hands of the imperialists. The example of Katanga illustrates this quite well. Thus the unity of the Third World is not yet achieved. It is a work in progress, which begins by the union, in each country, after independence as before, of the whole of the colonised people under the command of the peasant class. This is what Fanon explains to his brothers in Africa, Asia and Latin America: we must achieve revolutionary socialism all together everywhere, or else one by one we will be defeated by our former masters. He hides nothing, neither weaknesses, nor discords, nor mystification. Here, the movement gets off to a bad start; there, after a striking initial success it loses momentum; elsewhere it has come to a standstill, and if it is to

start again, the peasants must throw their bourgeoisie overboard. The reader is sternly put on his guard against the most dangerous will o' the wisps: the cult of the leader and of personalities, western culture, and what is equally to be feared, the withdrawal into the twilight of past African culture. For the only true culture is that of the Revolution; that is to say, it is constantly in the making. Fanon speaks out loud; we Europeans can hear him, as the fact that you hold this book in your hand proves; is he not then afraid that the colonial powers may take advantage of his sincerity?

No; he fears nothing. Our methods are out-of-date; they can sometimes delay emancipation, but not stop it. And do not think that we can change our ways; neo-colonialism, that idle dream of mother-countries, is a lot of hot air; the « Third Forces » don't exist, or if they do they are only the tin-pot bourgeoisies that colonialism has already placed in the saddle. Our Machiavellianism has little purchase on this wide-awake world that has run our falsehoods to earth one after the other. The settler has only recourse to one thing: brute force, when he can command it; the native has only one choice, between servitude or supremacy. What does Fanon care whether you read his work or not? It is to his brothers that he denounces our old tricks, and he is sure we have no more up our sleeves. It is to them he says: « Europe has laid her hands on our continents, and we must slash at her fingers till she lets go. It's a good moment; nothing can happen at Bizerta, at Elizabethville or in the Algerian bled (1) that the whole world does not hear about. The rival blocks take opposite sides, and hold each other in check; let us take advantage of this paralysis, let us burst into history, forcing it by our invasion into universality for the first time. Let us start fighting; and if we've no other arms, the waiting knife's enough. »

Europeans, you must open this book and enter into it. After a few steps in the darkness you will see strangers gathered around a fire; come close, and listen, for they are talking of the destiny they will mete out to your trading-centres and to the hired soldiers who defend them. They will see you, perhaps, but they will go on talking among themselves, without even lowering their voices.

(1) Up-country in North Africa (Transl).

This indifference strikes home: their fathers, shadowy creatures, your creatures, were but dead souls; you it was who allowed them glimpses of light, to you only did they dare speak, and you did not bother to reply to such zombies. Their sons ignore you; a fire warms them and sheds light around them, and you have not lit it. Now, at a respectful distance, it is you who will feel furtive, nightbound and perished with cold. Turn and turn about; in these shadows from whence a new dawn will break, it is you who are the zombies.

In this case, you will say, let's throw away this book. Why read it if it is not written for us? For two reasons; the first is that Fanon explains you to his brothers and shows them the mechanism by which we are estranged from ourselves; take advantage of this, and get to know yourselves seen in the light of truth, objectively. Our victims know us by their scars and by their chains, and it is this that makes their evidence irrefutable. It is enough that they show us what we have made of them for us to realise what we have made of ourselves. But is it any use? Yes, for Europe is at death's door. But, you will say, we live in the mother country, and we disapprove of her excesses. It is true, you are not settlers, but you are no better. For the pioneers belonged to you; you sent them overseas, and it was you they enriched. You warned them that if they shed too much blood you would disown them, or say you did, in something of the same way as any state maintains abroad a mob of agitators, agents provocateurs and spies whom it disowns when they are caught. You, who are so liberal and so humane, who have such an exaggerated adoration of culture that it verges on affectation, you pretend to forget that you own colonies and that in them men are massacred in your name. Fanon reveals to his comrades — above all to some of them who are rather too Westernised — the solidarity of the people of the mother-country and of their representatives in the colonies. Have the courage to read this book, for in the first place it will make you ashamed, and shame, as Marx said, is a revolutionary sentiment. You see, I, too, am incapable of ridding myself of subjective illusions; I, too, say to you: « All is lost, unless... ». As a European, I steal the enemy's book, and out of it I fashion a remedy for Europe. Make the most of it.

And here is the second reason: if you set aside Sorel's fascist

utterances, you will find that Fanon is the first since Engels to bring the processes of history into the clear light of day. Moreover, you need not think that hotheadedness or an unhappy childhood have given him some uncommon taste for violence; he acts as the interpreter of the situation, that's all. But this is enough to enable him to constitute, step by step, the dialectic which liberal hypocrisy hides from you and which is as much responsible for our existence as for his.

During the last century, the middle classes looked on the workers as covetous creatures, made lawless by their greedy desires; but they took care to include these great brutes in our own species, or at least they considered that they were free men — that is to say, free to sell their labour. In France, as in England, humanism claimed to be universal.

In the case of forced labour, it is quite the contrary. There is no contract; moreover, there must be intimidation and thus oppression grows. Our soldiers overseas, rejecting the universalism of the mother country, apply the « numerus clausus » to the human race: since none may enslave, rob or kill his fellow-man without committing a crime, they lay down the principle that the native is not one of our fellow-men. Our striking-power has been given the mission of changing this abstract certainty into reality: the order is given to reduce the inhabitants of the annexed country to the level of superior monkeys in order to justify the settler's treatment of them as beasts of burden. Violence in the colonies does not only have for its aim the keeping of these enslaved men at arm's length; it seeks to dehumanise them. Everything will be done to wipe out their traditions, to substitute our language for theirs and to destroy their culture without giving them ours. Sheer physical fatigue will stupefy them. Starved and ill, if they have any spirit left, fear will finish the job; guns are levelled at the peasant; civilians come to take over his land and force him by dint of flogging to till the land for them. If he shows fight, the soldiers fire and he's a dead man; if he gives in, he degrades himself and he is no longer a man at all; shame and fear will split up his character and make his inmost self fall to pieces. The business is conducted with flying colours and by experts; the « psychological services » weren't established yesterday; nor was brain-washing. And yet, in spite of all these efforts, their ends are nowhere achieved: neither

in the Congo, where Negroes' hands were cut off, nor in Angola, where until very recently malcontents' lips were pierced in order to shut them with padlocks. I do not say that it is impossible to change a man into an animal: I simply say that you won't get there without weakening him considerably. Blows will never suffice; you have to push the starvation further, and that's the trouble with slavery.

For when you domesticate a member of our own species, you reduce his output, and however little you may give him, a farmyard man finishes by costing more than he brings in. For this reason the settlers are obliged to stop the breaking-in half-way; the result, neither man nor animal, is the native. Beaten, under-nourished, ill, terrified — but only up to a certain point — he has, whether he's black, yellow or white, always the same traits of character: he's a sly-boots, a lazybones and a thief, who lives on nothing, and who understands only violence.

Poor settler; here is his contradiction naked, shorn of its trappings. He ought to kill those he plunders, as they say djinns do. Now, this is not possible, because he must exploit them as well. Because he can't carry massacre on to genocide, and slavery to animal-like degradation, he loses control, the machine goes into reverse, and a relentless logic leads him on to decolonisation.

But it does not happen immediately. At first the European's reign continues. He has already lost the battle, but this is not obvious; he does not yet know that the natives are only half-native; to hear him talk, it would seem that he ill-treats them in order to destroy or to repress the evil that they have rooted in them; and after three generations their pernicious instincts will reappear no more. What instincts does he mean? The instincts that urge slaves on to massacre their master? Can he not here recognise his own cruelty turned against himself? In the savagery of these oppressed peasants, does he not find his own settler's savagery, which they have absorbed through every pore and for which there is no cure? The reason is simple; this imperious being, crazed by his absolute power and by the fear of losing it, no longer remembers clearly that he was once a man; he takes himself for a horsewhip or a gun; he has come to believe that the domestication of the « inferior races » will come about by the conditioning of their reflexes. But in this he leaves out of account the human

inexhaustible means of repression but also that which their own fury produces in them. They are cornered between our guns pointed at them and those terrifying compulsions, those desires for murder which spring from the depth of their spirits and which they do not always recognise; for at first it is not their violence, it is ours, which turns back on itself and rends them; and the first action of these oppressed creatures is to bury deep down that hidden anger which their and our moralities condemn and which is however only the last refuge of their humanity. Read Fanon: you will learn how, in the period of their helplessness, their mad impulse to murder is the expression of the natives' collective unconscious.

If this suppressed fury fails to find an outlet, it turns in a vacuum and devastates the oppressed creatures themselves. In order to free themselves they even massacre each other. The different tribes fight between themselves since they cannot face the real enemy — and you can count on colonial policy to keep up their rivalries; the man who raises his knife against his brother thinks that he has destroyed once and for all the detested image of their common degradation, even though these expiatory victims don't quench their thirst for blood. They can only stop themselves from marching against the machine-guns by doing our work for us; of their own accord they will speed up the dehumanisation that they reject. Under the amused eye of the settler, they will take the greatest precautions against their own kind by setting up supernatural barriers, at times reviving old and terrible myths, at others binding themselves by scrupulous rites. It is in this way that an obsessed person flees from his deepest needs — by binding himself to certain observances which require his attention at every turn. They dance; that keeps them busy; it relaxes their painfully contracted muscles; and then the dance mimes secretly, often without their knowing, the refusal they cannot utter and the murders they dare not commit. In certain districts they make use of that last resort — possession by spirits. Formerly this was a religious experience in all its simplicity, a certain communion of the faithful with sacred things; now they make of it a weapon against humiliation and despair; Mumbo-Jumbo and all the idols of the tribe come down among them, rule over their violence and waste it in trances until it is exhausted. At the same time these high-placed personages protect them; in other words the colonised people protect themselves against

colonial estrangement by going one better in religious estrangement, with the unique result that finally they add the two estrangements together and each reinforces the other. Thus in certain psychoses the hallucinated person, tired of always being insulted by his demon, one fine day starts hearing the voice of an angel who pays him compliments; but the jeers don't stop for all that; only from then on, they alternate with congratulations. This is a defence, but it is also the end of the story; the self is disassociated, and the patient heads for madness. Let us add, for certain other carefully selected unfortunates, that other witchery of which I have already spoken: Western culture. If I were them, you may say, I'd prefer my mumbo-jumbo to their Acropolis. Very good: you've grasped the situation. But not altogether, because you aren't them — or not yet. Otherwise you would know that they can't choose; they must have both. Two worlds: that makes two bewitchings; they dance all night and at dawn they crowd into the churches to hear mass; each day the split widens. Our enemy betrays his brothers and becomes our accomplice; his brothers do the same thing. The status of « native » is a nervous condition introduced and maintained by the settler among colonised people with their consent.

Laying claim to and denying the human condition at the same time: the contradiction is explosive. For that matter it does explode, you know as well as I do; and we are living at the moment when the match is put to the fuse. When the rising birthrate brings wider famine in its wake, when these newcomers have life to fear rather more than death, the torrent of violence sweeps away all barriers. In Algeria and Angola, Europeans are massacred at sight. It is the moment of the boomerang; it is the third phase of violence; it comes back on us, it strikes us, and we do not realise any more than we did the other times that it's we that have launched it. The « liberals » are stupefied; they admit that we were not polite enough to the natives, that it would have been wiser and fairer to allow them certain rights in so far as this was possible; they ask nothing better than to admit them in batches and without sponsors to that very exclusive club, our species; and now this barbarous, mad outburst doesn't spare them any more than the bad settlers. The Left at home is embarrassed; they know the true situation of the natives, the merciless oppression they are submitted to; they do not condemn their revolt, knowing full well that we have done

everything to provoke it. But, all the same, they think to themselves, there are limits; these guerillas should be bent on showing that they are chivalrous; that would be the best way of showing they are men. Sometimes the Left scolds them... « You're going too far; we won't support you any more ». The natives don't give a damn about their support; for all the good it does them they might as well stuff it up their backsides. Once their war began, they saw this hard truth: that every single one of us has made his bit, has got something out of them; they don't need to call anyone to witness; they'll grant favoured treatment to no one.

There is one duty to be done, one end to achieve: to thrust out colonialism by every means in their power. The more far-seeing among us will be, in the last resort, ready to admit this duty and this end; but we cannot help seeing in this ordeal by force the altogether inhuman means that these less-than-men make use of to win the concession of a charter of humanity. Accord it to them at once, then, and let them endeavour by peaceful undertakings to deserve it. Our worthiest souls contain racial prejudice.

They would do well to read Fanon; for he shows clearly that this irrepressible violence is neither sound and fury, nor the resurrection of savage instincts, nor even the effect of resentment: it is man re-creating himself. I think we understood this truth at one time, but we have forgotten it — that no gentleness can efface the marks of violence; only violence itself can destroy them. The native cures himself of colonial neurosis by thrusting out the settler through force of arms. When his rage boils over, he rediscovers his lost innocence and he comes to know himself in that he himself creates his self. Far removed from his war, we consider it as a triumph of barbarism; but of its own volition it achieves, slowly but surely, the emancipation of the rebel, for bit by bit it destroys in him and around him the colonial gloom. Once begun, it is a war that gives no quarter. You may fear or be feared; that is to say, abandon yourself to the disassociations of a sham existence or conquer your birthright of unity. When the peasant takes a gun in his hands, the old myths grow dim and the prohibitions are one by one forgotten. The rebel's weapon is the proof of his humanity. For in the first days of the revolt you must kill: to shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy an oppressor and the man he oppresses at the same time: there

himself at the level of a former inhabitant of the old mother country. Look how patient he is! Perhaps he dreams of another Dien Bien Phu,⁽¹⁾ but don't think he's really counting on it; he's a beggar fighting, in his poverty, against rich men powerfully armed. While he is waiting for decisive victories, or even without expecting them at all, he tires out his adversaries until they are sick of him.

It will not be without fearful losses; the colonial army becomes ferocious; the country is marked out, there are mopping-up operations, transfers of population, reprisal expeditions, and they massacre women and children. He knows this; this new man begins his life as a man at the end of it; he considers himself as a potential corpse. He will be killed; not only does he accept this risk, he's sure of it. This potential dead man has lost his wife and his children; he has seen so many dying men that he prefers victory to survival; others, not he, will have the fruits of victory; he is too weary of it all. But this weariness of the heart is the root of an unbelievable courage. We find our humanity on this side of death and despair; he finds it beyond torture and death. We have sown the wind; he is the whirlwind. The child of violence, at every moment he draws from it his humanity. We were men at his expense, he makes himself man at ours: a different man; of higher quality.

Here Fanon stops. He has shown the way forward: he is the spokesman of those who are fighting and he has called for union, that is to say the unity of the African continent against all dissensions and all particularisms. He has gained his end. If he had wished to describe in all its details the historical phenomenon of decolonisation he would have to have spoken of us; this is not at all his intention. But, when we have closed the book, the argument continues within us, in spite of its author; for we feel the strength of the peoples in revolt and we answer by force. Thus there is a fresh moment of violence; and this time we ourselves are involved, for by its nature this violence is changing us, accordingly as the « half-native » is changed. Everyone of us must think for himself — always provided that he thinks at all; for in Europe today, stunned as she is by the blows received by France, Belgium or

England, even to allow your mind to be diverted, however slightly, is as good as being the accomplice in crime of colonialism. This book had not the slightest need of a preface, all the less because it is not addressed to us. Yet I have written one, in order to bring the argument to its conclusion; for we in Europe too are being decolonised: that is to say that the settler which is in every one of us is being savagely rooted out. Let us look at ourselves, if we can bear to, and see what is becoming of us. First, we must face that unexpected revelation, the strip-lease of our humanism. There you can see it, quite naked, and it's not a pretty sight. It was nothing but an ideology of lies, a perfect justification for pillage; its honeyed words, its affectation of sensibility were only alibis for our aggressions. A fine sight they are too, the believers in non-violence, saying that they are neither executioners nor victims. Very well then; if you're not victims when the government which you've voted for, when the army in which your younger brothers are serving without hesitation or remorse have undertaken race murder, you are, without a shadow of doubt, executioners. And if you choose to be victims and to risk being put in prison for a day or two, you are simply choosing to pull your irons out of the fire. But you will not be able to pull them out; they'll have to stay there till the end. Try to understand this at any rate: if violence began this very evening and if exploitation and oppression had never existed on the earth, perhaps the slogans of non-violence might end the quarrel. But if the whole regime, even your non-violent ideas, are conditioned by a thousand year-old oppression, your passivity serves only to place you in the ranks of the oppressors.

You know well enough that we are exploiters. You know too that we have laid hands on first the gold and metals, then the petroleum of the « new continents », and that we have brought them back to the old countries. This was not without excellent results, as witness our palaces, our cathedrals and our great industrial cities; and then when there was the threat of a slump, the colonial markets were there to soften the blow or to divert it. Crammed with riches, Europe accorded the human status de jure to its inhabitants. With us, to be a man is to be an accomplice of colonialism, since all of us without exception have profited by colonial exploitation. This fat, pale continent ends by falling into what Fanon rightly calls narcissism. Cocteau became irritated with Paris — « that city

(1) The French army's drastic defeat at Dien Bien Phu ended the war in Indo-China. (Transl.)

which talks about itself the whole time ». Is Europe any different ? And that super-European monstrosity, North America ? Chatter, chatter : liberty, equality, fraternity, love, honour, patriotism and what have you. All this did not prevent us from making anti-racial speeches about dirty niggers, dirty Jews and dirty Arabs. High-minded people, liberal or just soft-hearted, protest that they were shocked by such inconsistency ; but they were either mistaken or dishonest, for with us there is nothing more consistent than a racist humanism since the European has only been able to become a man through creating slaves and monsters. While there was a native population somewhere this imposture was not shown up ; in the notion of the human race we found an abstract assumption of universality which served as cover for the most realistic practices. On the other side of the ocean there was a race of less-than-humans who, thanks to us, might reach our status a thousand years hence, perhaps ; in short, we mistook the élite for the genus. Today, the native populations reveal their true nature, and at the same time our exclusive « club » reveals its weakness — that it's neither more nor less than a minority. Worse than that : since the others become men in name against us, it seems that we are the enemies of mankind ; the élite shows itself in its true colours — it is nothing more than a gang. Our precious sets of values begin to moulder ; on closer scrutiny you won't see one that isn't stained with blood. If you are looking for an example, remember these fine words : « How generous France is ! » Us, generous ? What about Sétif, then ? And those eight years of ferocious war which have cost the lives of over a million Algerians ? And the tortures ?

But let it be understood that nobody reproaches us with having been false to such-and-such a mission — for the very good reason that we had no mission at all. It is generosity itself that's in question ; this fine melodious word has only one meaning : the granting of a statutory charter. For the folk across the water, new men, freed men, no one has the power nor the right to give anything to anybody ; for each of them has every right, and the right to everything. And when one day our human kind becomes full-grown, it will not define itself as the sum total of the whole world's inhabitants, but as the infinite unity of their mutual needs. Here I stop ; you will have no trouble in finishing the job ; all you have to do is to look our aristocratic virtues straight

in the face, for the first and last time. They are cracking up ; how could they survive the aristocracy of underlings who brought them into being ? A few years ago, a bourgeois colonialist commentator found only this to say in defence of the West : « We aren't angels. But we, at least, feel some remorse ». What a confession ! Formerly our continent was buoyed up by other means : the Parthenon, Chartres, the Rights of Man or the swastika. Now we know what these are worth ; and the only chance of our being saved from shipwreck is the very Christian sentiment of guilt. You can see it's the end ; Europe is springing leaks everywhere. What then has happened ? It simply is that in the past we made history and now it is being made of us. The ratio of forces has been inverted ; decolonisation has begun ; all that our hired soldiers can do is to delay its completion.

The old « mother countries » have still to go the whole hog ; they still have to engage their entire forces in a battle which is lost before it has begun. At the end of the adventure we again find that colonial brutality which was Bugeaud's (1) doubtful glory ; but though it has been multiplied ten-fold, it's still not enough. The national service units are sent to Algeria, and they remain there seven years with no result. Violence has changed its direction. When we were victorious we practised it without its seeming to alter us ; it broke down the others, but for us men our humanism remained intact. United by their profits, the peoples of the mother countries baptised their commonwealth of crimes, calling them fraternity and love ; today violence, blocked everywhere, comes back on us through our soldiers, comes inside and takes possession of us. Involution starts ; the native re-creates himself, and we, settlers and Europeans, ultras and liberals, we break up. Rage and fear are already blatant ; they show themselves openly in the nigger-hunts in Algiers. Now, which side are the savages on ? Where is barbarism ? Nothing is missing, not even the tom-toms ; the motor-horns beat out « Al-gér-ie française » while the Europeans burn Moslems alive. Fanon reminds us that not so very long ago, a congress of psychiatrists was distressed by the

(1) Thomas-Robert Bugeaud de la Piconnerie, 1784-1849, Duke of Islay, Marshall of France. Famous for military exploits in the conquest of Algeria, he was appointed Governor of Algeria in 1840. (Transl.)

National liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonisation is always a violent phenomenon. At whatever level we study it — relationships between individuals, new names for sports clubs, the human admixture at cocktail parties, in the police, on the directing boards of national or private banks — decolonisation is quite simply the replacing of a certain « species » of men by another « species » of men. Without any period of transition, there is a total, complete and absolute substitution. It is true that we could equally well stress the rise of a new nation, the setting up of a new State, its diplomatic relations, and its economic and political trends. But we have precisely chosen to speak of that kind of *tabula rasa* which characterises at the outset all decolonisation. Its unusual importance is that it constitutes, from the very first day, the minimum demands of the colonised. To tell the truth, the proof of success lies in a whole social structure being changed from the bottom up. The extraordinary importance of this change is that it is willed, called for, demanded. The need for this change exists in its crude state, impetuous and compelling, in the consciousness and in the lives of the men and women who are colonised. But the possibility of this change is equally experienced in the form of a terrifying future in the consciousness of another « species » of men and women: the colonisers.

Decolonisation, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a programme of complete disorder. But it cannot come as a result of magical practices, nor of a natural shock, nor of a friendly understanding. Decolonisation, as we know, is a historical process: that is to say that it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself

The colonised man will first manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people. This is the period when the niggers beat each other up, and the police and magistrates do not know which way to turn when faced with the astonishing waves of crime in North Africa. We shall see later how this phenomenon should be judged (1). When the native is confronted with the colonial order of things, he finds he is in a state of permanent tension. The settler's world is a hostile world, which spurns the native, but at the same time it is a world of which he is envious. We have seen that the native never ceases to dream of putting himself in the place of the settler — not of becoming the settler but of substituting himself for the settler. This hostile world, ponderous and aggressive because it fends off the colonised masses with all the harshness it is capable of, represents not merely a hell from which the swiftest flight possible is desirable, but also a paradise close at hand which is guarded by terrible watchdogs.

The native is always on the alert, for since he can only make out with difficulty the many symbols of the colonial world, he is never sure whether or not he has crossed the frontier. Confronted with a world ruled by the settler, the native is always presumed guilty. But the native's guilt is never a guilt which he accepts; it is rather a kind of curse, a sort of sword of Damocles, for, in his innermost spirit, the native admits no accusation. He is overpowered but not tamed; he is treated as an inferior but he is not convinced of his inferiority. He is patiently waiting until the settler is off his guard to fly at him. The native's muscles are always tensed. You can't say that he is terrorized, or even apprehensive. He is in fact ready at a moment's notice to exchange the rôle of the quarry for that of the hunter. The native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor. The symbols of social order — the police, the bugle-calls in the barracks, military parades and the waving flags — are at one and the same time inhibitory and stimulating: for they do not convey the message «Don't dare to budge»; rather, they cry out «Get ready to attack». And, in fact, if the native had any tendency to fall asleep and to forget, the settler's hauteur and the settler's anxiety to test the strength of the colonial system would remind

(1) See chap. V : *Colonial war and mental disorders.*

discussed, such as full electoral representation, the liberty of the press, and liberty of association. Reforms are debated. Thus it need not astonish anyone to notice that a large number of natives are militant members of the branches of political parties which stem from the mother country. These natives fight under an abstract watchword: « Government by the workers », and they forget that in their country it should be *nationalist* watchwords which are first in the field. The native intellectual has clothed his aggressiveness in his barely veiled desire to assimilate himself to the colonial world. He has used his aggressiveness to serve his own individual interests.

Thus there is very easily brought into being a kind of class of enfranchised slaves, or slaves who are individually free. What the intellectual demands is the right to multiply the emancipated, and the opportunity to organise a genuine class of emancipated citizens. On the other hand, the mass of the people have no intention of standing by and watching individuals increase their chances of success. What they demand is not the settler's position of status, but the settler's place. The immense majority of natives want the settler's farm. For them, there is no question of entering into competition with the settler. They want to take his place.

The peasantry is systematically disregarded for the most part by the propaganda put out by the nationalist parties. And it is clear that in the colonial countries the peasants alone are revolutionary, for they have nothing to lose and everything to gain. The starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays. For him there is no compromise, no possible coming to terms; colonisation and decolonisation are simply a question of relative strength. The ex-politised man sees that his liberation implies the use of all means, and that of force first and foremost. When in 1956, after the capitulation of Monsieur Guy Mollet to the settlers in Algeria, the *Front de Libération Nationale*, in a famous leaflet, stated that colonialism only loosens its hold when the knife is at its throat, no Algerian really found these terms too violent. The leaflet only expressed what every Algerian felt at heart: colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence.

At the decisive moment, the colonialist bourgeoisie, which up till then has remained inactive, comes into the field. It

introduces that new idea which is in proper parlance a creation of the colonial situation: non-violence. In its simplest form this non-violence signifies to the intellectual and economic *élite* of the colonised country that the bourgeoisie has the same interests as them and that it is therefore urgent and indispensable to come to terms for the public good. Non-violence is an attempt to settle the colonial problem around a green baize table, before any regrettable act has been performed or irreparable gesture made, before any blood has been shed. But if the masses, without waiting for the chairs to be arranged around the baize table, listen to their own voice and begin committing outrages and setting fire to buildings, the *élites* and the nationalist bourgeois parties will be seen rushing to the colonialists to exclaim « This is very serious! We do not know how it will end; we must find a solution — some sort of compromise ».

This idea of compromise is very important in the phenomenon of decolonisation, for it is very far from being a simple one. Compromise involves the colonial system and the young nationalist bourgeoisie at one and the same time. The partisans of the colonial system discover that the masses may destroy everything. Blown-up bridges, ravaged farms, repressions and fighting harshly disrupt the economy. Compromise is equally attractive to the nationalist bourgeoisie, who since they are not clearly aware of the possible consequences of the rising storm, are genuinely afraid of being swept away by this huge hurricane and never stop saying to the settlers: « We are still capable of stopping the slaughter; the masses still have confidence in us; act quickly if you do not want to put everything in jeopardy ». One step more, and the leader of the nationalist party keeps his distance with regard to that violence. He loudly proclaims that he has nothing to do with these Mau-Mau, these terrorists, these throat-slitters. At best, he shuts himself off in a no-man's-land between the terrorists and the settlers and willingly offers his services as go-between; that is to say, that as the settlers cannot discuss terms with these Mau-Mau, he himself will be quite willing to begin negotiations. Thus it is that the rear-guard of the national struggle, that very party of people who have never ceased to be on the other side in the fight, find themselves somersaulted into the van of negotiations and compromise — precisely because that party has taken very good care never to break contact with colonialism.

Before negotiations have been set on foot, the majority

State, and in the last resort on the material means which that violence commands » (1).

In fact, the leaders of reform have nothing else to say than : « With what are you going to fight the settlers? With your knives? Your shot-guns? »

It is true that weapons are important when violence comes into play, since all finally depends on the distribution of these implements. But it so happens that the liberation of colonial countries throws new light on the subject. For example, we have seen that during the Spanish campaign, which was a very genuine colonial war, that Napoleon, in spite of an army which reached in the offensives of the Spring of 1810 the huge figure of 400,000 men, was forced to retreat. Yet the French army made the whole of Europe tremble by its weapons of war, by the bravery of its soldiers and by the military genius of its leaders. Face to face with the enormous potentials of the Napoleonic troops, the Spaniards, inspired by an unshakeable national ardour, rediscovered the famous methods of guerilla warfare which, twenty-five years before, the American militia had tried out on the English forces. But the native's guerilla warfare would be of no value as opposed to other means of violence if it did not form a new element in the world-wide process of competition between trusts and monopolies.

In the early days of colonisation, a single column could occupy immense stretches of country : the Congo, Nigeria, the Ivory Coast, and so on. Today however the colonised countries' national struggle crops up in a completely new international situation. Capitalism, in its early days, saw in the colonies a source of raw materials which, once turned into manufactured goods, could be distributed on the European market. After a phase of accumulation of capital, capitalism has today come to modify its conception of the profit-earning capacity of a commercial enterprise. The colonies have become a market. The colonial population is a customer who is ready to buy goods. Consequently, if the garrison has to be perpetually reinforced, if buying and selling slackens off, that is to say if manufactured and finished goods can no longer be exported, there is clear proof that the solution of military force must be set aside. A blind domination founded on slavery is not economically speak-

(1) Engels : « *Anti-Dühring* », Part II, Chapter III, Theory of Violence. Éditions Sociales, p. 199.

ing worthwhile for the bourgeoisie of the mother-country. The monopolistic group within this bourgeoisie does not support a government whose policy is solely that of the sword. What the factory-owners and finance magnates of the mother country expect from their government is not that it should decimate the colonial peoples, but that it should safeguard with the help of economic conventions their own « legitimate interests ».

Thus there exists a sort of detached complicity between capitalism and the violent forces which blaze up in colonial territory. What is more, the native is not alone against the oppressor, for indeed there is also the political and diplomatic support of progressive countries and peoples. But above all there is competition, that pitiless war which financial groups wage upon each other. A Berlin Conference was able to tear Africa into shreds and divide her up between three or four imperial flags. At the moment, the important thing is not whether such-and-such a region in Africa is under French or Belgian sovereignty, but rather that the economic zones are respected. Today, wars of repression are no longer waged against rebel sultans; everything is more elegant, less bloodthirsty; the liquidation of the Castro régime will be quite peaceful. They do all they can to strangle Guinea and they eliminate Mossadegh. Thus the nationalist leader who is frightened of violence is wrong if he imagines that colonialism is going to « massacre all of us ». The military will of course go on playing with tin soldiers which date from the time of the conquest, but higher finance will soon bring the truth home to them.

This is why reasonable nationalist political parties are asked to set out their claims as clearly as possible, and to seek with their colonialist opposite numbers, calmly and without passion, for a solution which will take the interests of both parties into consideration. We see that if this nationalist reformist tendency which often takes the form of a kind of caricature of trade unionism decides to take action, it will only do so in a highly peaceful fashion, through stoppages of work in the few industries which have been set up in the towns, mass demonstrations to cheer the leaders, and the boycotting of buses or of imported commodities. All these forms of action serve at one and the same time to bring pressure to bear on the forces of colonialism, and to allow the people to work off their energy. This practice of therapy by hibernation, this sleep-cure used on the people, may sometimes be successful; thus out of the conference around the green baize table comes the political selectiveness which

demarcation line is definite and manifest. The process of identification is automatic.

We must also notice in this ripening process the rôle played by the history of the resistance at the time of the conquest. The great figures of the colonised people are always those who led the national resistance to invasion. Behanzin, Soundiata, Samory, Abdel Kader — all spring again to life with peculiar intensity in the period which comes directly before action. This is the proof that the people are getting ready to begin to go forward again, to put an end to the static period begun by colonisation, and to make history.

The uprising of the new nation and the breaking down of colonial structures are the result of two causes: either of a violent struggle of the people in their own right, or of action on the part of surrounding colonised peoples which acts as a brake on the colonial regime in question.

A colonised people is not alone. In spite of all that colonialism can do, its frontiers remain open to new ideas and echoes from the world outside. It discovers that violence is in the atmosphere, that it here and there bursts out, and here and there sweeps away the colonial regime — that same violence which fulfils for the native a rôle that is not simply informatory, but also operative. The great victory of the Vietnamese people at Dien Bien Phu is no longer, strictly speaking, a Vietnamese victory. Since July 1954, the question which the colonised peoples have asked themselves has been « What must be done to bring about another Dien Bien Phu? How can we manage it? » Not a single colonised individual could ever again doubt the possibility of a Dien Bien Phu; the only problem was how best to use the forces at their disposal, how to organise them, and when to bring them into action. This encompassing violence does not work upon the colonised people only; it modifies the attitude of the colonialists who become aware of manifold Dien Bien Phus. This is why a veritable panic takes hold of the colonialist governments in turn. Their purpose is to capture the vanguard, to turn the movement of liberation towards the right, and to disarm the people: quick, quick, let's decolonise. Decolonise the Congo before it turns into another Algeria. Vote the constitutional framework for all Africa, create the French *Communauté*, renovate that same *Communauté*, but for God's sake let's decolonise quick... And they decolonise at such a rate that they impose independence on Houphouët-Boigny. To the strategy of Dien Bien Phu, defined by the colonised peoples,

This, then is the correspondence, term by term, between the two trains of reasoning.

But it so happens that for the colonised people this violence, because it constitutes their only work, invests their characters with positive and creative qualities. The practice of violence binds them together as a whole, since each individual forms a violent link in the great chain, a part of the great organism of violence which has surged upwards in reaction to the settler's violence in the beginning. The groups recognise each other and the future nation is already indivisible. The armed struggle mobilises the people; that is to say, it throws them in one way and in one direction.

The mobilisation of the masses, when it arises out of the war of liberation, introduces into each man's consciousness the ideas of a common cause, of a national destiny and of a collective history. In the same way the second phase, that of the building-up of the nation, is helped on by the existence of this cement which has been mixed with blood and anger. Thus we come to a fuller appreciation of the originality of the words used in these under-developed countries. During the colonial period the people are called upon to fight against oppression; after national liberation, they are called upon to fight against poverty, illiteracy and under-development. The struggle, they say, goes on. The people realise that life is an unending contest.

We have said that the native's violence unifies the people. By its very structure, colonialism is separatist and regionalist. Colonialism does not simply state the existence of tribes; it also re-inforces it and separates them. The colonial system encourages chieftaincies and keeps alive the old Marabout confraternities. Violence is in action all-inclusive and national. It follows that it is closely involved in the liquidation of regionalism and of tribalism. Thus the national parties show no pity at all towards the caids and the customary chiefs. Their destruction is the preliminary to the unification of the people.

At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect. Even if the armed struggle has been symbolic and the nation is demobilised through a rapid movement of decolonisation, the people have the time to see that the liberation has been the business of each and all and that the leader has no special merit. From thence comes that type of aggressive reticence with regard to the machinery of protocol which young

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governments quickly show. When the people have taken violent part in the national liberation they will allow no one to set themselves up as « liberators ». They show themselves to be jealous of the results of their action and take good care not to place their future, their destiny or the fate of their country in the hands of a living god. Yesterday they were completely irresponsible; today they mean to understand everything and make all decisions. Illuminated by violence, the consciousness of the people rebels against any pacification. From now on the demagogues, the opportunists and the magicians have a difficult task. The action which has thrown them into a hand-to-hand struggle confers upon the masses a voracious taste for the concrete. The attempt at mystification becomes, in the long run, practically impossible.

World. The wealth which smothers her is that which was stolen from the under-developed peoples. The ports of Holland, the docks of Bordeaux and Liverpool were specialised in the Negro slave-trade, and owe their renown to millions of deported slaves. So when we hear the head of a European state declare with his hand on his heart that he must come to the help of the poor under-developed peoples, we do not tremble with gratitude. Quite the contrary; we say to ourselves: « It's a just reparation which will be paid to us ». Nor will we acquiesce in the help for under-developed countries being a programme of « sisters of charity ». This help should be the ratification of a double realisation: the realisation by the colonised peoples that *it is their due*, and the realisation by the capitalist powers that in fact *they must pay* (1). For if, through lack of intelligence (we won't speak of lack of gratitude) the capitalist countries refuse to pay, then the relentless dialectic of their own system will smother them. It is a fact that young nations do not attract much private capital. There are many reasons which explain and render legitimate this reserve on the part of the monopolies. As soon as the capitalists know — and of course they are the first to know — that their government is getting ready to decolonise, they hasten to withdraw all their capital from the colony in question. The spectacular flight of capital is one of the most constant phenomena of decolonisation.

Private companies, when asked to invest in independent countries, lay down conditions which are shown in practice to be unacceptable or unrealizable. Faithful to the principle of immediate returns which is theirs as soon as they go « over-seas », the capitalists are very chary concerning all long-term investments. They are unamenable and often openly hostile to the prospective programmes of planning laid down by the young teams who form the new government. At a pinch they willingly agree to lend money to the young States, but only on condition that this money is used to buy manufactured products

(1) « To make a radical difference between the building up of socialism in Europe and our relations with the Third World (as if our only relations with it were external ones) is, whether we know it or not, to set the pace for the distribution of the colonial inheritance over and above the liberation of the under-developed countries. It is to wish to build up a luxury socialism upon the fruits of imperialist robbery — as if, inside the gang, the swag is more or less shared out equally, and even a little of it given to the poor in the form of charity, since it's been forgotten that they were the people it was stolen from. » Marcel Pétju. « To die for De Gaulle? » Article appearing in « Temps Modernes », n° 175-6, October-November 1960.

and machines : in other words, that it serves to keep the factories in the mother-country going.

In fact the cautiousness of the Western financial groups may be explained by their fear of taking any risk. They also demand political stability and a calm social climate which are impossible to obtain when account is taken of the appalling state of the population as a whole immediately after independence. Therefore, vainly looking for some guarantee which the former colony cannot give, they insist on garrisons being maintained or the inclusion of the young state in military or economic pacts. The private companies put pressure on their own governments to at least set up military bases in these countries for the purpose of assuring the protection of their interests. In the last resort these companies ask their government to guarantee the investments which they decide to make in such-and-such an underdeveloped region.

It happens that few countries fulfil the conditions demanded by the trusts and monopolies. Thus capital, failing to find a safe outlet, remains blocked in Europe, and is frozen. It is all the more frozen because the capitalists refuse to invest in their own countries. The returns in this case are in fact negligible and treasury control is the despair of even the boldest spirits.

In the long run the situation is catastrophic. Capital no longer circulates, or else its circulation is considerably diminished. In spite of the huge sums swallowed up by military budgets, international capitalism is in desperate straits.

But another danger threatens it as well. Insofar as the Third World is in fact abandoned and condemned to regression or at least to stagnation by the selfishness and wickedness of Western nations, the underdeveloped peoples will decide to continue their evolution inside a collective autarky. Thus the Western industries will quickly be deprived of their overseas markets. The machines will pile up their products in the warehouses and a merciless struggle will ensue on the European market between the trusts and the financial groups. The closing of factories, the paying off of workers and unemployment will force the European working-class to engage in an open struggle against the capitalist regime. Then the monopolies will realise that their true interests lie in giving aid to the underdeveloped countries — unstinted aid with not too many conditions. So we see that the young nations of the Third World are wrong in trying to make up to the capitalist countries. We are strong in our own right, and in the justice of our point of view. We

ought on the contrary to emphasise and explain to the capitalist countries that the fundamental problem of our time is not the struggle between the socialist regime and them. The Cold War must be ended, for it leads nowhere. The plans for nuclearising the world must stop, and large-scale investments and technical aid must be given to under-developed regions. The fate of the world depends on the answer that is given to this question.

Moreover, the capitalist regime must not try to enlist the aid of the socialist regime over « the fate of Europe » in face of the starving multitudes of coloured peoples. The exploit of Colonel Gargarin doesn't seem to displease General de Gaulle, for is it not a triumph which brings honour to Europe? For some time past the statesmen of the capitalist countries have adopted an equivocal attitude towards the Soviet Union. After having united all their forces to abolish the socialist regime, they now realise that they'll have to reckon with it. So they look as pleasant as they can, they make all kinds of advances, and they remind the Soviet people the whole time that they « belong to Europe ».

They will not manage to divide the progressive forces which mean to lead mankind towards happiness by brandishing the threat of a Third World which is rising like the tide to swallow up all Europe. The Third World does not mean to organise a great crusade of hunger against the whole of Europe. What it expects from those who for centuries have kept it in slavery is that they will help it to rehabilitate mankind, and make man victorious everywhere, once and for all. But it is clear that we are not so naive as to think that this will come about with the co-operation and the good will of the European governments. This huge task which consists of re-introducing mankind into the world, the whole of mankind, will be carried out with the indispensable help of the European peoples, who themselves must realise that in the past they have often joined the ranks of our common masters where colonial questions were concerned. To achieve this, the European peoples must first decide to wake up and shake themselves, use their brains, and stop playing the stupid game of the Sleeping Beauty.

This consideration of violence has led us to take account of the frequent existence of a time-lag, or a difference of rhythm, between the leaders of a nationalist party and the mass of the people. In every political or trade-union organisation there is a traditional gap between the rank-and-file, who demand the total and immediate bettering of their lot, and the leaders, who, since they are aware of the difficulties which may be made by the employers, seek to limit and restrain the workers' demands. This is why you often are aware of a dogged discontentment among the rank-and-file as regards their leaders. After a day spent in demonstrating for their demands, the leaders celebrate the victory, whereas the rank-and-file have a strong suspicion that they have been cheated. It is through a multiplicity of demonstrations in support of their claims and through an increase in trade-union demands that the rank-and-file achieve their political education. A politically informed trade-union member is a man who knows that a local conflict is not a decisive settlement between himself and the employers. The native intellectuals, who have studied in their respective « mother-countries » the working of political parties, carefully organise similar institutions in order to mobilise the masses and bring pressure to bear on the colonial administration. The birth of nationalist parties in the colonised countries is contemporary with the formation of an intellectual *élite* engaged in trade. The *élite* will attach a fundamental importance to organisation, so much so that the fetish of organisation will often take precedence over a reasoned study of colonial society. The notion of the party is a notion imported from the mother country. This instrument of modern political warfare is thrown down just as it is, without the slightest modification, upon real life with all its infinite variations and lack of balance, where slavery, serfdom, barter, a skilled working-class and high finance exist side by side.

The weakness of political parties does not only lie in the mechanical application of an organisation which was created to carry on the struggle of the working-class inside a highly industrialised, capitalist society. If we limit ourselves to the *type* of organisation, it is clear that innovations and adaptations ought to have been made. The great mistake, the inherent defect in the majority of political parties in under-developed regions has been, following traditional lines, to approach in the first place those elements which are the most politically conscious: the working-classes in the towns, the skilled workers and the civil servants — that is to say, a tiny portion of the population, which hardly represents more than one per cent.

But although this proletariat has read the party publications and understood its propaganda, it is much less ready to obey in the event of orders being given which set in motion the fierce struggle for national liberation. It cannot be too strongly stressed that in the colonial territories the proletariat is the nucleus of the colonised population which has been most pampered by the colonial regime. The embryonic proletariat of the towns is in a comparatively privileged position. In capitalist countries, the working-class has nothing to lose; it is they who in the long run have everything to gain. In the colonial countries the working-class has everything to lose; in reality it represents that fraction of the colonised nation which is necessary and irreplaceable if the colonial machine is to run smoothly: it includes tram conductors, taxi drivers, miners, dockers, interpreters, nurses, and so on. It is these elements which constitute the most faithful followers of the nationalist parties, and who because of the privileged place which they hold in the colonial system constitute also the « bourgeois » fraction of the colonised people.

So we understand that the followers of the nationalist political parties are above all town-dwellers — shop-stewards, industrial workers, intellectuals and shop-keepers all living for the most part in the towns. Their way of thinking is already marked in many points by the comparatively well-to-do class, distinguished by technical advances, that they spring from. Here « modern ideas » reign. It is these classes that will struggle against obscurantist traditions, that will change old customs, and that will thus enter into open conflict with the old granite block upon which the nation rests.

The overwhelming majority of nationalist parties show a deep distrust towards the people of the rural areas. The fact is

that as a body these people appear to them to be bogged down in fruitless inertia. The members of the nationalist parties (town workers and intellectuals) pass the same unfavourable judgement on country districts as the settlers. But if we try to understand the reasons for this mistrust on the part of the political parties with regard to the rural areas, we must remember that colonialism has often strengthened or established its domination by organising the petrification of the country districts. Ringed round by marabouts, witch-doctors and customary chieftains, the majority of country-dwellers are still living in the feudal manner, and the full power of this medieval structure of society is maintained by the settlers' military and administrative officials.

So now the young nationalist middle-class, which is above all a class interested in trade, is going to compete with these feudal lords in many and various fields. There are marabouts and medicine-men who bar the way to sick people who otherwise could consult the doctor, oracles which pass judgement and thus render lawyers useless, caids who make use of their political and administrative powers to set up in trade or to start a transport service, customary chiefs who oppose, in the name of religion and tradition, the setting up of businesses and the introduction of new goods. The rising class of native traders and wholesalers needs the disappearance of these prohibitions and barriers in order to develop. The native customers, the preserve of feudal lords, who now become aware that they are more or less forbidden to buy the new products, therefore become a market to be contended for.

The feudal leaders form a screen between the young Westernised nationalists and the bulk of the people. Each time the *élite* tries to get through to the country people, the tribal chieftains, leaders of confraternities and traditional authorities intensify their warnings, their threats and their ex-communications. These traditional authorities who have been upheld by the occupying power view with disfavour the attempts made by the *élite* to penetrate the country districts. They know very well that the ideas which are likely to be introduced by these influences coming from the towns call in question the very nature of unchanging, everlasting feudalism. Thus their enemy is not at all the occupying power with which they get along on the whole very well, but these people with modern ideas who mean to dislocate the aboriginal society, and who in doing so will take the bread out of their mouths.

gees. Another rumour was equally rife — that the whites of South Africa were soon going to invade the island with the collusion of the settlers. Thus, after the war the candidates on the nationalist list were triumphantly elected. Immediately after, organised repression began of the cells of the *Mouvement Démocratique de la Rénovation Malgache* (Democratic Movement for Madagascan Restoration). Colonialism, in order to reach its ends, used the usual traditional methods: frequent arrests, racist propaganda between tribes, and the creation of a party out of the unorganised elements of the *lumpen-proletariat*. This party, with the name of the Disinherited Madagascans, gave the colonial authorities by its distinctly provocative actions the legal excuse to maintain order. It happened that this very frequent operation of liquidating a party which had been set up in advance took on in this context gigantic proportions. The rural masses, on the defensive for the last three or four years, suddenly felt themselves in deadly peril and decided to oppose colonialist forces savagely. Armed with spears, or more often simply with sticks and stones, the people flung themselves into the general revolt for national liberty. We know the end of the story.

Such armed rebellions only represent one of the means used by the country dwellers to join in the national struggle. Sometimes when the nationalist party in the towns is tracked down by police repression the peasants carry on the tradition of urban agitation. News of the repression comes to the country districts in a grossly exaggerated form; the tale runs that the leaders are arrested, that machine-gunning is rife, that the town is running red with the blood of Negroes, or that the small settlers are bathing in Arab blood. Thereupon the accumulated, exacerbated hate explodes. The neighbouring police barracks is captured, the policemen are hacked to pieces, the local school-master is murdered, the doctor only gets away with his life because he was not at home, etc. Pacifying forces are hurried to the spot and the air-force bombards it. Then the banner of revolt is unfurled, the old warriorlike traditions spring up again, the women cheer, the men organise and take up positions in the mountains, and guerilla war begins. The peasantry spontaneously gives concrete form to the general insecurity; and colonialism takes fright and either continues the war or negotiates.

What is the reaction of the nationalist parties to this eruption of the peasant masses into the national struggle? We have

seen that the majority of nationalist parties have not written into their propaganda the necessity for armed intervention. They do not oppose the continuing of the rebellion, but they content themselves with leaving it to the spontaneous action of the country people. As a whole they treat this new element as a sort of manna fallen from heaven, and pray to goodness that it'll go on falling. They make the most of the manna, but do not attempt to organise the rebellion. They don't send leaders into the countryside to educate the people politically, or to increase their awareness or put the struggle onto a higher level. All they do is to hope that, carried onwards by its own momentum, the action of the people will not come to a standstill. There is no contamination of the rural movement by the urban movement; each develops according to its own dialectic.

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The nationalist parties do not attempt to give definite orders to the country people, although the latter are perfectly ready to listen to them. They offer them no objective; they simply hope that this new movement will go on indefinitely and that the bombardments will not put an end to it. Thus we see that even when such an occasion offers, the nationalist parties make no use at all of the opportunity which is offered to them to integrate the people of the countryside, to educate them politically and to raise the level of their struggle. The old attitude of mistrust towards the countryside is criminally evident.

The political leaders go underground in the towns, give the impression to the colonialists that they have no connection with the rebels, or seek refuge abroad. It very seldom happens that they join the people in the hills. In Kenya, for example, during the Mau-Mau rebellion, not a single well-known nationalist declared his affiliation with the movement, or even tried to defend the men involved in it.

The different strata of the nation never have it out with each other to any advantage; there is no settling of accounts between them. Thus, when independence is achieved, after the repression practised on the country people, after the *entente* between colonialism and the national parties, it is no wonder that you find this incomprehension to an even greater degree. The country dwellers are slow to take up the structural reforms proposed by the government; and equally slow in following their social reforms, even though they may be very progressive if viewed objectively, precisely because the people now at the head of affairs did not explain to the people as a whole during

totypes of this division of the species go over to the enemy, become Negroes or Arabs, and accept suffering, torture and death.

Such examples disarm the general hatred that the native feels towards the foreign settlement. The native surrounds these few men with warm affection, and tends by a kind of emotional over-valuation to place absolute confidence in them. In the mother-country, once looked upon as a bloodthirsty and implacable step-mother, many voices are raised, some those of prominent citizens, in condemnation of the policy of war that their government is following, advising that the national will of the colonised people should be taken into consideration. Certain soldiers desert from the colonialist ranks; others explicitly refuse to fight against the people's liberty and go to prison for the sake of the right of that people to independence and self-government.

The settler is not simply the man that must be killed. Many members of the mass of colonialists reveal themselves to be much, much nearer to the national struggle than certain sons of the nation. The barriers of blood and race-prejudice are broken down on both sides. In the same way, not every Negro or Moslem is issued automatically with a hall-mark of genuineness; and the gun or the knife is not inevitably reached for when a settler makes his appearance. Consciousness slowly dawns upon truths that are only partial, limited and unstable. As we may surmise, all this is very difficult. The task of bringing the people to maturity will be made easier by the thoroughness of the organisation and by the high intellectual level of its leaders. The force of intellect increases and becomes more elaborate as the struggle goes on, as the enemy increases his manoeuvres and as victories are gained and defeats suffered. The leaders show their power and authority by criticising mistakes, using every appraisal of past conduct to bring the lesson home, and thus insure fresh conditions for progress. Each local ebb of the tide will be used to review the question from the standpoint of *all* villages and of *all* political networks. The rebellion gives proof of its rational basis and expresses its maturity each time that it uses a particular case to advance the people's awareness. In defiance of those inside the movement who tend to think that shades of meaning constitute dangers and drive wedges into the solid block of popular opinion, the leaders stand firm upon those principles that have been sifted out in the national struggle, and in the world-wide struggle of mankind for his freedom. There exists a brutality of thought

and a mistrust of subtlety which is typical of revolutions; but there also exists another kind of brutality which is astonishingly like the first and which is typically anti-revolutionary, hazardous and anarchist. This unmixed and total brutality, if not immediately combated, invariably leads to the defeat of the movement within a few weeks.

The nationalist militant who had fled from the town in disgust at the demagogic and reformist manoeuvres of the leaders there, disappointed by political life, discovers in real action a new form of political activity which in no way resembles the old. These politics are the politics of leaders and organisers living inside history who take the lead with their brains and their muscles in the fight for freedom. These politics are national, revolutionary and social and these new facts which the native will now come to know exist only in action. They are the essence of the fight which explodes the old colonial truths and reveals unexpected facets, which brings out new meanings and pin-points the contradictions camouflaged by these facts. The people engaged in the struggle who because of it command and know these facts, go forward, freed from colonialism and forewarned of all attempts at mystification, inoculated against all national anthems. Violence alone, violence committed by the people, violence organised and educated by its leaders, makes it possible for the masses to understand social truths and gives the key to them. Without that struggle, without that knowledge of the practice of action, there's nothing but a fancy-dress parade and the blare of the trumpets. There's nothing save a minimum of readaptation, a few reforms at the top, a flag waving: and down there at the bottom an undivided mass, still living in the middle ages, endlessly marking time.

national middle-class, of its spiritual penury, and of the profoundly cosmopolitan mould that its mind is set in.

The national middle-class which takes over power at the end of the colonial regime is an under-developed middle-class. It has practically no economic power, and in any case it is in no way commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country which it hopes to replace. In its wilful narcissism, the national middle-class is easily convinced that it can advantageously replace the middle-class of the mother country. But that same independence which literally drives it into a corner will give rise within its ranks to catastrophic reactions, and will oblige it to send out frenzied appeals for help to the former mother country. The university and merchant classes which make up the most enlightened section of the new state are in fact characterised by the smallness of their number and their being concentrated in the capital, and the type of activities in which they are engaged: business, agriculture and the liberal professions. Neither financiers nor industrial magnates are to be found within this national middle-class. The national bourgeoisie of under-developed countries is not engaged in production, nor in invention, nor building, nor labour; it is completely canalised into activities of the intermediary type. Its innermost vocation seems to be to keep in the running and to be part of the racket. The psychology of the national bourgeoisie is that of the business-man, not that of a captain of industry; and it is only too true that the greed of the settlers and the system of embargoes set up by colonialism has hardly left them any other choice.

Under the colonial system, a middle-class which accumulates capital is an impossible phenomenon. Now, precisely, it would seem that the historical vocation of an authentic national middle-class in an under-developed country is to repudiate its own nature in so far as it is bourgeois, that is to say in so far as it is the tool of capitalism, and to make itself the willing slave of that revolutionary capital which is the people.

In an under-developed country an authentic national middle-class ought to consider as its bounden duty to betray the calling fate has marked out for it, and to put itself to school with the people: in other words to put at the people's disposal the intellectual and technical capital that it has snatched when going through the colonial universities. But unhappily we shall see that very often the national middle-class does not follow this heroic, positive, fruitful and just path; rather, it disappears with its soul set at peace into the shocking ways — shocking

because anti-national — of a traditional bourgeoisie, of a bourgeoisie which is stupidly, contemptibly, cynically bourgeois.

The objective of nationalist parties as from a certain given period is, we have seen, strictly national. They mobilise the people with slogans of independence, and for the rest leave it to future events. When such parties are questioned on the economic programme of the State that they are clamouring for, or on the nature of the regime which they propose to install, they are incapable of replying, because, precisely, they are completely ignorant of the economy of their own country.

This economy has always developed outside the limits of their knowledge. They have nothing more than an approximate, bookish acquaintance with the actual and potential resources of their country's soil and mineral deposits; and therefore they can only speak of these resources on a general and abstract plane. After independence this under-developed middle-class, reduced in numbers and without capital, which refuses to follow the path of revolution, will fall into deplorable stagnation. It is unable to give free rein to its genius, which formerly it was wont to lament, though rather too glibly, was held in check by colonial domination. The precariousness of its resources and the paucity of its managerial class forces it back for years into an artisanal economy. From its point of view, which is inevitably a very limited one, a national economy is an economy based on what may be called local products. Long speeches will be made about the artisan class. Since the middle classes find it impossible to set up factories that would be more profit-earning both for themselves and for the country as a whole, they will surround the artisan class with a chauvinistic tenderness in keeping with the new awareness of national dignity, and which moreover will bring them in quite a lot of money. This cult of local products and this incapability to seek out new systems of management will be equally manifested by the bogging down of the national middle-class in the methods of agricultural production which were characteristic of the colonial period.

The national economy of the period of independence is not set on a new footing. It is still concerned with the ground-nut harvest, with the cocoa crop and the olive yield. In the same way there is no change in the marketing of basic products, and not a single industry is set up in the country. We go on sending out raw materials; we go on being Europe's small farmers, who specialise in unfinished products.

Yet the national middle-class constantly demands the nationalisation of the economy and of the trading sectors. This is because, from their point of view, nationalisation does not mean placing the whole economy at the service of the nation and deciding to satisfy the needs of the nation. For them, nationalisation does not mean governing the State with regard to the new social relations whose growth it has been decided to encourage. To them, nationalisation quite simply means the transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are a legacy of the colonial period.

Since the middle-class has neither sufficient material nor intellectual resources (by intellectual resources we mean engineers and technicians) it limits its claims to the taking over of business offices and commercial houses formerly occupied by the settlers. The national bourgeoisie steps into the shoes of the former European settlement: doctors, barristers, traders, commercial travellers, general agents and transport agents. It considers that the dignity of the country and its own welfare require that it should occupy all these posts. From now on it will insist that all the big foreign companies should pass through its hands, whether these companies wish to keep on their connections with the country, or to open it up. The national middle-class discovers its historic mission: that of intermediary.

Seen through its eyes, its mission has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists, prosaically, of being the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the masque of neo-colonialism. The national bourgeoisie will be quite content with the role of the Western bourgeoisie's business agent, and it will play its part without any complexes in a most dignified manner. But this same lucrative role, this cheap-jack's function, this meanness of outlook and this absence of all ambition symbolise the incapability of the national middle-class to fulfil its historic role of bourgeoisie. Here, the dynamic, pioneer aspect, the characteristics of the inventor and of the discoverer of new worlds which are found in all national bourgeoisies are lamentably absent. In the colonial countries, the spirit of indulgence is dominant at the core of the bourgeoisie; and this is because the national bourgeoisie identifies itself with the Western bourgeoisie, from whom it has learnt its lessons. It follows the Western bourgeoisie along its path of negation and decadence without ever having emulated it in its first stages of exploration and invention, stages which are an acquisition of that Western

bourgeoisie whatever the circumstances. In its beginnings, the national bourgeoisie of the colonial countries identifies itself with the decadence of the bourgeoisie of the West. We need not think that it is jumping ahead; it is in fact beginning at the end. It is already senile before it has come to know the petulance, the fearlessness or the will to succeed of youth.

The national bourgeoisie will be greatly helped on its way towards decadence by the Western bourgeoisies, who come to it as tourists avid for the exotic, for big game hunting and for casinos. The national bourgeoisie organises centres of rest and relaxation and pleasure resorts to meet the wishes of the Western bourgeoisie. Such activity is given the name of tourism, and for the occasion will be built up as a national industry. If proof is needed of the eventual transformation of certain elements of the ex-native bourgeoisie into the organisers of parties for their Western opposite numbers, it is worth while having a look at what has happened in Latin America. The casinos of Havana and of Mexico, the beaches of Rio, the little Brazilian and Mexican girls, the half-breed thirteen-year-olds, the ports of Acapulco and Copacabana — all these are the stigma of this deprivation of the national middle class. Because it is bereft of ideas, because it lives to itself and cuts itself off from the people, undermined by its hereditary incapacity to think in terms of all the problems of the nation as seen from the point of view of the whole of that nation, the national middle-class will have nothing better to do than to take on the role of manager for Western enterprise, and it will in practice set up its country as the brothel of Europe.

Once again we must keep before us the unfortunate example of certain Latin American republics. The banking magnates, the technocrats and the big business-men of the United States have only to step onto a plane and they are wafted into sub-tropical climes, there for a space of a week or ten days to luxuriate in the delicious depravities which their « reserves » hold for them.

The behaviour of the national landed proprietors is practically identical with that of the middle classes of the towns. The big farmers have, as soon as independence was proclaimed, demanded the nationalisation of agricultural production. Through manifold scheming practices they manage to make a clean sweep of the farms formerly owned by settlers, thus reinforcing their hold on the district. But they do not try to introduce new agricultural methods, nor to farm more intensively,

the bourgeoisie is « Replace the foreigner », and because it hastens in every walk of life to secure justice for itself and to take over the posts that the foreigner has vacated, the « small people » of the nation — taxi drivers, cake sellers and shoeblacks — will be equally quick to insist that the Dahomans go home to their own country, or will even go further and demand that the Foulbis and the Peuhls return to their jungle or their mountains.

It is from this view-point that we must interpret the fact that in young, independent countries, here and there federalism triumphs. We know that colonial domination has marked certain regions out for privilege. The colony's economy is not integrated into that of the nation as a whole. It is still organised in order to complete the economy of the different mother countries. Colonialism hardly ever exploits the whole of a country. It contents itself with bringing to light the natural resources, which it extracts, and exports to meet the needs of the mother-country's industries, thereby allowing certain sectors of the colony to become relatively rich. But the rest of the colony follows its path of under-development and poverty, or at all events sinks into it more deeply.

Immediately after independence, the nationals who live in the more prosperous regions realise their good luck, and show a primary and profound reaction in refusing to feed the other nationals. The districts which are rich in ground-nuts, in cocoa and in diamonds come to the forefront, and dominate the empty panorama which the rest of the nation presents. The nationals of these rich regions look upon the others with hatred, and find in them envy and covetousness, and homicidal impulses. Old rivalries which were there before colonialism, old inter-racial hatreds come to the surface. The Balubas refuse to feed the Luluas ; Katanga forms itself into a State, and Albert Kalondji gets himself crowned king of South Kasai.

African unity, that vague formula, yet one to which the men and women of Africa were passionately attached, and whose operative value served to bring immense pressure to bear on colonialism, African unity takes off the mask, and crumbles into regionalism inside the hollow shell of nationality itself. The national bourgeoisie, since it is strung up to defend its immediate interests, and sees no further than the end of its nose, reveals itself incapable of simply bringing national unity into being, or of building up the nation on a stable and productive basis. The national front which has forced colonialism to withdraw cracks up, and wastes the victory it has gained.

that if they are not content they have only to go to Cairo. Sometimes American Protestantism transplants its anti-Catholic prejudices into African soil, and keeps up tribal rivalries through religion.

Taking the continent as a whole, this religious tension may be responsible for the revival of the commonest racial feeling. Africa is divided into Black and White, and the names that are substituted — Africa South of the Sahara, Africa North of the Sahara — do not manage to hide this latent racism. Here, it is affirmed that White Africa has a thousand-year-old tradition of culture; that she is Mediterranean, that she is a continuation of Europe and that she shares in Greco-Latin civilisation. Black Africa is looked on as a region that is inert, brutal, uncivilised in a word, savage. There, all day long you may hear unpleasant remarks about veiled women, polygamy and the supposed disdain the Arabs have for the feminine sex. All such remarks are reminiscent in their aggressiveness of those that are so often heard coming from the settler's lips. The national bourgeoisie of each of these two great religions, which has totally assimilated colonialist thought in its most corrupt form, takes over from the Europeans and establishes in the continent a racial philosophy which is extremely harmful for the future of Africa. By its laziness and will to imitation, it promotes the ingrafting and stiffening of racism which was characteristic of the colonial era. Thus it is by no means astonishing to hear in a country that calls itself African remarks which are neither more nor less than racist, and to observe the existence of paternalist behaviour which gives you the bitter impression that you are in Paris, Brussels or London.

In certain regions of Africa, drivelling paternalism with regard to the blacks and the loathsome idea derived from western culture that the black man is impervious to logic and the sciences reign in all their nakedness. Sometimes it may be ascertained that the black minorities are hemmed in by a kind of semi-slavery which renders legitimate that species of wariness, or in other words mistrust, which the countries of Black Africa feel with regard to the countries of White Africa. It is all too common that a citizen of Black Africa hears himself called a « Negro » by the children when walking in the streets of a big town in White Africa, or finds that civil servants address him in pidgin English.

Yes, unfortunately it is not unknown that students from Black Africa who attend secondary schools north of the Sahara

hear their schoolfellows asking if in their country there are houses, if they know what electricity is, or if they practise cannibalism in their families. Yes, unfortunately it is not unknown that in certain regions north of the Sahara Africans coming from countries south of the Sahara meet nationals who implore them to take them « anywhere at all on condition we meet Negroes ». In parallel fashion, in certain young states of Black Africa members of parliament, or even ministers, maintain without a trace of humour that the danger is not at all of a reoccupation of their country by colonialism but of an eventual invasion by « those vandals of Arabs coming from the North ».

As we see it, the bankruptcy of the bourgeoisie is not apparent in the economic field only. They have come to power in the name of a narrow nationalism and representing a race; they will prove themselves incapable of triumphantly putting into practice a programme with even a minimum humanist content, in spite of fine-sounding declarations which are devoid of meaning since the speakers bandy about in irresponsible fashion phrases that come straight out of European treatises on morals and political philosophy. When the bourgeoisie is strong, when it can arrange everything and everybody to serve its power, it does not hesitate to affirm positively certain democratic ideas which claim to be universally applicable. There must be very exceptional circumstances if such a bourgeoisie, solidly based economically, is forced into denying its own humanist ideology. The Western bourgeoisie, though fundamentally racist, most often manages to mask this racism by a multiplicity of nuances which allow it to preserve intact its proclamation of mankind's outstanding dignity.

The Western bourgeoisie has prepared enough fences and railings to have no real fear of the competition of those whom it exploits and holds in contempt. Western bourgeois racial prejudice as regards the nigger and the Arab is a racism of contempt; it is a racism which minimises what it hates. Bourgeois ideology, however, which is the proclamation of an essential equality between men, manages to appear logical in its own eyes by inviting the sub-men to become human, and to take as their prototype western humanity as incarnated in the Western bourgeoisie.

The racial prejudice of the young national bourgeoisie is a racism of defence, based on fear. Essentially it is no different from vulgar tribalism, or the rivalries between septs or confraternities. We may understand why keen-witted international

and its growth. In other words, the combined effort of the masses led by a party and of intellectuals who are highly conscious and armed with revolutionary principles ought to bar the way to this useless and harmful middle-class.

The theoretical question that for the last fifty years has been raised whenever the history of under-developed countries is under discussion — whether or not the bourgeois phase can be skipped — ought to be answered in the field of revolutionary action, and not by logic. The bourgeois phase in under-developed countries can only justify itself in so far as the national bourgeoisie has sufficient economic and technical strength to build up a bourgeois society, to create the conditions necessary for the development of a large-scale proletariat, to mechanise agriculture and finally to make possible the existence of an authentic national culture.

A bourgeoisie similar to that which developed in Europe is able to elaborate an ideology and at the same time strengthen its own power. Such a bourgeoisie, dynamic, educated and secular has fully succeeded in its undertaking of the accumulation of capital and has given to the nation a minimum of prosperity. In under-developed countries, we have seen that no true bourgeoisie exists; there is only a sort of little greedy caste, avid and voracious, with the mind of a huckster, only too glad to accept the dividends that the former colonial power hands out to it. This get-rich-quick middle class shows itself incapable of great ideas or of inventiveness. It remembers what it has read in European text-books and imperceptibly it becomes not even the replica of Europe, but its caricature.

The struggle against the bourgeoisie of under-developed countries is far from being a theoretical one. It is not concerned with making out its condemnation as laid down by the judgement of history. The national bourgeoisie of under-developed countries must not be opposed because it threatens to slow down the total, harmonious development of the nation. It must simply be stoutly opposed because, literally, it is good for nothing. This bourgeoisie, expressing its mediocrity in its profits, its achievements and in its thought tries to hide this mediocrity by buildings which have prestige value at the individual level, by chromium plating on big American cars, by holidays on the Riviera and weekends in neon-lit night-clubs.

This bourgeoisie which turns its back more and more on the people as a whole does not even succeed in extracting spectacular concessions from the West, such as investments

which would be of value for the country's economy or the setting up of certain industries. On the contrary, assembly plants spring up and consecrate the type of neo-colonialist industrialisation in which the country's economy flounders. Thus it must not be said that the national bourgeoisie retards the country's evolution, that it makes it lose time or that it threatens to lead the nation up blind alleys. In fact, the bourgeois phase in the history of under-developed countries is a completely useless phase. When this caste has vanished, devoured by its own contradictions, it will be seen that nothing new has happened since independence was proclaimed, and that everything must be started again from scratch. The changeover will not take place at the level of the structures set up by the bourgeoisie during its reign, since that caste has done nothing more than take over unchanged the legacy of the economy, the thought and the institutions left by the colonialists.

It is all the easier to neutralise this bourgeois class in that, as we have seen, it is numerically, intellectually and economically weak. In the colonised territories, the bourgeois caste draws its strength after independence chiefly from agreements reached with the former colonial power. The national bourgeoisie has all the more opportunity to take over from the oppressor since it has been given time for a leisurely *tête-à-tête* with the ex-colonial power. But deep-rooted contradictions undermine the ranks of that bourgeoisie; it is this that gives the observer an impression of instability. There is not as yet a homogeneity of caste. Many intellectuals, for example, condemn this regime based on the domination of the few. In under-developed countries, there are certain members of the *élite*, intellectuals and civil servants, who are sincere, who feel the necessity for a planned economy, the out-lawing of profiteers and the strict prohibition of attempts at mystification. In addition, such men fight in a certain measure for the mass participation of the people in the ordering of public affairs.

In those under-developed countries which accede to independence, there almost always exists a small number of honest intellectuals, who have no very precise ideas about politics, but who instinctively distrust the race for positions and pensions which is symptomatic of the early days of independence in colonised countries. The personal situation of these men (bread-winners of large families) or their background (hard struggles and a strictly moral upbringing) explain their manifest contempt for profiteers and schemers. We must know how to use these men in

*Who is "We" if not
a member of the small
number?*

mains at the beginning and for a long time afterwards a bourgeoisie of the civil service. It is the positions that it holds in the new national administration which will give it strength and serenity. If the government gives it enough time and opportunity, this bourgeoisie will manage to put away enough money to stiffen its domination. But it will always reveal itself as incapable of giving birth to an authentic bourgeois society with all the economic and industrial consequences which this entails.

From the beginning the national bourgeoisie directs its efforts towards activities of the intermediary type. The basis of its strength is found in its aptitude for trade and small business enterprises, and in securing commissions. It is not its money that works, but its business acumen. It does not go in for investments and it cannot achieve that accumulation of capital necessary to the birth and blossoming of an authentic bourgeoisie. At that rate it would take centuries to set on foot an embryonic industrial revolution, and in any case it would find the way barred by the relentless opposition of the former mother country, which will have taken all precautions when setting up neo-colonialist trade conventions.

If the government wants to bring the country out of its stagnation and set it well on the road towards development and progress, it must first and foremost nationalise the middleman's trading sector. The bourgeoisie, who wish to see both the triumph of the spirit of money-making and the enjoyment of consumer goods, and at the same time the triumph of their contemptuous attitude towards the mass of the people and the scandalous aspect of profit-making (should not we rather call it robbery?), in fact invest largely in this sector. The intermediary market which formerly was dominated by the settlers will be invaded by the young national bourgeoisie. In a colonial economy the intermediary sector is by far the most important. If you want to progress, you must decide in the first few hours to nationalise this sector. But it is clear that such a nationalisation ought not to take on a rigidly state-controlled aspect. It is not a question of placing at the head of these services citizens who have had no political education. Every time such a procedure has been adopted it has been seen that the government has in fact contributed to the triumph of a dictatorship of civil servants who had been set in the mould of the former mother country, and who quickly showed themselves incapable of thinking in terms of the nation as a whole. These civil servants very soon began to sabotage the national economy and

to throw its structure out of joint; under them, corruption, prevarication, the diversion of stocks and the black market came to stay. Nationalising the intermediary sector means organising wholesale and retail co-operatives on a democratic basis; it also means decentralising these co-operatives by getting the mass of the people interested in the ordering of public affairs. You will not be able to do all this unless you give the people some political education. Previously, it was realised that this key problem should be clarified once and for all. Today, it is true that the principle of the political education of the masses is generally subscribed to in under-developed countries. But it does not seem that this primordial task is really taken to heart. When people stress the need to educate the people politically, they decide to point out at the same time that they want to be supported by the people in the action that they are taking. A government which declares that it wishes to educate the people politically thus expresses its desire to govern with the people and for the people. It ought not to speak a language destined to camouflage a bourgeois administration. In the capitalist countries, the bourgeois governments have long since left this infantile stage of authority behind. To put it bluntly, they govern with the help of their laws, their economic strength and their police. Now that their power is firmly established they no longer need to lose time in striking demagogic attitudes. They govern in their own interests, and they have the courage of their own strength. They have created legitimacy, and they are strong in their own right.

The bourgeois caste in newly independent countries have not yet the cynicism nor the unruffled calm which are founded on the strength of long-established bourgeoisies. From this springs the fact that they show a certain anxiety to hide their real convictions, to side-track, and in short to set themselves up as a popular force. But the inclusion of the masses in politics does not consist in mobilising three or four times a year ten thousand or a hundred thousand men and women. These mass meetings and spectacular gatherings are akin to the old tactics that date from before independence, whereby you exhibited your forces in order to prove to yourself and to others that you had the people behind you. The political education of the masses proposes not to treat the masses as children but to make adults of them.

This brings us to consider the role of the political party in an under-developed country. We have seen in the preceding

coming the expression of popular discontentment, instead of taking for its fundamental purpose the free flow of ideas from the people up to the government, forms a screen, and forbids such ideas. The party leaders behave like common sergeant-majors, frequently reminding the people of the need for «silence in the ranks». This party which used to call itself the servant of the people, which used to claim that it worked for the full expression of the people's will, as soon as the colonial power puts the country into its control hastens to send the people back to their caves. As far as national unity is concerned the party will also make many mistakes, as for example when the so-called national party behaves as a party based on ethnical differences. It becomes, in fact, the tribe which makes itself into a party. This party which of its own will proclaims that it is a national party, and which claims to speak in the name of the totality of the people, secretly, sometimes even openly organises an authentic ethnical dictatorship. We no longer see the rise of a bourgeois dictatorship, but a tribal dictatorship. The ministers, the members of the cabinet, the ambassadors and local commissioners are chosen from the same ethnological group as the leader, sometimes directly from his own family. Such regimes of the family sort seem to go back to the old laws of inbreeding, and not anger but shame is felt when we are faced with such stupidity, such an imposture, such intellectual and spiritual poverty. These heads of the government are the true traitors in Africa, for they sell their country to the most terrifying of all its enemies : stupidity. This tribalising of the central authority, it is certain, encourages regionalist ideas and separatism. All the decentralising tendencies spring up again and triumph, and the nation falls to pieces, broken in bits. The leader, who once used to call for «African unity» and who thought of his own little family wakes up one day to find himself saddled with five tribes, who also want to have their own ambassadors and ministers ; and irresponsible as ever, still unaware and still despicable, he denounces their «treason».

We have more than once drawn attention to the baleful influence frequently wielded by the leader. This is due to the fact that the party in certain districts is organised like a gang, with the toughest person in it as its head. The ascendancy of such a leader and his power over others is often mentioned, and people have no hesitation in declaring, in a tone of slightly admiring complicity that he strikes terror into his nearest collaborators. In order to avoid these many pitfalls

an unceasing battle must be waged, a battle to prevent the party ever becoming a willing tool in the hands of a leader. « Leader » : the word comes from the English verb « to lead », but a frequent French translation is « to drive ». The driver, the shepherd of the people no longer exists today. The people are no longer a herd ; they do not need to be driven. If the leader drives me on, I want him to realise that at the same time I show him the way ; the nation ought not to be something bossed by a Grand Panjandrum. We may understand the panic caused in governmental circles each time one of these leaders falls ill ; they are obsessed by the question of who is to succeed him. What will happen the country if the leader disappears ? The ruling classes who have abdicated in favour of the leader, irresponsible, oblivious of everything and essentially preoccupied with the pleasures of their everyday life, their cocktail parties, their journeys paid for by government money, the profits they can make out of various schemes — from time to time these people discover the spiritual waste land at the heart of the nation.

A country that really wishes to answer the questions that history puts to it, that wants to develop not only its towns but also the brains of its inhabitants, such a country must possess a trustworthy political party. The party is not a tool in the hands of the government. Quite on the contrary, the party is a tool in the hands of the people ; it is they who decide on the policy that the government carries out. The party is not, and ought never to be, the only political bureau where all the members of the government and the chief dignitaries of the regime may meet freely together. Only too frequently the political bureau, unfortunately, consists of all the party and its members who reside permanently in the capital. In an under-developed country, the leading members of the party ought to avoid the capital as if it had the plague. They ought, with some few exceptions, to live in the country districts. The centralisation of all activity in the city ought to be avoided. No excuse of administrative discipline should be taken as legitimising that excrescence of a capital which is already overpopulated and over-developed with regard to nine-tenths of the country. The party should be de-centralised in the extreme. It is the only way to bring life to regions which are dead, those regions which are not yet awakened to life.

In practice, there will be at least one member of the political bureau in each area and he will deliberately not be appointed as head of that area. He will have no administrative powers.

The regional member of the political bureau is not expected to hold the highest rank in the regional administrative organisation. He ought not automatically to belong to the regional administrative body. For the people, the party is not an authority, but an organism through which they as the people exercise their authority and express their will. The less there is of confusion and duality of powers, the more the party will play its part of guide and the more surely it will constitute for the people a decisive guarantee. If the party is mingled with the government, the fact of being a party militant means that you take the short cut to gain private ends, to hold a post in the government, step up the ladder, get promotion and make a career for yourself.

In an under-developed country, the setting up of dynamic district officials stops the process whereby the towns become top-heavy, and the incoherent rush towards the cities of the mass of country people. The setting up early in the days of independence of regional organisations and officials who have full authority to do everything in their power to awaken such a region, to bring life to it and to hasten the growth of consciousness in it is a necessity from which there is no escape for a country that wishes to progress. Otherwise, the government big-wigs and the party officials group themselves around the leader. The government services swell to huge proportions, not because they are developing and specialising, but because new-found cousins and fresh militants are looking for jobs and hope to edge themselves into the government machine. And the dream of every citizen is to get up to the capital, and to have his share of the cake. The local districts are deserted ; the mass of the country people with no one to lead them, uneducated and unsupported, turn their backs on their poorly-laboured fields and flock towards the outer ring of suburbs, thus swelling out of all proportion the ranks of the *lumpen-proletariat*.

The moment for a fresh national crisis is not far off. To avoid it, we think that a quite different policy should be followed : that the interior, the back-country ought to be the most privileged part of the country. Moreover, in the last resort, there is nothing inconvenient in the government choosing its seat elsewhere than in the capital. The capital must be de-consecrated ; the outcast masses must be shown that we have decided to work for them. It is with this idea in mind that the government of Brazil tried to found Brazilia. The dead city of Rio de Janeiro was an insult to the Brazilian people. But, un-

fortunately, Brazilia is just another new capital, as monstrous as the first. The only advantage of this achievement is that, today, there exists a road through the bush to it.

No, there is no serious reason which can be opposed to the choice of another capital, or to the moving of the government as a whole towards one of the most under-populated regions. The capital of under-developed countries is a commercial notion inherited from the colonial period. But we who are citizens of the under-developed countries, we ought to seek every occasion for contacts with the rural masses. We must create a national policy, in other words a policy for the masses. We ought never to lose contact with the people which has battled for its independence and for the concrete betterment of its existence.

The native civil servants and technicians ought not to bury themselves in diagrams and statistics, but rather in the heart of the people. They ought not to bristle up every time there is question of a move to be made to the « interior ». We should no longer see the young women of the country threaten their husbands with divorce if they do not manage to avoid being appointed to a rural post. For these reasons, the political bureau of the party ought to treat these forgotten districts in a very privileged manner; and the life of the capital, an altogether artificial life which is stuck onto the real, national life like a foreign body ought to take up the least space possible in the life of the nation, which is sacred and fundamental.

In an under-developed country, the party ought to be organised in such fashion that it is not simply content with having contacts with the masses. The party should be the direct expression of the masses. The party is not an administration responsible for transmitting government orders; it is the energetic spokesman and the incorruptible defender of the masses. In order to arrive at this conception of the party, we must above all rid ourselves of the very Western, very bourgeois and therefore contemptuous attitude that the masses are incapable of governing themselves. In fact, experience proves that the masses understand perfectly the most complicated problems. One of the greatest services that the Algerian revolution will have rendered to the intellectuals of Algeria will be to have placed them in contact with the people, to have allowed them to see the extreme, ineffable poverty of the people, at the same time allowing them to watch the awakening of the people's intelligence and the onward progress of their consciousness. The Algerian people, that mass of starving illiterates, those

men and women plunged for centuries in the most appalling obscurity have held out against tanks and aeroplanes, against napalm and « psychological services », but above all against corruption and brain-washing, against traitors and against the « national » armies of general Bellounis. This people has held out in spite of hesitant or feeble individuals, and in spite of would-be dictators. This people has held out because for seven years its struggle has opened up for it vistas that it never dreamed existed. Today, arms factories are working in the midst of the mountains several yards underground; today, the people's tribunals are functioning at every level, and local planning commissions are organising the division of large-scale holdings, and working out the Algeria of tomorrow. An isolated individual may obstinately refuse to understand a problem, but the group or the village understands with disconcerting rapidity. It is true that if care is taken to use only a language that is understood by graduates in law and economics, you can easily prove that the masses have to be managed from above. But if you speak the language of every day; if you are not obsessed by the perverse desire to spread confusion and to rid yourself of the people, then you will realise that the masses are quick to seize every shade of meaning and to learn all the tricks of the trade. If recourse is had to technical language, this signifies that it has been decided to consider the masses as uninitiated. Such a language is hard put to it to hide the lecturers' wish to cheat the people and to leave them out of things. The business of obscuring language is a mask behind which stands out the much greater business of plunder. The people's property and the people's sovereignty are to be stripped from them at one and the same time. Everything can be explained to the people, on the single condition that you really want them to understand. And if you think that you don't need them, and that on the contrary they may hinder the smooth running of the many limited liability companies whose aim it is to make the people even poorer, then the problem is quite clear.

For if you think that you can manage a country without letting the people interfere, if you think that the people upset the game by their mere presence, whether they slow it down or whether by their natural ignorance they sabotage it, then you must have no hesitation: you must keep the people out. Now, it so happens that when the people are invited to partake in the management of the country, they do not slow the movement down but on the contrary they speed it up. We Alge-

ted them from their land and how from owners they became labourers. The more the people understand, the more watchful they become, and the more they come to realise that finally everything depends on them and their salvation lies in their own cohesion, in the true understanding of their interests and in knowing who are their enemies. The people come to understand that wealth is not the fruit of labour but the result of organised, protected robbery. Rich people are no longer respectable people; they are nothing more than flesh-eating animals, jackals and vultures which wallow in the people's blood. With another end in view the political commissioners have had to decide that nobody will work for anyone else any longer. The land belongs to those that till it. This is a principle which has through explanation become a fundamental law of the Algerian revolution. The peasants who used to employ agricultural labourers have been obliged to give a share of the land to their former employees.

So it may be seen that production per acre trebled, in spite of the many raids by the French, in spite of bombardments from the air, and the difficulty of getting manures. The *fellahs* who at harvest-time were able to judge and weigh the crops thus obtained wanted to know whence came such a phenomenon; and they were quick to understand that the idea of work is not as simple as all that, that slavery is opposed to work, and that work presupposes liberty, responsibility and consciousness.

In those districts where we have been able to carry out successfully these interesting experiments, where we have watched man being created by revolutionary beginnings, the peasants have very clearly caught hold of the idea that the more intelligence you bring to your work, the more pleasure you will have in it. We have been able to make the masses understand that work is not simply the output of energy, nor the functioning of certain muscles, but that people work more by using their brains and their hearts than with only their muscles and their sweat. In the same way in these liberated districts which are at the same time excluded from the old trade routes we have had to modify production, which formerly looked only towards the towns and towards export. We have organised production to meet consumers' needs for the people and for the units of the national army of liberation. We have quadrupled the production of lentils and organised the manufacture of charcoal. Green vegetables and charcoal have been sent through the mountains from the north to the south, whereas the southern

not exist except in a programme which has been worked out by revolutionary leaders and taken up with full understanding and enthusiasm by the masses. The nation's effort must constantly be adjusted into the general background of under-developed countries. The battle-line against hunger, against ignorance, against poverty and against unawareness ought to be ever present in the muscles and the intelligences of men and women. The work of the masses and their will to overcome the evils which have for centuries excluded them from the mental achievements of the past ought to be grafted onto the work and will of all under-developed peoples. On the level of under-developed humanity there is a kind of collective effort, a sort of common destiny. The news which interests the Third World does not deal with king Baudouin's marriage nor the scandals of the Italian ruling class. What we want to hear about are the experiments carried out by the Argentinians or the Burmese in their efforts to overcome illiteracy or the dictatorial tendencies of their leaders. It is these things which strengthen us, teach us and increase our efficiency ten times over. As we see it, a programme is necessary for a government which really wants to free the people politically and socially. There must be an economic programme ; there must also be a doctrine concerning the division of wealth and social relations. In fact, there must be an idea of man and of the future of humanity ; that is to say that no demagogic formula and no collusion with the former occupying power can take the place of a programme. The new peoples, unawakened at first but soon becoming more and more clearminded, will make strong demands for this programme. The African people and indeed all under-developed peoples, contrary to common belief, very quickly build up a social and political consciousness. What can be dangerous is when they reach the stage of social consciousness before the stage of nationalism. If this happens, we find in under-developed countries fierce demands for social justice which paradoxically are allied with often primitive tribalism. The under-developed peoples behave like starving creatures ; this means that the end is very near for those who are having a good time in Africa. Their government will not be able to prolong its own existence indefinitely. A bourgeoisie that provides nationalism alone as food for the masses fails in its mission and gets caught up in a whole series of mishaps. But if nationalism is not made explicit, if it is not enriched and deepened by a very rapid transformation into a consciousness of social and political needs, in other words into

humanism, it leads up a blind alley. The bourgeois leaders of under-developed countries imprison national consciousness in sterile formalism. It is only when men and women are included on a vast scale in enlightened and fruitful work that form and body are given to that consciousness. Then the flag and the palace where sits the government cease to be the symbols of the nation. The nation deserts these brightly-lit, empty shells and takes shelter in the country, where it is given life and dynamic power. The living expression of the nation is the moving consciousness of the whole of the people ; it is the coherent, enlightened action of men and women. The collective building up of a destiny is the assumption of responsibility on the historical scale. Otherwise there is anarchy, repression and the resurgence of tribal parties and federalism. The national government, if it wants to be national, ought to govern by the people and for the people, for the outcasts and by the outcasts. No leader however valuable he may be can substitute himself for the popular will ; and the national government, before concerning itself about international prestige, ought first to give back their dignity to all citizens, fill their minds and feast their eyes with human things, and create a prospect that is human because conscious and sovereign men dwell therein.

to say « We've had enough »; more that one peasant rising crushed, more that one demonstration put down before we could today hold our own, certain in our victory. As for us who have decided to break the back of colonialism, our historic mission is to sanction all revolts, all desperate actions, all those abortive attempts drowned in rivers of blood.

In this chapter we shall analyse the problem, which is felt to be fundamental, of the legitimacy of the claims of a nation. It must be recognised that the political party which mobilises the people hardly touches on this problem of legitimacy. The political parties start from living reality and it is in the name of this reality, in the name of the stark facts which weigh down the present and the future of men and women, that they fix their line of action. The political party may well speak in moving terms of the nation, but what it is concerned with is that the people who are listening understand the need to take part in the fight if, quite simply, they wish to continue to exist.

Today we know that in the first phase of the national struggle colonialism tries to disarm national demands by putting forward economic doctrines. As soon as the first demands are set out, colonialism pretends to consider them, recognising with ostentatious humility that the territory is suffering from serious under-development which necessitates a great economic and social effort. And, in fact, it so happens that certain spectacular measures (centres of work for the unemployed which are opened here and there, for example) delay the crystallisation of national consciousness for a few years. But, sooner or later, colonialism sees that it is not within its powers to put into practice a project of economic and social reforms which will satisfy the aspirations of the colonised people. Even where food supplies are concerned, colonialism gives proof of its inherent incapability. The colonialist state quickly discovers that if it wishes to disarm the nationalist parties on strictly economic questions then it will have to do in the colonies exactly what it has refused to do in its own country. It is not mere chance that almost everywhere today there flourishes the doctrine of Cartierism.

The disillusioned bitterness we find in Cartier when up against the obstinate determination of France to link to herself peoples which she must feed while so many French people live in want shows up the impossible situation in which colonialism finds itself when the colonial system is called upon to transform itself into an unselfish programme of aid and assistance. It is why, once again, there is no use in wasting time repeating

hearts, relentlessly determine to renew contact once more with the oldest and most pre-colonial springs of life of their people.

Let us go further. Perhaps this passionate research and this anger are kept up or at least directed by the secret hope of discovering beyond the misery of today, beyond self-contempt, resignation and abjuration, some very beautiful and splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others. I have said that I have decided to go further. Perhaps unconsciously, the native intellectuals, since they could not stand wonder-struck before the history of today's barbarity, decided to go back further and to delve deeper down; and, let us make no mistake, it was with the greatest delight that they discovered that there was nothing to be ashamed of in the past, but rather dignity, glory and solemnity. The claim to a national culture in the past does not only rehabilitate that nation and serve as a justification for the hope of a future national culture. In the sphere of psycho-affective equilibrium it is responsible for an important change in the native. Perhaps we have not sufficiently demonstrated that colonialism is not simply content to impose its rule upon the present and the future of a dominated country. Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today.

When we consider the efforts made to carry out the cultural estrangement so characteristic of the colonial epoch, we realise that nothing has been left to chance and that the total result looked for by colonial domination was indeed to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness. The effect consciously sought by colonialism was to drive into the natives' heads the idea that if the settlers were to leave, they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation and bestiality.

On the unconscious plane, colonialism therefore did not seek to be considered by the native as a gentle, loving mother who protects her child from a hostile environment, but rather as a mother who unceasingly restrains her fundamentally perverse offspring from managing to commit suicide and from giving free rein to its evil instincts. The colonial mother protects her child from itself, from its ego, and from its physiology, its biology and its own unhappiness which is its very essence.

In such a situation the claims of the native intellectual are no luxury but a necessity in any coherent programme. The native intellectual who takes up arms to defend his nation's legitimacy and who wants to bring proofs to bear out that legitimacy, who is willing to strip himself naked to study the history of his body, is obliged to dissect the heart of his people.

Such an examination is not specifically national. The native intellectual who decides to give battle to colonial lies fights on the field of the whole continent. The past is given back its value. Culture, extracted from the past to be displayed in all its splendour, is not necessarily that of his own country. Colonialism, which has not bothered to put too fine a point on its efforts has never ceased to maintain that the Negro is a savage; and for the colonist, the Negro was neither an Angolan nor a Nigerian, for he simply spoke of « the Negro ». For colonialism, this vast continent was the haunt of savages, a country riddled with superstitions and fanaticism, destined for contempt, weighed down by the curse of God, a country of cannibals — in short, the Negro's country. Colonialism's condemnation is continental in its scope. The contention by colonialism that the darkest night of humanity lay over pre-colonial history concerns the whole of the African continent. The efforts of the native to rehabilitate himself and to escape from the claws of colonialism are logically inscribed from the same point of view as that of colonialism. The native intellectual who has gone far beyond the domains of Western culture and who has got it into his head to proclaim the existence of another culture never does so in the name of Angola or of Dahomey. The culture which is affirmed is African culture. The Negro, never so much a Negro as since he has been dominated by the whites, when he decides to prove that he has a culture and to behave like a cultured person, comes to realise that history points out a well-defined path to him: he must demonstrate that a Negro culture exists.

And it is only too true that those who are most responsible for this racialisation of thought, or at least for the first movement towards that thought, are and remain those Europeans who have never ceased to set up white culture to fill the gap left by the absence of other cultures. Colonialism did not dream of wasting its time in denying the existence of one national culture after another. Therefore the reply of the colonised peoples will be straight away continental in its breadth. In Africa, the native literature of the last twenty years is not a national literature but a Negro literature. The concept of Negro-ism, for

example, was the emotional if not the logical antithesis of that insult which the white man flung at humanity. This rush of Negro-ism against the white man's contempt showed itself in certain spheres to be the one idea capable of lifting interdictions and anathemas. Because the New Guinean or Kenyan intellectuals found themselves above all up against a general ostracism and delivered to the combined contempt of their overlords, their reaction was to sing praises in admiration of each other. The unconditional affirmation of African culture has succeeded the unconditional affirmation of European culture. On the whole, the poets of Negro-ism oppose the idea of an old Europe to a young Africa, tiresome reasoning to lyricism, oppressive logic to high-stepping nature, and on one side stiffness, ceremony, etiquette and scepticism, while on the other frankness, liveliness, liberty and — why not? — luxuriance: but also irresponsibility.

The poets of Negro-ism will not stop at the limits of the continent. From America, black voices will take up the hymn with fuller unison. The « black world » will see the light and Busia from Ghana, Birago Diop from Senegal, Hampaté Ba from the Soudan and Saint-Clair Drake from Chicago will not hesitate to assert the existence of common ties and a motive power that is identical.

The example of the Arab world might equally well be quoted here. We know that the majority of Arab territories have been under colonial domination. Colonialism has made the same effort in these regions to plant deep in the minds of the native population the idea that before the advent of colonialism their history was one which was dominated by barbarism. The struggle for national liberty has been accompanied by a cultural phenomenon known by the name of the awakening of Islam. The passion with which contemporary Arab writers remind their people of the great pages of their history is a reply to the lies told by the occupying power. The great names of Arabic literature and the great past of Arab civilisation have been brandished about with the same ardour as those of the African civilisations. The Arab leaders have tried to return to the famous Dar El Islam which shone so brightly from the twelfth to the fourteenth century.

Today, in the political sphere, the Arab League is giving palpable form to this will to take up again the heritage of the past and to bring it to culmination. Today, Arab doctors and Arab poets speak to each other across the frontiers, and strive to create a new Arab culture and a new Arab civilisation. It

is in the name of Arabism that these men join together, and that they try to think together. Everywhere, however, in the Arab world, national feeling has preserved even under colonial domination a liveliness that we fail to find in Africa. At the same time that spontaneous communion of each with all, present in the African movement, is not to be found in the Arab League. On the contrary, paradoxically, everyone tries to sing the praises of the achievements of his nation. The cultural process is freed from the indifferentiation which characterised it in the African world, but the Arabs do not always manage to stand aside in order to achieve their aims. The living culture is not national but Arab. The problem is not as yet to secure a national culture, not as yet to lay hold of a movement differentiated by nations, but to assume an African or Arabic culture when confronted by the all-embracing condemnation pronounced by the dominating power. In the African world, as in the Arab, we see that the claims of the man of culture in a colonised country are all-embracing, continental and in the case of the Arabs, world-wide.

This historical necessity in which the men of African culture find themselves to racialise their claims and to speak more of African culture than of national culture will tend to lead them up a blind alley. Let us take for example the case of the African Cultural Society. This society had been created by African intellectuals who wished to get to know each other and to compare their experiences and the results of their respective research work. The aim of this society was therefore to affirm the existence of an African culture, to evaluate this culture on the plane of distinct nations and to reveal the internal motive forces of each of their national cultures. But at the same time this society fulfilled another need: the need to exist side by side with the European Cultural Society, which threatened to transform itself into a Universal Cultural Society. There was therefore at the bottom of this decision the anxiety to be present at the universal trysting place fully armed, with a culture springing from the very heart of the African continent. Now, this Society will very quickly show its inability to shoulder these different tasks, and will limit itself to exhibitionist demonstrations, while the habitual behaviour of the members of this Society will be confined to showing Europeans that such a thing as African culture exists, and opposing their ideas to those of ostentatious and narcissistic Europeans. We have shown that such an attitude is normal and draws its legitimacy

from the lies propagated by men of Western culture. But the degradation of the aims of this Society will become more marked with the elaboration of the concept of Negro-ism. The African Society will become the cultural society of the black world and will come to include the Negro dispersion, that is to say the tens of thousands of black people spread over the American continents.

The Negroes who live in the United States and in Central or Latin America in fact experience the need to attach themselves to a cultural matrix. Their problem is not fundamentally different from that of the Africans. The whites of America did not mete out to them any different treatment from that of the whites that ruled over the Africans. We have seen that the whites were used to putting all Negroes in the same bag. During the first congress of the African Cultural Society which was held in Paris in 1956, the American Negroes of their own accord considered their problems from the same standpoint as those of their African brothers. Cultured Africans, speaking of African civilisations, decreed that there should be a reasonable status within the state for those who had formerly been slaves. But little by little the American Negroes realised that the essential problems confronting them were not the same as those that confronted the African Negroes. The Negroes of Chicago only resemble the Nigerians or the Tanganykians in so far as they were all defined in relation to the whites. But once the first comparisons had been made and subjective feelings were assuaged, the American Negroes realised that the objective problems were fundamentally heterogeneous. The test cases of civil liberty whereby both whites and blacks in America try to drive back racial discrimination have very little in common in their principles and objectives with the heroic fight of the Angolan people against the detestable Portuguese colonialism. Thus, during the second congress of the African Cultural Society the American Negroes decided to create an American society for people of black cultures.

Negro-ism therefore finds its first limitation in the phenomena which take account of the formation of the historical character of men. Negro and African-Negro culture broke up into different entities because the men who wished to incarnate these cultures realised that every culture is first and foremost national, and that the problems which kept Richard Wright or Langston Hughes on the alert were fundamentally different from those which might confront Leopold Senghor or Jomo

Kenyatta. In the same way certain Arab states, though they had chanted the marvellous hymn of Arab renaissance, had nevertheless to realise that their geographical position and the economic ties of their region were stronger even than the past that they wished to revive. Thus we find today the Arab states organically linked once more with societies which are Mediterranean in their culture. The fact is that these states are submitted to modern pressure and to new channels of trade while the network of trade relations which was dominant during the great period of Arab history has disappeared. But above all there is the fact that the political regimes of certain Arab states are so different, and so far away from each other in their conceptions that even a cultural meeting between these states is meaningless.

Thus we see that the cultural problem as it sometimes exists in colonised countries runs the risk of giving rise to serious ambiguities. The lack of culture of the Negroes, as proclaimed by colonialism, and the inherent barbarity of the Arabs ought logically to lead to the exaltation of cultural manifestations which are not simply national but continental, and extremely racial. In Africa, the movement of men of culture is a movement towards the Negro-African culture or the Arab-Moslem culture. It is not specifically towards a national culture. Culture is becoming more and more cut off from the events of today. It finds its refuge beside a hearth that glows with passionate emotion, and from there makes its way by realistic paths which are the only means by which it may be made fruitful, homogeneous and consistent.

If the action of the native intellectual is limited historically, there remains nevertheless the fact that it contributes greatly to upholding and justifying the action of politicians. It is true that the attitude of the native intellectual sometimes takes on the aspect of a cult or of a religion. But if we really wish to analyse this attitude correctly we will come to see that it is symptomatic of the intellectual's realisation of the danger that he is running in cutting his last moorings and of breaking adrift from his people. This stated belief in a national culture is in fact an ardent, despairing turning towards anything that will afford him secure anchorage. In order to ensure his salvation and to escape from the supremacy of the white man's culture the native feels the need to turn backwards towards his unknown roots and to lose himself at whatever cost in his own barbarous people. Because he feels he is becoming estranged, that is to

But at the moment when the nationalist parties are mobilising the people in the name of national independence, the native intellectual sometimes spurns these acquisitions which he suddenly feels make him a stranger in his own land. It is always easier to proclaim rejection than actually to reject. The intellectual who through the medium of culture has filtered into Western civilisation, who has managed to become part of the body of European culture — in other words who has exchanged his own culture for another — will come to realise that the cultural matrix, which now he wishes to assume since he is anxious to appear original, can hardly supply any figureheads which will bear comparison with those, so many in number and so great in prestige, of the occupying power's civilisation. History, of course, though nevertheless written by the Westerners and to serve their purposes, will be able to evaluate from time to time certain periods of the African past. But, standing face to face with his country at the present time, and observing clearly and objectively the events of today throughout the continent which he wants to make his own, the intellectual is terrified by the void, the degradation and the savagery he sees there. Now he feels that he must get away from white culture. He must seek his culture elsewhere, anywhere at all; and if he fails to find the substance of culture of the same grandeur and scope as displayed by the ruling power, the native intellectual will very often fall back upon emotional attitudes and will develop a psychology which is dominated by exceptional sensitivity and susceptibility. This withdrawal which is due in the first instance to a begging of the question in his internal behaviour mechanism and his own character brings out, above all, a reflex and contradiction which is muscular.

This is sufficient explanation of the style of those native intellectuals who decide to give expression to this phase of consciousness which is in process of being liberated. It is a harsh style, full of images, for the image is the draw-bridge which allows unconscious energies to be scattered on the surrounding meadows. It is a vigorous style, alive with rhythms, struck through and through with bursting life; it is full of colour, too, bronzed, sun-baked and violent. This style, which in its time astonished the peoples of the West, has nothing racial about it, in spite of frequent statements to the contrary; it expresses above all a hand-to-hand struggle and it reveals the need that man has to liberate himself from a part of his being which already contained the seeds of decay. Whether the fight is

first phase, the native intellectual gives proof that he has assimilated the culture of the occupying power. His writings correspond point by point with those of his opposite numbers in the mother country. His inspiration is European and we can easily link up these works with definite trends in the literature of the mother country. This is the period of unqualified assimilation. We find in this literature coming from the colonies the Parnassians, the Symbolists and the Surrealists.

In the second phase we find the native is disturbed; he decides to remember what he is. This period of creative work approximately corresponds to that immersion which we have just described. But since the native is not a part of his people, since he only has exterior relations with his people, he is content to recall their life only. Past happenings of the bye-gone days of his childhood will be brought up out of the depths of his memory; old legends will be reinterpreted in the light of a borrowed estheticism and of a conception of the world which was discovered under other skies.

Sometimes this literature of just-before-the-battle is dominated by humour and by allegory; but often too it is symptomatic of a period of distress and difficulty, where death is experienced, and disgust too. We spew ourselves up; but already underneath laughter can be heard.

Finally in the third phase, which is called the fighting phase, the native, after having tried to lose himself in the people and with the people, will on the contrary shake the people. Instead of according the people's lethargy an honoured place in his esteem, he turns himself into an awakener of the people; hence comes a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature. During this phase a great many men and women who up till then would never have thought of producing a literary work, now that they find themselves in exceptional circumstances — in prison, with the Maquis or on the eve of their execution — feel the need to speak to their nation, to compose the sentence which expresses the heart of the people and to become the mouthpiece of a new reality in action.

The native intellectual nevertheless sooner or later will realise that you do not show proof of your nation from its culture but that you substantiate its existence in the fight which the people wage against the forces of occupation. No colonial system draws its justification from the fact that the territories it dominates are culturally non-existent. You will never make colonialism blush for shame by spreading out little-known cultural

treasures under its eyes. At the very moment when the native intellectual is anxiously trying to create a cultural work he fails to realise that he is utilising techniques and language which are borrowed from the stranger in his country. He contents himself with stamping these instruments with a hall-mark which he wishes to be national, but which is strangely reminiscent of exoticism. The native intellectual who comes back to his people by way of cultural achievements behaves in fact like a foreigner. Sometimes he has no hesitation in using a dialect in order to show his will to be as near as possible to the people; but the ideas that he expresses and the preoccupations he is taken up with have no common yardstick to measure the real situation which the men and the women of his country know. The culture that the intellectual leans towards is often no more than a stock of particularisms. He wishes to attach himself to the people; but instead he only catches hold of their outer garments. And these outer garments are merely the reflection of a hidden life, teeming and perpetually in motion. That extremely obvious objectivity which seems to characterise a people is in fact only the inert, already forsaken result of frequent, and not always very coherent adaptations of a much more fundamental substance which itself is continually being renewed. The man of culture, instead of setting out to find this substance, will let himself be hypnotised by these mummified fragments which because they are static are in fact symbols of negation and outworn contrivances. Culture has never the translucidity of custom; it abhors all simplification. In its essence it is opposed to custom, for custom is always the deterioration of culture. The desire to attach oneself to tradition or bring abandoned traditions to life again does not only mean going against the current of history but also opposing one's own people. When a people undertakes an armed struggle or even a political struggle against a relentless colonialism, the significance of tradition changes. All that has made up the technique of passive resistance in the past may, during this phase, be radically condemned. In an under-developed country during the period of struggle traditions are fundamentally unstable and are shot through by centrifugal tendencies. This is why the intellectual often runs the risk of being out of date. The peoples who have carried on the struggle are more and more impervious to demagogy; and those who wish to follow them reveal themselves as nothing more than common opportunists, in other words latecomers.

In the sphere of plastic arts, for example, the native artist

who wishes at whatever cost to create a national work of art shuts himself up in a stereotyped reproduction of details. These artists, who have nevertheless thoroughly studied modern techniques and who have taken part in the main trends of contemporary painting and architecture, turn their back on foreign culture, deny it and set out to look for a true national culture, setting great store on what they consider to be the constant principles of national art. But these people forget that the forms of thought and what it feeds on, together with modern techniques of information, language and dress have dialectically reorganised the people's intelligences and that the constant principles which acted as safeguards during the colonial period are now undergoing extremely radical changes.

The artist who has decided to illustrate the truths of the nation turns paradoxically towards the past and away from actual events. What he ultimately intends to embrace are in fact the cast-offs of thought, its shells and corpses, a knowledge which has been stabilised once and for all. But the native intellectual who wishes to create an authentic work of art must realise that the truths of a nation are in the first place its realities. He must go on until he has found the seething pot out of which the learning of the future will emerge.

Before independence, the native painter was insensible to the national scene. He set a high value on non-figurative art, or more often was specialised in still-lives. After independence his anxiety to rejoin his people will confine him to the most detailed representation of reality. This is representative art which has no internal rhythms, an art which is serene and immobile, evocative not of life but of death. Enlightened circles are in ecstasies when confronted with this « inner truth » which is so well expressed; but we have the right to ask if this truth is in fact a reality, and if it is not already outworn and denied, called in question by the epoch through which the people are treading out their path towards history.

In the realm of poetry we may establish the same facts. After the period of assimilation characterised by rhyming poetry, the poetic tom-tom's rhythms break through. This is a poetry of revolt; but it is also descriptive and analytical poetry. The poet ought however to understand that nothing can replace the reasoned, irrevocable taking up of arms on the people's side. Let us quote Depestre once more:

« The lady was not alone;
She had a husband,

apart from the popular struggle. To take an example : all those men and women who are fighting with their bare hands against French colonialism in Algeria are not by any means strangers to the national culture of Algeria. The national Algerian culture is taking on form and content as the battles are being fought out, in prisons, under the guillotine and in every French outpost which is captured or destroyed.

We must not therefore be content with delving into the past of a people in order to find coherent elements which will counteract colonialism's attempts to falsify and harm. We must work and fight with the same rhythm as the people to construct the future and to prepare the ground where vigorous shoots are already springing up. A national culture is not a folklore, nor an abstract populism that believes it can discover the people's true nature. It is not made up of the inert dregs of gratuitous actions, that is to say actions which are less and less attached to the ever-present reality of the people. A national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence. A national culture in under-developed countries should therefore take its place at the very heart of the struggle for freedom which these countries are carrying on. Men of African cultures who are still fighting in the name of African-Negro culture and who have called many congresses in the name of the unity of that culture should to-day realise that all their efforts amount to is to make comparisons between coins and sarcophagi.

There is no common destiny to be shared between the national cultures of Senegal and Guinea ; but there is a common destiny between the Senegalese and Guinean nations which are both dominated by the same French colonialism. If it is wished that the national culture of Senegal should come to resemble the national culture of Guinea, it is not enough for the rulers of the two peoples to decide to consider their problems — whether the problem of liberation is concerned, or the trade-union question, or economic difficulties — from similar view-points. And even here there does not seem to be complete identity, for the rhythm of the people and that of their rulers are not the same. There can be no two cultures which are completely identical. To believe that it is possible to create a black culture is to forget that niggers are disappearing, just as those people who brought them into being are seeing the break-up of their econo-

The value of this type of conflict is that it supplies the maximum of conditions necessary for the development and aims of culture. After national freedom has been obtained in these conditions, there is no such painful cultural indecision which is found in certain countries which are newly independent, because the nation by its manner of coming into being and in the terms of its existence exerts a fundamental influence over culture. A nation which is born of the people's concerted action and which embodies the real aspirations of the people while changing the State cannot exist save in the expression of exceptionally rich forms of culture.

The natives who are anxious for the culture of their country and who wish to give to it a universal dimension ought not therefore to place their confidence in the single principle of inevitable, undifferentiated independence written into the consciousness of the people in order to achieve their task. The liberation of the nation is one thing; the methods and popular content of the fight are another. It seems to us that the future of national culture and its riches are equally also part and parcel of the values which have ordained the struggle for freedom.

And now it is time to denounce certain pharisees. National claims, it is here and there stated, are a phase that humanity has left behind. It is the day of great concerted actions, and retarded nationalists ought in consequence to set their mistakes aright. We however consider that the mistake, which may have very serious consequences, lies in wishing to skip the national period. If culture is the expression of national consciousness, I will not hesitate to affirm that in the case with which we are dealing it is the national consciousness which is the most elaborate form of culture.

The consciousness of self is not the closing of a door to communication. Philosophic thought teaches us, on the contrary, that it is its guarantee. National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension. This problem of national consciousness and of national culture takes on in Africa a special dimension. The birth of national consciousness in Africa has a strictly contemporaneous connection with the African consciousness. The responsibility of the African as regards national culture is also a responsibility with regard to African Negro culture. This joint responsibility is not the fact of a metaphysical principle but the awareness of a simple rule which wills that every independent nation in an Africa where colonialism is still entrenched

selves into a structure which then reveals the colonised personality. This « sensitivity » is easily understood if we simply study and are alive to the number and depth of the injuries inflicted upon a native during a single day spent amidst the colonial regime. It must in any case be remembered that a colonised people is not only simply a dominated people. Under the German occupation the French remained men; under the French occupation, the Germans remained men. In Algeria there is not simply the domination but the decision to the letter not to occupy anything more than the sum total of the land. The Algerians, the veiled women, the palm-trees and the camels make up the landscape, the *natural* background to the human presence of the French.

Hostile nature, obstinate and fundamentally rebellious, is in fact represented in the colonies by the bush, by mosquitoes, natives and fever and colonisation is a success when all this indocile nature has finally been tamed. Railways across the bush, the draining of swamps and a native population which is non-existent politically and economically are in fact one and the same thing.

In the period of colonisation when it is not contested by armed resistance, when the sum total of harmful nervous stimuli overstep a certain threshold, the defensive attitudes of the natives give way and they then find themselves crowding the mental hospitals. There is thus during this calm period of successful colonisation a regular and important mental pathology which is the direct product of oppression.

Today the war of national liberation which has been carried on by the Algerian people for the last seven years has become a favourable breeding-ground for mental disorders, because so far as the Algerians are concerned it is a total war. We shall mention here some Algerian cases which have been attended by us and who seem to us to be particularly eloquent. We need hardly say that we are not concerned with producing a scientific work. We avoid all arguments over semiology, nosology or therapeutics. The few technical terms used serve merely as references. We must, however, insist on two points. Firstly, as a general rule, clinical psychiatry classifies the different disturbances shown by our patients under the heading « reactionary psychoses ». In doing this, prominence is given to the event which has given rise to the disorder, although in some cases mention is made of the previous history of the case (the psychological, affective and biological condition of the patient) and of

- 72: to become the lumber - cut 83, 163
 73: Viol. unifies - , faces of despair etc.
 18: Saxton: man re-creates himself
 in violence; (not in
 labor.)

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117 Repeat -

- 74: illuminated by violence
 150-1: masses understood early things, the
 individual nobles
 148: Deventer investigations
 174: "Negroism" - Am. Negroes 188
 Culture: racial, not national