

**Garvey, Padmore, and Fanon: A
Critical Appraisal of the Role
Caribbean-born Radicals Played in the
African Liberation Movement from
1916-1963**

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by

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AUTHOR DECLARATIONS

1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

2. The advanced study in the English Language and Literature graduate program of which this thesis is part has consisted of:

i) English literature as well as American literature including novel, poetry, and drama studies, a comparative approach to world literatures, and examination of several literary theories as well as critical approaches which have contributed to this thesis in an effective way.

ii) The thesis is composed of main sources, including several original works by the figures in question, and secondary sources, particularly scholarly articles from a variety of journals and theoretical books.

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ABSTRACT

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Garvey, Padmore, and Fanon: A Critical Appraisal of the Role Caribbean-born Radicals Played in the African Liberation Movement from 1916-1963

This thesis assesses the careers of three Caribbean-born race leaders: Jamaica's Marcus Garvey, Trinidad's George Padmore, and Martinique's Frantz Fanon. In doing so, it highlights the tricontinental nature of the African liberation movement and traces the major themes of the movement from the end of World War I to the early 1960s. The prominent ideologies of each of these figures are discussed, and special attention is paid to the manner in which their ideas diverged from one another and from their dissenting contemporaries. The evolution of Pan-Africanism, black nationalism, and African Socialism will be highlighted. The first chapter will discuss, among other things, the post-WWI conditions that paved the way for Garvey to become a major race leader in America; Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association and its Back-to-Africa platform; his glorification of Africa's past; his plans for an independent African state in Liberia; and the racialism and nationalism in his ideas. The second chapter will analyze Padmore's early connection to the Communist Party in America; his break from the party, and the role Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia played in this; his prominent role in the groundbreaking 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress; and his formulation of non-violent positive action and Marxism in an African context. The third chapter will examine Fanon's

opinions about violence in the colonial context; his emphasis that the peasantry must be the true driving force behind a revolution; his complex relationship with Marxism, including his repudiation of Padmore's ideological Pan-African socialism; his ideas about neocolonialism; and his thoughts about national culture. Contemporary sources will be drawn from in the conclusion to address the relative success of the three men in light of more recent history.

Key words:

Pan-Africanism, repatriation, Communism, Marxism, African Socialism, liberation movement, racialism, nationalism, neocolonialism, national bourgeoisie, violence in the colonial context

KISA ÖZET

Mark Chevalier

Mayıs 2008

Garvey, Padmore ve Fanon: Karayip Doğumlu Radikallerin 1916-1963 Arası Afrika Özgürlük Hareketinde Oynadıkları Rollerine Eleştirel bir Bakış

Bu tez Afrika bağımsızlık hareketinde önde gelen üç ismin kariyerini değerlendirecek: Jamaikalı Marcus Garvey, Trinidadlı George Padmore ve Martinikli Frantz Fanon. Bunu yaparken de Afrika bağımsızlık hareketinin Birinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan 1960'lara kadar olan dönemin ana temaları incelenecek. Her bir şahsiyetin en belirgin ideolojileri tartışılacak ve fikirlerinin birbirlerinden ve onlara muhalefet olan çağdaşlarından nasıl farklılık gösterdiği incelenecek. Pan-Afrkanizm, siyah milliyetçilik ve Afrika sosyalizmin geçirdiği değişim vurgulanacak. Garvey'in Afrika'ya Dönüş hareketine, Padmore'un şiddet içermeyen, pozitif hareketine ve Fanon'un şiddet ve neocolonialism ([diğer ülkeleri ekonomik, siyasi ve kültürel yöntemlerle etki altına alma](#)) üzerine olan fikirlerine vurgu yapılacak. Tez, her bir şahsiyetin bıraktığı izleri ve mirası analiz ederek bitecek.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Pan-Afrikanizm, ülkeye geri dönme, Komünizm, Marksizm, Afrika Sosyalizmi, Afrika bağımsızlık hareketi, ırkçılık, milliyetçilik, neocolonialism, milli burjuva, sömürge bağlamında şiddet.

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Introduction

There has been considerable contact between African, African-American, and African-Caribbean radical intellectuals since the 19th century and, in this sense, the fight for African liberation, perhaps more than any other anti-imperial movement, has always been distinguished by its internationalism and the degree to which it was developed cooperatively as a tricontinental affair. As Robert Young states:

In terms of political history, the Black Atlantic operated as a region whose individual constituencies cannot be separated from each other: the history of North and South America and the Caribbean is inextricably bound up with that of Africa, and the reverse is also true.
(218)

In this thesis we will examine the contributions that three Caribbean figures—Jamaica’s Marcus Garvey, Trinidad’s George Padmore, and Martinique’s Frantz Fanon—have made to the African liberation movement.

Although each man was born in the West Indies, each was a diasporic figure who fought passionately for, above all else, a liberated Africa. To this extent they embody the tricontinental spirit of the African anti-colonial movement as well as anyone. Garvey was born in Jamaica and spent some of his formative years in London before eventually emigrating to America and becoming one of the most charismatic race leaders of the twentieth century. He arrived in the U.S. at a time when conditions for blacks had slipped to a new low. Meanwhile, World War I had catapulted African nationalism to a new level. The conscription of African troops for conflicts in both East Africa and Europe had a two-pronged effect. Black soldiers

not only gained a newfound international perspective on their plight, but also began to sense that their colonial masters were far from invincible. Soldiers who returned to their native lands expressed impatience with leaders who cooperated with the colonial powers, and though demands for independence were still a way off, calls for political representation were not. Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, which asserted the right of self-determination, also served to embolden discontent blacks. Out of this picture emerged Garvey, a Jamaican-born activist who would come to play a major role in early African and African-American liberation politics. In 1991, Michael W. Williams declared:

Unquestionably, the greatest and most successful organizer for the Pan-Africanist cause was Jamaica-born Marcus Garvey. For at least a decade after World War I, Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) were the unchallenged recipients of the nationalist loyalties of millions of oppressed Africans in different parts of the African world. (Williams, "Pan-Africanism and Zionism" 348)

If we juxtapose this statement with Ben F. Rogers' declaration that "there is little question that Marcus Garvey was the most popular Negro leader in the United States during the early 1920's," it is evident that Garvey was the most influential black leader of the 1920s—not only for America, but for the entire black world (158).

Often referred to as "the father of African emancipation", Trinidadian George Padmore, who moved between Trinidad, America, Moscow, Paris, London, and Ghana throughout his life, exemplified the tricontinental spirit of the African liberation movement as well as anyone. In this regard, he was closer to the rule than

the exception, as repression in the colonies themselves forced many activists to the imperial capitals of London and Paris. The convergence of exiled political radicals and intellectuals in Europe and the U.S. enabled activists from different countries to discuss their varying experiences and political ideas, which helps explain the internationalism of Pan-Africanism.

In particular, Padmore and other Caribbeans were crucial to the African anti-colonial movement in the 1930s and 1940, resolutely carrying on the fight when the once-powerful influence of Garveyism and W.E. B. Du Bois' Pan-African Congresses—held in 1919, 1921, 1923, and 1927—had faded. C.L.R. James, in his notes on the life of Padmore, stated that “it was largely the West Indians who made the African question a live question in British politics and this state of affairs continued until Nkrumah came to London in the early 1940s” (James qtd. in Young 225). Padmore deserves much of the credit for this, as his prolific output as a journalist and essayist for African-American, West Indian, West African, and British newspapers raised awareness and stimulated communication between anti-colonial activists based out of Europe, America, Africa, and the Caribbean. Looking back at Padmore's legacy as an activist, Michael A. Gomez noted that

Padmore's influence as a journalist covering labor strikes in Trinidad and the Caribbean in 1937 and 1938 was far-reaching, exposing the relationship between foreign capital and colonial rule in the increasingly desperate plight of the peasant-turned-wage-laborer. (187-188)

Padmore helped spur the international movement from this period onward as a regular writer for the *Chicago Defender*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, and *Crisis*, and as

the African correspondent for the Associated Negro Press during World War II. The latter role was indispensable to the movement, as the Second World War irrevocably altered the perspectives of the oppressed and colonized peoples of the world.

Padmore's reports helped engender a sense of kinship between African-Americans and the browbeaten subjects of the world, giving them the sense that "the struggle of the Negro in the United States is part and parcel of the struggle against imperialism and exploitation in India, China, Burma, Africa, the Philippines, Malaya, the West Indies and South America (Von Eschen qtd. in Young 223). From the mid-thirties until his death in 1959—in a variety of different roles—Padmore fought tirelessly for the oppressed peoples of the world. Specifically, his contributions to Pan-Africanism and his role in formulating what became the distinctive African or black Marxist tradition were monumental to the African liberation movement in the middle part of the 20th Century.

Born in Martinique in 1925, Frantz Fanon left to fight with the free French in WWII and then returned to his homeland in 1945 to study philosophy. During an election for deputies for the French parliament, Fanon came under the influence of Aime Césaire. Here he "underwent his first moment of political radicalization" before returning to France, "reinforced with the potent mixture of communism and *negritude*," to begin formal studies in medicine, psychiatry, and philosophy (Young 275). While training in psychiatry in Lyon, he edited a black journal called *Tam-Tam*. Upon completion of his training, he hoped to obtain a post in West Africa but was instead assigned to head the psychiatry department at a hospital in Blida-Joinville, Algeria in 1953. The following year the French fell at Dien Ben Phu in Vietnam, and the Algerian Front de Liberation Nationale formally commenced a war

of independence against France. Fanon soon found himself involved in the Algerian Revolution, an experience that “produced a second moment of political radicalization” (Young 275). His most famous work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, was written during his involvement in the Algerian war, and was first published in 1961. In this extremely influential book, Fanon explores the psychological effects of colonization and outlines the building blocks—using Algeria as an archetype—for a broad decolonization movement in Africa. The text has since become a manual for political leaders faced with the prospect of decolonization.

The venerable Aime Cesaire made the following interesting remark about Fanon’s ascent to the pantheon of political activists:

Fanon probably soared to such heights and was possessed of so wide a horizon because he was a West Indian, meaning that he started from so lowly and narrow a basis. Maybe it was necessary to be West Indian, that is, to be so destituted, so depersonalized, in order to go forth with such ardour to the conquest of oneself and of plenitude; West Indian, this is to say, so mystified in the beginning as to finally be able to expose the most secret motives of mystification, and with such mastery; finally, West Indian to be capable of so forcefully escaping from impotency by action, and from solitude by fraternity. (Cesaire qtd. in Martin 384)

When we consider the formidable list of West Indians who have in the twentieth century sprung forth from the suffocating atmosphere of the West Indies to make their influence felt in the international African anti-colonial movement —Edward Blyden, Sylvester Williams, Garvey, C.L.R. James, Padmore, Stokely Carmichael,

Fanon, and Césaire himself, to name a few—we see that Césaire’s words were not without warrant. Additionally, Walter Rodney has declared that “it is in the Caribbean that Pan African sentiments were born” (Rodney qtd. in Nantambu 566).

Winston James also declared:

The Caribbean presence in radical[ism] in the U.S. was remarkable in... three important respects. First, it was out of proportion to the group's numerical weight within the black population. Second, Caribbeans founded and led not only black nationalist [groups] like the UNIA, but also important political currents on the revolutionary socialist left. Third, the migrants also provided some of the most distinguished black intellectuals at the time. (James qtd. in Parker 100)

In this thesis, I have chosen to devote my attention to Garvey, Padmore, and Fanon because I believe they are the three most prolific activists in this long line of West Indian radicals, and that their collective work—both in its ideological similarities and differences—highlights the most important themes of the anti-colonial movement from the close of WWI to the decolonization period of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

In my analysis of Marcus Garvey’s career as a race leader, I will examine the following elements:

- i) The abhorrent conditions for African-Americans following the First World War, and how Garvey emerged at a time when the masses desperately needed a new leader.

- ii) Garvey's foundation of The Universal Negro Improvement Association and his Back-to-Africa platform, which included the glorification of Africa's past and a call for Pan-Africanism.
- iii) Plans for an independent African state in Liberia and the dissolution of these plans.
- iv) Garvey's racialism and nationalism, which have served as the underpinnings of black nationalism.

I will then turn my attention to Padmore, who began his involvement in the liberation movement around the same time as Garvey but peaked in the years that led up to WWII. I will discuss the following aspects of his work:

- i) The connection to communism that defined the early part of Padmore's career and caused him to denounce Garvey's ideas.
- ii) His break from the Communist Party, and the role Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia played in this.
- iii) How Padmore and Kwame Nkrumah put ideological Pan-Africanism to use at the 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress.
- iv) His role in formulating non-violent, positive action and African Socialism.

I will conclude with a study of Fanon's philosophy and opinions, with the bulk of attention given to his groundbreaking *The Wretched of the Earth*. Fanon's work is reflective of the changing tenor of the liberation movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in which revolutionary warfare and decolonization had become the dominant themes. I will focus on the following elements:

- i) Fanon's polemical argument that independence can only be achieved with violence and his meticulous analysis of a nascent revolution.
- ii) His repudiation of the ideological Pan-African socialism of Padmore on the grounds of its non-violent teachings and its emphasis on Pan-African rather than national culture.
- iii) His emphasis that the masses, and not the nationalist parties, are the force that drives a revolution.
- iv) His complicated relationship with Marxism.
- v) His thoughts on the national bourgeoisie, neocolonialism, and other struggles presented after independence.
- vi) His ideas about national culture and the native intellectual's responsibility in the revolution.

Though these men were of course influenced by one another and by their contemporaries, I have chosen to focus on them because I believe their differences in ideology outnumber their similarities. This enables us to gain a broader understanding of the liberation movement and its manifold facets. With such a complex problem, there will never be an easy or clear solution. The aim of this thesis is not to argue that any of these men had a definitive answer to the African problem, or that any of their ideas were superior to those of the others, but to show that each man responded admirably to the historical context he found himself in and, in doing so, slowly improved a situation that once looked hopeless. In analyzing these three key figures, I hope to make a contribution toward understanding the African liberation movement and the continent's ongoing search for identity.

Chapter I: Marcus Garvey

1.1 A race leader comes of age

After dropping out of school at the age of fourteen, Marcus Garvey found work as a printer's apprentice in Kingston to help support his family. Angered by pervasive economic and social inequities, he helped lead a printer's union strike in 1907. Three years later, he founded *Garvey's Watchmen*, a fiery periodical that quickly failed. He then moved to Costa Rica and served as a timekeeper on a banana plantation. While doing so, he was disgusted by the manner in which the lighter-skinned foremen exploited the black laborers. After traveling more around Central America, he became convinced of a universal truth that would color many of his philosophies for the remainder of his career: wherever whites and blacks were found together, the whites were certain to be exploiting the blacks. He was determined to change this, and traveled to London in 1912 with these thoughts fresh in his mind. There he familiarized himself with Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery* (1901)—a reading experience that changed his life—and began to ask himself a number of questions: Where is the black man's government, he wondered. Where is his King, his president, his country, his army? When he couldn't answer these questions, he resolved to find his own solutions.

On July 15, 1914, Garvey sailed from Southampton, bound for his native Jamaica. His thoughts were racing:

The dreams of a continent-wide African Empire were firing his imagination. He saw before him a new world of black men, not peons,

serfs, dogs and slaves, but a nation of sturdy men making their impress upon civilization and causing a new light to dawn upon the human race. (Brisbane 258)

Upon his return to Jamaica, Garvey immediately founded an organization to which he gave the impressive name of The Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (later known simply as the UNIA, or the Association). The lofty and ambitious aim of this organization was to unite all the black peoples of the world into one great body and to establish a country and government that was completely their own. Garvey wrote to Booker T. Washington in America and informed him of the new organization and its goals. Washington responded with an invitation to come to the United States for a speaking tour. With the wheels in motion, Pan-Africanism was, indeed, on the march.

To his disappointment, however, Garvey soon discovered that Jamaica was no place to carry out his grandiose plans. He could not incite the natives to action. According to Howard Cruse, this had to do with a fundamental difference in the political consciousness of West Indians and Americans:

West Indians are essentially conservatives fashioned in the British mold. Thus it has been observed that West Indian radicalism and militancy, especially in the United States, has been an outlet for a lack of 'revolutionary' elbow room in the black West Indies, where slow reform rather than radical social change has been the tradition. (119)

Sensing this resistance to radical change, Garvey sailed to the United States in 1916, hoping his designs would find a more willing audience. After achieving some fame by speaking on street corners, he caught his big break in 1917 when—while in

attendance at a gathering in a Harlem church—he was invited by the chairman to speak a few words to the large crowd that had gathered. He spoke more than a few words. His passion, eloquence and magnetic personality captured the attention of the crowd, and his fame in New York grew rapidly. He then decided the time was right to unfurl his plans for the UNIA to black America. His ideas were immediately embraced, and this reinforced his belief in the organization’s founding principles (which will be expounded upon later). “His doctrines were hailed in America, whereas they were laughed at and rejected in Jamaica. Hence, rather than change them, the aims and ideals of the Association were to be high-lighted,” wrote Robert H. Brisbane in 1949 (259).

1.2 Success in the United States

In light of Garvey’s failure in his homeland, it’s interesting to consider the factors that led to his almost immediate success in the U.S. The period following the First World War was a critical one for the American black man. During the war, hundreds of thousands had migrated from the south to fill the demand for labor in the great industrial cities of the north. Many had a difficult time making the transition from a slow, traditional agricultural way of life to the hustle and bustle of a crowded urban existence. Moreover, when jobs became less plentiful after the war, race conflicts flared up in cities throughout the country (there were about 25 riots in the summer of 1919). Meanwhile, due largely to the second coming of the Ku Klux Klan, the number of lynchings began to mount. Revived in 1915, the Klan made little progress during the war, but in 1919 became a force to be reckoned with as its

cells rapidly spread throughout the country. There were 38 lynchings in 1917, 64 in 1918, and 83 in 1919. And, as Ben F. Rogers notes, “if it was disturbing to note the increase in number, it was even more disturbing to note the increasing sadism of the mobs who conducted them. In 1919, eleven Negroes were burned alive” (154).

Frustrated in their search for a promised land, crowded into the black ghettos, and needing to confront race riots, lynchings, and the burgeoning Klan, American blacks desperately needed leaders. After turning to Booker T. Washington (who died in 1915) for a generation, they needed someone new, and thus “these oppressed citizens welcomed a Moses who would lead them to a new Canaan. Garvey was their man” (Record 393). As Birgit Aron phrases it in “The Garvey Movement: Shadow and Substance”:

Into this situation came a man from Jamaica who promised leadership to the blackest and most humble among the Negroes by appealing to blackness as a virtue. He painted a glowing picture of national redemption in Africa. He was a man of fiery zeal and moving eloquence reminiscent of the religious prophets of old. (341)

Garvey was able to instill a sense of racial pride that the black masses, beaten down by the white man for 400 years, sorely needed. The word "black," which had long been used as an epithet even by the darkest-skinned blacks themselves, was to be dignified. He called for all men of African blood to refer to themselves as black men rather than as Negroes or colored men. Furthermore, he said what his audience wanted to hear, and what they heard from no other source (and certainly not from lighter-skinned intellectuals like DuBois): that although the plight of black people might be wretched today, they were destined to inherit the earth, because blackness

was not the symbol of all that was loathed and disgraceful but rather of beauty, grace, and righteousness. Garvey's message proclaimed this in dramatic terms that the masses could understand. Moreover, he appealed to the masses because his plan addressed their concrete needs, offering them a way out of the vicious circle of poverty, racism, violence, and deceit. After thousands of black soldiers had traveled a great distance to fight for democracy in World War I, only to come back to even worse racism and economic and social conditions, the masses were ready to receive a stronger stance and message than the NAACP, with its cautious and careful advocacy of social progress, could offer. As a Southern woman who joined the UNIA said, "Garvey is giving my people backbones where they had wishbones" (Blaisdell 3).

Garvey's singular presence, combined with the eagerness of the masses to accept a new savior, enabled him to amass an enormous following in a short period of time. He has been described as "possessing the best attributes of both Booker Washington and Du Bois. He had Du Bois's radical spirit and Washington's rapport with the common person" (Warren 18). In December 1920, a mere four years after Garvey had confidently strode into Harlem, an authoritative New York periodical commented upon him as follows:

The most striking new figure among American Negroes is Marcus Garvey. His significance lies in the fact that he embodies and directs a new spirit among Negroes. Whatever may happen to his grandiose schemes of finance and politics, he is the best point at which to study what is going on inside the heads of the ten million colored people in the United States. They are doing and thinking many things that are unsuspected by the public at large. (Talley 153)

In that brief period of forty-eight months Garvey had founded and was leading the largest and best-known organization of blacks ever to exist in the Western Hemisphere. He was publishing a newspaper enjoying the largest circulation for black publications anywhere and the name Marcus Aurelius Garvey evoked an unprecedented sense of hope for blacks in the new world as well as those in Africa.

1.3 Taking the next step—plans for Africa

In August, 1920, Garvey, claiming that four million blacks paid dues to the UNIA, believed the time had come to put his plan in action. The manpower and devotion now existed, he believed, to transform abstract concepts into concrete realizations. Earlier that year, he issued through his newspaper, the *Negro World*, a call for a convention of blacks from all parts of the world to meet in New York City for the entire month of August. During the last days of July, 1920, African tribesmen, blacks from South and Central America, Canada and the West Indies, and black Americans enthusiastically greeted each other in Harlem on what was for them a historic occasion. In the month that followed, these delegates diligently outlined plans for the establishment of an actual Black state in Africa. The convention finally adopted a declaration of independence containing sixty-six articles, a tri-color of red, black and green (the colors of the Ethiopian flag) and a universal anthem. Garvey was designated His Excellency, the Provisional President of Africa. And since the logic of an all-black state called for a black god, the convention set up the African Orthodox church with George A. McGuire as its first Archbishop. The Convention of 1920 was the first of a series of such gatherings sponsored by the UNIA annually

through 1925. Brisbane describes this five-year period as “the greatest surge of black nationalism the civilized world has ever witnessed” (262).

1.4 African utopia

The picture Garvey painted of Africa in his Back-to-Africa exhortations was very much a utopia. By definition, a utopia is an ideally perfect place, especially in its social, political, and moral aspects—and that is the depiction Garvey gave of Africa. Central to this characterization was the idea that Africa was once great, and, through repatriation, could again rise to greatness. This idyllic conception of Africa’s heritage will be explored more fully in the next section, but for now let us consider the words Garvey used to inspire his oppressed followers:

So Negroes, I say, through the Universal Negro Improvement Association, that there is much to live for. I have a vision of the future, and I see before me a picture of a redeemed Africa, with her dotted cities, with her beautiful civilization, with her millions of happy children, going to and fro. (“The Future as I See It”)

Garvey also made it clear in his speeches that his goal was not simply to exalt one segment of the black race, but to combine the African diaspora from all corners of the globe in an effort to elevate the entire race. This would not be done merely by gathering and discoursing about racial pride, but by actually establishing a black empire. His doctrine therefore depended upon physical space for a nation as heavily as it relied upon racialism. These tenets will be examined later in the paper, but for now consider the element of black nationalism present in the following description of

his goals for the black race:

The masses of Negroes in America, the West Indies, South and Central America are in sympathetic accord with the aspirations of the native Africans. We desire to help them build up Africa as a Negro Empire, where every black man, whether he was born in Africa or in the Western world, will have the opportunity to develop on his own lines under the protection of the most favorable democratic institutions. (“Africa for the Africans”)

While Garvey was a Christian himself, and wished to promote a conscientious Christian worship among the native tribes of Africa, he also recognized that religion—with its promise of eternal afterlife to the pious—had long been used as a tool to oppress and exploit the black man. So while he encouraged his devotees to continue to strive for spiritual rewards, he also urged them not to ignore the possibility that a black paradise could exist on earth. Aron notes:

Instead of the Heavenly Kingdom, Garvey offered a microcosmic worldly empire complete with a King-President, an aristocracy, a church, an army, a nurses' corps, national hymns, legends of ancient African glory, businesses—in fact all the symbols of a nation except the nation itself. (341)

Finally, in his blueprint of a utopian African empire, Garvey emphasized that such a nation would never aim to control and exploit the natives. He advised those who had any aims of doing so to seek another organization:

It is hoped that when the time comes for American and West Indian Negroes to settle in Africa, they will realize their responsibility and

their duty. It will not be to go to Africa for the purpose of exercising an over-lordship over the natives, but it shall be the purpose of the Universal Negro Improvement Association to have established in Africa that brotherly co-operation which will make the interests of the African native and the American and West Indian Negro one and the same, that is to say, we shall enter into a common partnership to build up Africa in the interests of our race. (“Africa for the Africans”)

To do otherwise, he posited, would run contrary to everything the Pan-African movement stood for. Throughout his career, Garvey tenaciously defended this idea (to the point where it may have derailed his plans in Liberia, as we will see later). Williams writes, of Pan-Africanism as whole, “there has been no Pan-Africanist notion advanced by any of its practitioners that has made a claim to land outside or inside Africa that required the eventual expulsion or political and economic subjugation of its indigenous inhabitants” (Williams, “Pan-Africanism and Zionism” 370).

1.5 Africa’s great past

A common thread of the work of Garvey and Du Bois was the need to assert the positive qualities of Africa’s past. This could not be done without first denouncing some of the commonly held ideas about African civilization. As Du Bois stated, “Among Negroes of my generation there was little inherited knowledge about Africa...but much distaste” (Du Bois qtd. in Warren 17). Most African-Americans had been inculcated to believe that their ancestors were savage,

monstrous, subhuman creatures devoid of language, art, and culture. Hegel's infamous introduction to *Philosophy of History*, first published in 1837, was characteristic of the contemporary "scholarship" regarding Africa. He claimed:

Africa proper, as far as history goes back, has remained for all purposes of connection with the rest of the world, shut up. It is the gold land compressed within itself, the land of childhood which lying beyond the days of self-conscious history is undeveloped in the dark mantel of night. The Negro. . . exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality, all that we call feeling, if we would comprehend him. We leave Africa never to mention it again for it has no historical part of the world. It has no movement or development to exhibit. Historical movement in it, that is in its Northern part, belongs to the Asiatic or European world. This history of the world travels from East to West, for Europe is absolutely the end of history, Asia the beginning. (Hegel qtd. in Warren 17)

In the face of such a dehumanizing, dismissive attitude about the African continent—and, by extension, the entire black race—it was clear that blacks the world over needed to hear that this was patently and shockingly untrue. Garvey took it one step further by declaring that the opposite was, in fact, true. And while he was not the first to cry that the opposite was true—that Africa did indeed have a glorious past and that much of its culture had actually been appropriated by Europe—the strength of his voice and the size of his audience enabled his message to resonate the loudest.

Two major strands formed the core of Garvey's theory about Africa. First, he believed that African civilization was the first of all world civilizations to develop beyond the primitive stage, and that it had attained unrivaled peaks before the avaricious Europeans destroyed and plundered it. Second, he held that “there was nothing inherently inferior about the African race, which, given time, proper aid, and education, would rise again to untold splendor” (Fein 446). Garvey thus called upon capable black men to return to Africa to fulfill the historic mission of recivilizing their misguided and exploited African brothers. Trumpeting the original supremacy of African civilization, Garvey wrote:

To read the histories of the world, people and races, written by white men, would make the Negro feel that he never amounted to anything in the creation. . . . We are satisfied to know, however, that our race gave the first great civilization to the world, and that, for centuries, Africa, our ancestral home, was the seat of learning; and black men, who were only then fit for the company of the gods, were philosophers, artists, scientists, and men of vision and leadership, while the people of other races were groping in savagery, darkness, and continental barbarism. (Garvey qtd. in Garvey, Amy 70)

The black man's past in Africa, though little known to the masses, was to be glorified and celebrated. Instead of feeling inherently inferior to the great white race, the black man needed to understand that he came from greatness—and, as the course of history is cyclical, would someday return to greatness. With hard work and faith, he urged, this reversion to the glorious days of yore could be attained within their

lifetime. With this in mind, blacks mustn't lose hope and must keep their eyes fixed firmly on the prize:

But, when we come to consider the history of man, was not the Negro a power, was he not great once? Yes, honest students of history can recall the day when Egypt, Ethiopia and Timbuktu towered in their civilizations, towered above Europe, towered above Asia. When Europe was inhabited by a race of cannibals, a race of savages, naked men, heathens and pagans, Africa was peopled with a race of cultured black men, who were master in art, science and literature; men who were cultured and refined; men who, it was said, were like the gods. Even the great poets of old sang in beautiful sonnets of the delight it afforded the gods to be in companionship with the Ethiopians. Why, then, should we lose hope? Black men, you were once great; you shall be great again. ("The Future as I See It")

1.6 Liberia—putting the plan in action

Having commanded a massive following, and having fully propounded his beliefs and ideas about Africa, it was time for Garvey to take the next step: to carry out his plans and establish a state in Africa. Liberia, which was founded—under the auspices of the American Colonization Society—by freed slaves in 1822, was the chosen destination. Garvey proclaimed, "I am saying to the men and women of the Negro race there is but one salvation for the Negro as I see it now, and that is the building of Liberia, West Africa" (Garvey qtd. in Blaisdell 32). Garvey's connection

with Liberia dated from May 1920, when his emissary, Elie Garcia, visited the Republic and explained the aims and schemes of the UNIA to President C. D. B. King, and how Liberia fit into such plans. The proposal was to transfer UNIA headquarters to Liberia, aid the Liberian government with money to build hospitals and schools, pay Liberia's debts, and, most importantly to the designs of the UNIA, settle New World blacks in the Republic. The settlers would then assist in the development of Liberia's agricultural and natural resources in an effort to further bolster a stagnant economy. In exchange for financial assistance and labor, Garcia asked the Liberian government to grant the Association land to settle the immigrants, and to establish agricultural, business, and industrial enterprises. The response was overwhelmingly positive. The Liberian authorities warmly received Garcia's proposal, and Liberia's Secretary of State, Edwin J. Barclay, also pledged that his government would cooperate with the Association.

At the time of Garcia's visit in 1920, Liberia contained slightly more than half a million people, the vast majority of whom were indigenous African peoples, who predominantly inhabited the remote and less-developed parts of the Republic. The rest, numbering around 5000, were Americo-Liberians, who were settled in a smattering of towns near the coast. These were mostly the Afro-American immigrants and their descendants who had settled in Liberia annually from 1822 to the 1900s, but they also included several hundred Afro-West Indians from Barbados and their descendants who had emigrated to the Republic in 1865 (Akpan 107).

Despite Garcia's auspicious trip to Liberia, things quickly went awry. Within a few months, shortage of funds, dissension among UNIA staff, and suspicion of some of the intentions of the Association by the Americo-Liberians began to derail

plans. By July 1921, all UNIA representatives had returned, dissatisfied, to the United States. In spite of this, the Liberian government continued to show interest in working with the Association, and this encouraged Garvey—a few years later—to send a delegation of three men to Liberia in December 1923 to finalize preparations for settling between 20,000 and 30,000 families. Garvey hoped to send these settlers in a two-year period, beginning in September 1924. After the delegation was given a warm reception, and after several meetings with President King and his cabinet, a local committee of seven prominent Liberians was appointed by the President, and charged with the duty of coordinating the activities of the Association in Liberia.

Having received approbation, Garvey dispatched a team of technicians to Liberia in May 1924 to survey a site granted in Maryland county, and to erect buildings there for accommodating the immigrants. Yet when the technicians arrived in Liberia, they were instantly seized and detained by the Liberian government, and on July 31 1924, they were deported. Soon afterwards, the Americo-Liberian government denounced the Association.

1.7 Liberia—what went wrong?

In order to grasp what led to such an abrupt change of heart for the Liberian government, it's important to first understand that the Americo-Liberian leaders never cared about fulfilling Garvey's plans for a Pan-African empire. As M.B. Akpan wrote in 1973, "Garvey's plans to redeem the Negro race from its oppressors everywhere held but little attraction for the Liberian rulers" (120). They were far more concerned with defending their privileged position against intruders and

maintaining their role as parasites who thrived by exploiting the indigenous African population. As things stood, the indigenous Africans, who outnumbered the settlers in a ratio of almost 100 to 1, were largely denied political privileges, such as the franchise and employment in the government service, by the settler ruling class. In essence, they were defacto subjects of the Americo-Liberians, although in theory political privileges were open to settlers and indigenous Africans alike. The greatest fear of the ruling class was that any substantial extension of the franchise to the African peoples would enable the natives to overwhelm them politically, and in consequence take control of the government. Garvey's plans clearly would have disrupted this hierarchy. As Akpan notes, "they were therefore prepared to suppress ruthlessly any person or organization which threatened to end this exploitation" (108). Though unaware of this at the time, Garvey later declared that he fell out of favor with Liberian leaders, and that they banned his movement, because of apprehensions that he would not collaborate with them "to exploit the labour of the unfortunate blacks and build up a class distinction, based on education of the wrong sort..." (Akpan 126).

Furthermore, with dire economic problems, a desire to remain in the good graces of the United States government, and an ever-present fear of neighboring colonial powers, the Liberian rulers were in no position to show an active concern for the broader issue of improving the condition of peoples of African descent throughout the World. Hence President King's remark that Liberians "fully realize and are conscious of the fact that Liberia's immediate objective is toward nationalism and not racialism, the making of a nation and not a race" (King qtd. in Akpan 120).

In these circumstances, the probability that Liberian rulers would continue to work with Garvey and the UNIA depended primarily on three factors: the economic outlook of Liberia, the United States' attitude toward Liberia's connection with the Association, and the attitude of neighboring, colonial powers toward the Association. The Liberian economy, which was in a very bad state when negotiations began with the Association in 1920, was beginning to show signs of life without the aid of the Association. The primary reason for this was the government's decision to lease a huge tract of land to American Harvey S. Firestone for rubber production. The American government, meanwhile, certainly did not look kindly upon the Association. The government believed that the movement was breeding hatred among whites and blacks and could ultimately disrupt the fragile stability of American society. In addition, Britain and France, which had colonies nearby, strongly resented the Association's anti-imperialism stance, and Liberia was loath to alienate these powers.

These three factors, combined with perhaps the most important aspect of all—the ruling Americo-Liberian class's fear that the Association's immigrants might challenge its anchored position and seek to end its exploitation of the indigenous population—conspired to derail Garvey's grand plans. In July 1924, the tension between the Liberian Government and the UNIA came to a head. The group of Association engineers assigned to construct housing was arrested and deported the moment their ship reached Monrovia, and the police seized \$50,000 worth of construction materials meant for the black settlers. According to Frank Chalk, "It was almost as if Garvey had been tricked into going ahead with his plans and the Liberian advisory committee had served as the decoy" (129).

This betrayal was devastating to Garvey and his movement, and the consequences were irreversible. Akpan sums it up in the following manner:

By thus shutting its doors to the Association, the Liberian Government effectively destroyed the Association's back-to-Africa movement. While Garvey's opponents in America, and European colonial powers in Africa, understandably applauded President King's action as 'wise', 'courageous', and 'statesman-like', modern Africanists regard it as a betrayal of the nobler and wider interest of African peoples in favour of the narrow and selfish interest of a corrupt and callous oligarchy. (126)

1.8 The underpinnings of Garvey's racial ideology—exploiting the color caste system to enlist the masses

It's important to recognize that Garvey struggled to separate his people not only from the evils of white oppression, but also from what he perceived to be an equally dangerous obstacle: the superior role light-skinned blacks played in the social hierarchy. A general thesis has developed that posits that Garvey's ambition, his overwhelming assertiveness, and even his bombast were essentially the products of a pathological compensation for the evils of low-caste to which he and the other blacks in the West Indies were restricted. Typical of this reasoning is the following:

He [Garvey] grew up under a color caste system—white, mulatto and black—which even as a boy aroused his resentment, not only against

whites but mulattoes as well, and it was this resentment that was to be translated into one of the cardinal doctrines of the movement he was to lead. (Roi 68)

In effect, Garvey was able to turn the tables and use the invective that light-skinned blacks—such as is his adversary, W.E.B. DuBois—hurled at him to his own advantage. For example, when A. Philip Randolph called Garvey "a nuisance from the mudsill of Jamaican society, a supreme Negro Jamaican jackass who represented the views of the ignorant Negro immigrant only," Garvey used this description of himself time after time to demonstrate that the greatest enemy of the blacks in America were not the white people, but mulattoes or light-skinned blacks such as DuBois (Brisbane 260). As Brisbane notes:

Indeed, it is hardly an overstatement to say that much of Garvey's success can be attributed to the existence of what he called the color-caste system not only between the whites and blacks, but that existing within the Negro race itself. Since the days of slavery, the mulatto or light-skinned Negro has enjoyed a position in America much below that of the whites generally, but substantially above that of the blacks or near blacks. (260)

In the wake of slavery, mulattoes retained and even expanded their position above the darker blacks. Superior education and culture placed them at an advantage from the start, and they seized this advantage to fill almost all positions of leadership within the race. Economically, they made up the heart of the Negro bourgeoisie. Often their arrogance and intolerance toward the "thick-lipped, kinky-haired Negro" exceeded that of the whites, and within two generations after emancipation, "they

had erected a 'color-caste' system within the race somewhat analogous to that prevailing in India. The blacks, of course, were the untouchables" (Brisbane 261).

Consequently, to whatever extent the race was united against the whites, there was clearly a lack of genuine unity within the race itself. From this deeply entrenched, color-caste division within the black race sprung forth Garvey's greatest appeal to the black masses. Garvey made it clear that he had made a conscious decision not to be a bourgeoisie native intellectual, but to fight for the oppressed masses. In a 1923 article entitled "The Negro's Greatest Enemy", he declared:

I had to decide whether to please my friends and be one of the "black-whites" of Jamaica, and be reasonably prosperous, or come out openly and defend and help improve and protect the integrity of the black millions and suffer. I decided to do the latter, hence my offense against "colored-black-white" society in the colonies and America.

(Garvey qtd. in Blaisdell 4)

Garvey buttressed this appeal to the masses with his insistence that blacks everywhere needed to unite and form an actual African nation, and rode this platform to fame. There is no doubt that his attacks on whites and mulattoes, his advocacy of black and Pan-African ideals, and his aggressive nature constituted a dangerous racist ideology. His critics—of which there were many—attacked him for this position, claiming that it undermined the goal of unification for African peoples. Looking back at Garvey's career in 1963, Richard B. Moore—who had violently denounced Garveyism as a member of the African Blood Brotherhood in the 1920s—stated that "the constant attacks which Marcus Garvey made upon people of both African and European ancestry, whom he derisively called 'the hybrids of the

Negro race' did not conduce to the unifying of all people of African descent'' (Moore qtd. in Cruse 119). Nevertheless, millions of blacks were ready to accept any doctrine that lifted their abject spirits. Garvey made them believe that DuBois was not really working for them, but was simply exercising another, more subtle form of racial domination:

The Negro has had enough of the vaunted practice of race superiority as inflicted upon him by others, therefore he is not prepared to tolerate a similar assumption on the part of his own people. In America and the West Indies, we have Negroes who believe themselves so much above their fellows as to cause them to think that any readjustment in the affairs of the race should be placed in their hands for them to exercise a kind of an autocratic and despotic control as others have done to us for centuries. ("Africa for the Africans")

It is easy to see, then, how a stark divergence of ideologies developed between Garvey's UNIA and the intellectual movement that DuBois headed. Garvey abhorred DuBois' idea that African-Africans could lift themselves up and share the spoils of white America. He considered this an impossibility. Separation was the only answer. As Chalk notes:

Marcus Garvey exhorted black Americans to detach themselves from the snares of white institutions and join him in a determined effort to create a black Zion in Africa, a place to which Negroes could "look for help and support, moral and physical, when ill treated or abused for being Negroes." On the other hand, W.E.B. DuBois advised the Negro to migrate North and join his Northern brother in the struggle

for education and ultimate equality within white society. In the nineteen twenties, DuBois' program was based on the assumption that the "Talented Tenth" among American Negroes could lift the mass of the Negro people to a higher plateau of merit, where they could share with white Americans the benefits of an affluent society. (135)

1.9 Racialism

It should be clear by now that Garvey's Back-to-Africa platform was based upon racialism and nationalism. Racialism came first, as before Garvey could unfold his plan for a united African empire, it was critical for him to instill a universal sense of black pride. His first objective, therefore, was to make blacks everywhere understand that they shared a common heritage and must therefore regard one another as brothers:

Everybody knows that there is absolutely no difference between the native African and the American and West Indian Negroes, in that we are descendants from one common family stock. It is only a matter of accident that we have been divided and kept apart for over three hundred years, but it is felt that when the time has come for us to get back together, we shall do so in the spirit of brotherly love. ("Africa for the Africans")

Having established this sense of togetherness and belief in racial purity, it was then critical to make the masses understand that blackness was a virtue, and not a

deficiency. He did this by appealing to the past, and by rewriting black history in a manner that celebrated this glorious past. As Record explains:

He reinterpreted the scriptures to demonstrate the Negro-ness of the prophets and the disciples. And in time he proved to his own satisfaction that Christ was a Negro. Even God, he thought, was black. This led not only to the idea that the Negro was the equal of other races; it produced a theory of Negro superiority. (397)

Because of his belief in the inherent differences between the races, Garvey maintained that separatism was the only way to solve the world's great race problem:

There is no other way to avoid the threatening war of the races that is bound to engulf all mankind, which has been prophesied by the world's greatest thinkers; there is no better method than by apportioning every race to its own habitat. The time has really come for the Asiatics to govern themselves in Asia, as the Europeans are in Europe and the Western World, so also is it wise for the Africans to govern themselves at home, and thereby bring peace and satisfaction to the entire human family. ("Africa for the Africans")

This belief in racial superiority, and the desire for black separatism, led Aron to declare that "Garveyism, in brief, is a Negro racist philosophy" (337). Aron highlights the movement's disapproval of social democracy or ethnic integration in the United States—namely the free social and cultural intercourse between white and colored peoples—and also notes that Garveyism strongly rejects miscegenation between the two races and advocates the creation of black businesses as a step towards national redemption in Africa, concluding: "Its goals are somewhat similar

to those of the Zionists for the Jews: a national home for the Negro race and the revival of a Negro culture” (Aron 337).

Garvey therefore viewed all integrationists as enemies of the race. In 1921, he declared, “All true Negroes are against social equality” and that “all races should develop along their own lines” (Garvey qtd. in Rogers 160). Three years later, he echoed these statements when he said the UNIA believed in the “social and political physical separation of all people to the extent that they promote their own ideals and civilization” (Garvey qtd. in Rogers 160). For this reason—in what is one of the more controversial aspects of Garvey’s legacy—he actually supported the intentions of the Ku Klux Klan, believing that its goals were compatible with those of the UNIA. In 1924 he expressed the opinion that the Klan was useful because as it increased in strength and intolerance, it would encourage blacks to join the Back-to-Africa movement. As one delegate of the UNIA put it, “the Jews were driven to nationhood by the Egyptians; the Negroes would be driven to nationhood by the Klan” (Rogers 161).

In Atlanta in June 1922, Garvey actually had a two-hour meeting with Edward Clarke, the Klan’s second-in-command. Even before that, he had spoken favorably of the organization that “lynched race pride into the Negroes,” and had praised the Klan’s belief in segregation:

In our desire to achieve greatness as a race, we are liberal enough to extend to others a similar right...All races should be pure in morals and in outlook, and for that we, as Negroes, admire the leaders and members of the Anglo-Saxon clubs. They are honest and honorable in their desire to purify and preserve the white race even as we are

determined to purify and standardize our race. (Garvey qtd. in Gilroy 72)

Garvey believed that the transparent doctrine of the Klansman was to be preferred to the liberal because he was at least open and honest about his racial beliefs. At least one knew where one stood with a Klansman.

This affinity with white supremacists dismayed many of his followers and sympathizers and outraged his adversaries in the NAACP and the Communist Party. Robert A. Hill, the most prolific Garvey scholar, thinks it was Garvey's position on miscegenation and racial purity that halted the momentum of the UNIA and prevented it from extending beyond what Hill called the "propaganda stage", claiming that "the disintegration of the U.N.I.A. as a radical political force began the moment Garvey resorted to the ideology of racial purity" (Hill qtd. in Blaisdell ix).

Essentially, for Garvey the basic fact of life was race. This was a biological phenomenon and upon it depended the way men thought, what they believed, and the way they lived. To him, the world was clearly divided among racial lines. In a New York City speech in 1921, he declared:

You will realize as a serious group of people that you are living in a serious age, in a serious world—a world without sympathy—a world without charity, a world without love; a selfish, heartless world. This world in which we live is divided up into separate and distinct national groups. It is also divided up into great human groups. Each and every one of these national groups, and each and every one of these race groups is fighting for its own interests; fighting for those things that are dear to it. (Garvey qtd. in Blaisdell 37)

As Record states, “Because of this belief in the determinate character of race Garvey was led to the conclusion that racial integration was neither desirable nor possible” (398). While reformists spouted lofty rhetoric about social equality and while there might be intermittent joint efforts at the improvement of interracial relations, such movements, said Garvey, were destined to fail. In the end, the undeniable principle of racial purity would prevail and both blacks and whites would come to realize that integration was a human impossibility.

In truth, this strong current of racialism may have done much to derail plans with Liberia. Both President King and the *Liberian News*, the pro-government Liberian daily, justified Liberia's breach with the Association on the ground that it would show neighboring colonial powers and the world at large that “Liberia was not in sympathy with any movement 'which tends to intensify racial feelings of hatred and ill-will', and would remove a possible pretext from these powers for aggression against, and the partition of, Liberia” (Akpan 106).

That said, it must be noted that, according to Garvey, the purpose of the UNIA was not, as adversaries claimed, to create discord and discontent between the races. The idea was not to hate other people, said Garvey:

They have tried to make it appear that we are hostile to other races. This is absolutely false. We love all humanity. We are working for the peace of the world which we believe can only come about when all races are given their due. (Garvey qtd. in Blaisdell 8)

1.10 Nationalism

The second element of importance in Garvey's thought was the idea of nationalism. As Darren Davis and Ronald Brown note:

Marcus Garvey in the 1920s transformed the ideology of black nationalism into a mass protest movement. Garveyism stood for African nationalism; black superiority; antipathy toward whites; and foremost, a desire to create an African homeland for all blacks. (241)

Broadly defined, nationalism is a system of thought that has, at its core, two major components: a sense of political unity, consciousness of identity, or a common goal; and a desire for political self-determination. Garvey's UNIA clearly met these conditions. Within this broad belief system, nationalism may also involve a quest for a set of rights for the self-designed members of the nation, including, at a minimum, territorial autonomy or sovereignty (Davis and Brown 240). According to Lowell W. Barrington:

Control over one's own nation-state is a goal for most nationalists.

Less idealistic nationalists may realize that an independent state is not practical and seek something less than complete territorial sovereignty. (Barrington qtd. in Davis and Brown 240)

Garvey, who would stop at nothing short of an independent African state, was clearly not one of these "less idealistic nationalists". Through his travels, he had been impressed with the special treatment received by the subjects of the major national powers in the colonial areas. He saw the dominant position of the white race in world affairs, due not to its superiority of race, but to the fact that the principle of race was

upheld by national states with strong military and political forces at their disposal. The black man, he said, would never achieve his rightful place of greatness unless he could create in his historic homeland a powerful nation that would be able to protect the interests of blacks everywhere. In September 1923 he wrote: “We believe that the black people should have a country of their own where they should be given the fullest opportunity to develop politically, socially and industrially” (Garvey qtd. in Blaisdell 8). Blacks therefore needed to return to Africa and rebuild the great culture that once was theirs. They were to construct a new economy based on manufacturing, trade, and commerce, and to build a powerful nation backed by military clout that would command the respect of all nations and races everywhere. As Record writes, “Thus for Garvey, Negroes were not only a pure and distinct race with basic biological features of their own: they were a nation or at least an incipient nation which would in time come into its full flower” (397-398).

Implicit in these beliefs was the idea that the United States was simply not the black man’s country. Above all, the black man desperately needed to stop his futile beating against the solid walls of American race prejudice. If the white man claimed this nation as his alone, then by all means give it to him, said Garvey:

The professional Negro leader and the class who are agitating for social equality feel that it is too much work for them to settle down and build up a civilization of their own. They feel it is easier to seize on to the civilization of the white man and under the guise of constitutional rights fight for those things that the white man has created. Natural reason suggests that the white men will not yield them, hence such leaders are but fools for their pains. Teach the

Negro to do for himself and help him the best way possible in that direction. (Garvey qtd. in Garvey, Amy 43)

Garvey claimed that the failure to provide the black man with his own nation would result in catastrophe: “We believe that with the rising ambition of the Negro, if a country is not provided for him in another 50 or 100 years, there will be a terrible clash that will end disastrously to him and disgrace our civilization” (Garvey qtd. in Blaisdell 8). As Fanon later would, he spoke of the fundamental human need for bread and warned what would happen when there was not enough to go around: “Do you know when you want bread and the other fellow wants it, when there is only one loaf—what is going to happen?” he asked. “Enmity and pressure is going to spring up and a fight will ensure” (Garvey qtd. in Blaisdell 12). Here Garvey seems to have underestimated humanity, but his words nonetheless serve as a testament to the severity of the race problem he encountered when he embarked upon his career as a race leader.

Garvey’s extreme nationalism was one of the most controversial aspects of his platform. Scholarly literature has often referred to nationalism as both a curse and a blessing. It is constructive in that it promotes a sense of identity, legitimizes different cultures and histories, calls attention to injustice and oppression, and is a psychological tool used to combat such injustice. But it is destructive in that it “breeds political and social intolerance and conflict,” with research demonstrating that “black nationalists were almost twice as likely to express anti-Semitic, including anti-white, sentiments than any other civil rights group and they were the most intolerant” (Davis and Brown 239).

It is because of this extreme nationalism, racialism, and militarism—and the manner in which many of Garvey’s followers worshipped him as more than a man—that historians often identify affinities between Garveyism and the fascist movements that arose in Europe prior to the Second World War. According to Tony Martin:

Not surprisingly, such fierce unswerving loyalty was often branded “fanaticism” by Garvey’s critics, and enemies did not hesitate to describe the style of leadership existing within Garvey’s provisional African nation as fascist. These accusations were helped along by a strain of violence that seemed to run among Garveyites...Garveyites, particularly in the United States, were often implicated in violent confrontations with rival persons and groups. (Martin qtd. in Blaisdell vii)

Interestingly, Garvey himself agreed with this idea later in his life in 1937, as he looked back upon his career three years before his death. “We were the first Fascists,” he declared. “We had disciplined men, women and children in training for the liberation of Africa. The black masses saw that in this extreme nationalism lay their only hope and readily supported it” (Garvey qtd. in Gilroy 70).

1.11 Did the Back-to-Africa movement stand a chance?

In light of Garvey’s failure in Liberia and the rapid decline of the UNIA that accompanied it, we must ask ourselves: Was the Back-to-Africa movement merely a utopia? As mentioned in the earlier discussion of Africa as a utopia, a utopia can be defined as an ideally perfect place, especially in its social, political, and moral

aspects. A secondary definition of utopia, however, is decidedly more cynical. It emphasizes the unattainable nature of a utopia, defining it as an impractical, idealistic scheme for social and political reform. Having examined Garvey's background, his opinions and philosophies, his meteoric rise to fame, the employment of his plans, and his subsequent decline, we are now prepared to ask: Was Marcus Garvey's Back-to-Africa scheme practicable, or did it merely follow in the tradition of the classical utopian visions that had begun with Plato and extended throughout the course of western civilization for thousands of years? Was it simply another case of a visionary demagogue fomenting the masses with quixotic rhetoric, or was the establishment of an African empire plausible? Unfortunately for Garvey and his following, history seems to serve on the side of the former. Garvey himself seemed acutely aware that his opponents would dismiss his aims as mere visionary schemes—Du Bois explicitly stated that “it is absurd to talk of a return to Africa, merely because that was our home 300 years ago” (Du Bois qtd. in Warren 18)—and took pains to dispel this notion:

I trust that the Negro peoples of the world are now convinced that the work of the Universal Negro Improvement Association is not a visionary one, but very practical, and that it is not so far fetched, but can be realized in a short while if the entire race will only co-operate and work toward the desired end. (Garvey qtd. in Gilroy 91)

If the entire race will only co-operate and work toward the desired end. One need not look far to realize that such a condition will never be satisfied. If the divisions within the black race in America did not convince Garvey of the impossibility of harmony within the *entire race*, then certainly the duplicitous

behavior of the black Americo-Liberians would have. Such a philosophy also has roots in Plato's *Republic*, in which Plato defines justice as being the principle that ensures the absolute stability of the state. When each man accepts his own station and understands that the interests of the individual are subordinate to the interests of the state, and thus works tirelessly and selflessly to promote the greatness of the state, a perfectly just and happy state is created. Garvey's nascent form of fascism sought a similar form of stability. As Gilroy notes, "Perhaps the most insidious element of the fascist imagination is its utopian desire for a simpler world characterized by sameness and certainty" (91). But just as Plato acknowledged that the *Republic* was an ideal, and not a practicable, state, so it seems that those surrounding the Garvey movement recognized the impossibility of a uniform, stable African state. Certainly Garvey's critics in America, with DuBois at the forefront, regarded his plans as hollow and unattainable. Akpan explicitly states, "In America, many of the critics and opponents of the Association derided its plans as visionary, escapist, and impracticable" (121). Light-skinned blacks found it difficult to believe how anyone—let alone millions of people—could blindly put faith in this scheme. Moreover, there is some question as to whether Garvey's *supporters* even believed in the fulfillment of his designs. Record goes so far as to remark: "My own impression is that Garvey's followers did not wholly believe that an African homeland was possible" (399). Moreover, it seems unlikely that even the Liberian government, who initially expressed such enthusiasm about the idea, thought repatriation on a grand scale was feasible. As Akpan notes, "To begin with, it would be hard to support any postulate that the Liberian authorities could not have believed that the colonization and development projects of the Association were practicable" (117).

While the motivations of the Liberian government for conspiring with the Association were clear (at least in the beginning), and it's easy to see why DuBois and other intellectuals derided Garvey's schemes, one has to wonder why millions of American blacks would back Garvey's movement if they doubted its viability. Record, for one, views their response to Garvey more as a protest against conditions at home, and as an outlet for the defeats and frustrations that had attended their migration from the South. Eugene Wolfenstein argues that the movement created a false sense of racial power that blacks desperately needed: "Garveyism—and Klannishness—create the feeling but not the fact of racial potency, new illusions as substitutes for new realities" (169). Others echoed the idea that the movement merely served as a form of escape from the wretched conditions the black man knew in America. Aron claims that "The movement allowed its followers to escape from a grim and frustrated reality into the dreamland of high status and romantic culture" (341). Charles S. Johnson further reflects this idea, proposing that blacks simply needed a mode of escape from the hell that was their reality, and that Garvey, with his fiery rhetoric and his glorification of blackness, provided the means for this escape:

The "Back to Africa Movement," tho visionary and perhaps utterly impossible of accomplishment, afforded a mental relaxation for the long submerged Negro peasantry. It was a dream—but the new psychology has taught us the utility, the compensatory value, of dreams. These might be expected to increase in intensity in direct proportion to the impossibility of conscious realization. Assuming, as we now must, the increased desires and aspirations of Negroes

and the correspondingly increased racial consciousness among white groups. what other mode of escape is possible? Balked desires, repressed longings, must have an outlet. This was an outlet.(435)

Meanwhile, E. David Cronon, in his biography of Garvey, blames Garvey's failure on his despotic leadership style and his poor financial management of the Black Star Line shipping company: "Garveyism was greatly handicapped by the fact that it always remained the personal crusade of a single leader whose autocratic methods and slipshod financial practices alienated much of the support the movement might otherwise have received" (Cronon qtd. in Blaisdell vii). His increasingly extreme racialism and nationalism also contributed to his decline. As he faded from the public eye in the 1930s, his ideas became more and more controversial. He did not exactly endear himself to the general public when, for example, he recommended in 1934 to readers of his magazine, *The Black Man*, that they ought to look at *Mein Kampf*, expressing his hope that one day the black race would produce its own Hitler and claiming that "Hitler has a lesson to teach and he is teaching it well" (Garvey qtd. in Blaisdell xi). Remarks such as these do, however, seem more the product of a desperate, defeated man than that of the fiery, tireless leader that emerged at the close of the First World War. None of this is intended to suggest that Garvey was merely a hopeless visionary who accomplished nothing of consequence, or that he has since faded into obscurity. Even his biggest detractors expressed a begrudging respect for his remarkable ability to lead. The American Communist Party may have attacked him on the basis of the extreme nationalism of his movement, with its emphasis on racialism and its overt antipathy to light-skinned African-Americans, but "nevertheless admired Garvey's extraordinary ability to

develop a mass constituency of support” (Young 220). One of his most outspoken critics, Richard B. Moore, remarked that “the Garvey movement did heighten and spread the consciousness of African descent on a wider scale than ever before” (Moore qtd. in Cruse 119). And although his negotiations with Liberia ended bitterly, the direct contact West Africans had with Garvey’s UNIA in the 1920s went a long way in establishing him as a pivotal figure in the African liberation movement. The ideology of his Black Zionism became nearly as famous in Africa as it was in the U.S., and the UNIA was, among native Africans, unquestionably the best known of contemporary African-American political movements (Langley in Young 220). Fellow Caribbean C.L.R. James later noted that “Garvey’s voice reverberated inside Africa itself” and also learned from Kenyan Jomo Kenyatta

that in 1921 Kenya nationalists, unable to read, would gather round a reader of Garvey’s newspaper, *The Negro World*, and listen to an article two or three times. Then they would run various ways through the forest, carefully to repeat the whole, which they had memorized, to Africans hungry for some doctrine which lifted them from the servile consciousness in which Africans lived. (James qtd.. in Young 220)

Garvey’s ideas from the 1920s onward influenced both Kenyatta’s aspirations for Kenya’s independence and the ideas of Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah, who later said that *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* “fired” his “enthusiasm” (Nkrumah qtd. in Blaisdell xi). Additionally, Michael O. West, who looks back at Garvey’s legacy in a 2002 study, argues that “the UNIA was easily the furthest-ranging political organization in the black world during the interwar years, both

geographically and ideologically” and that Garvey’s movement helped “fire the enthusiasm of two generations of African activists, including Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, all of whom would emerge as leading African nationalists in the post-World War II era” (336-337).

Chapter II: George Padmore

2.1 The lure of communism

While studying at Howard University in the U.S. in 1928, Malcolm Nurse took on the pseudonym of George Padmore in order to accommodate his increasingly active involvement with communism. Like many other radicals in the U.S. and Caribbean at the time, Padmore was drawn to communism for two elemental reasons. First, communists were fundamentally opposed to racism, and demonstrated this aversion by fighting for a modern society with universal equality and no racial discrimination. Second, they were the only international group that was politically devoted to national self-determination and the emancipation of Africans both in America and in the colonies (Young 224). Moreover, an endorsement of Marxism demonstrated a rejection of the most potent symbol of the West, capitalism, and was often an ideology arrived at in response to extreme racial discrimination. Tunteng notes of Padmore and other black Marxists: “Their pilgrimage to the East was an act of desperation; it became a necessity only after rejection in the West” (Tunteng, “Black Political Culture” 240).

During this period, Padmore had little time for prominent black leaders who rejected the Marxian analysis. He dismissed the work of Du Bois and Garvey, the leading black spokesmen in post-WWI America. In retrospect, this may seem unfair, as both men were presented with massive obstacles in America in the post-war period and fought tirelessly for black freedom for their entire adult lives. Du Bois

actually was a leftist activist and did in fact become a communist very late in his life, while Garvey, whose philosophy was driven by a racial rather than a class ideology, openly denounced the Communist Party. In his 1925 “Statement of Conviction”, he wrote: “I pray the day will never come for the Negro and America when the government falls into the hands of such representatives of communism. I would rather be dead than live under government administered by such characters (Garvey qtd. in Blaisdell 193). Rather, black capitalism—as outlined in his plans for Liberia—would be the key to building up Africa as a black empire. Garvey was fully committed to capitalism—“Capitalism is necessary to the progress of the world,” he declared, “and those who unreasonably and wantonly oppose or fight against it are enemies of human advancement”—and staunchly opposed to the non-racialism of communism (Garvey qtd. in Cruse 133). He was more concerned with uniting “all the Negro peoples of the world into one great body to establish a country and Government” in Africa (Garvey qtd. in Tunteng, “Padmore’s Impact” 34). Although he was undeniably a staunch Pan-Africanist, Garvey, who was born in Jamaica but flourished in America, was enmeshed in African-American politics, which have tended to be less Marxist in orientation than Caribbean and African politics. The extreme nationalism and racialism of Garvey’s platform was fundamentally at odds with communism’s non-racialism. This position was simply incompatible with that of Padmore, who, as a communist, held that:

there is only one way to eliminate all injustices: the overthrow of capitalism. Therefore, all oppressed racial, ethnic, and minority groups must join forces with the working classes of the developed countries in order to combat the common enemy. The notion that

change may be effected through other means, or indeed without a revolution, is anathema. (Tunteng, "Padmore's Impact" 33)

Padmore clung to this position for a considerable length of time after the First World War. Convinced that the black problem was essentially economic, and not racial, he denounced Garvey as a "decayed bombast" and Du Bois as a "petty bourgeois Negro intellectual" (Hooker qtd. in Tunteng, "Padmore's Impact" 34). He was particularly hostile toward Garvey, whose Universal Negro Improvement Association, though considerably weakened, was still a factor in the 1930s (whereas Du Bois' Pan-African movement was virtually extinct at the time). Padmore thus did his best to bring the remaining strands of Garveyism into disrepute, hoping to foster the alliance between blacks and working-class whites that Garvey so vigorously decried. He called Garveyism "the most reactionary expression in Negro bourgeois nationalism," and added that, in its class content, "Garveyism is alien to the interests of the Negro toilers. Like Zionism and Gandhism, it is merely out to utilize racial and national consciousness for the purpose of promoting the class interests of the black bourgeoisie and landlord" (Padmore qtd. in Tunteng, "Padmore's Impact" 34).

2.2 Communist activity in the United States

Padmore's early work with the Comintern, the international branch of the communist movement, primarily took place in the United States, and he quickly became a force within the party. According to Robert Hill, Padmore was "after 1927 the rising black star of the American Communist Party" (Hill qtd. in Chevannes 38). Vladimir Lenin had been pushing his party to specifically target black Americans

since the Comintern Congress of 1920. Regarded as the group with the greatest revolutionary potential in the U.S., blacks were considered a crucial strategic element for communist activity in the country. The Comintern therefore encouraged a radical leftist stance that integrated racial issues within the larger context of class struggle. Frustrated by what they perceived to be slow developments within the African-American community, the party, at the Sixth Comintern Congress of 1928, ordered its members to become more directly involved in the black liberation movement. But various mobilization efforts—most notably an infiltration of the Garvey Movement and an ill-fated attempt to establish an independent African-American state within the U.S.—met with little success. A major obstacle was, according to Robert Young, that “African-Americans often suspected that the Communist Party was only interested in them instrumentally, rather than because it was concerned with the problems and needs of African-Americans as such” (222).

In his work for the American Negro Labor Congress, Padmore encountered firsthand the complexity of creating inter-racial political unity among workers in the U.S. In addition to apprehension on the part of black workers, owing to the fact that whites dominated the party, white workers complicated the problem by maintaining racist attitudes (Young 224). Although many black Americans continued to esteem the Soviet Union’s exceptionally tolerant and equitable racial stance, the Communist Party never managed to flourish in the U.S. By the late 1940s Joseph McCarthy’s fervent assaults on communist activity had effectively ended the party’s run, which in turn eviscerated the influence of radicals (such as Du Bois and Paul Robeson) who had relied upon the link between communism and African-American activist politics.

2.3 Communist activity in Africa

Communist strategies were more effective in Africa. According to Young, “If it was the case that the Communist Party achieved comparatively little with (or for) African-Americans, it was much more successful in Africa than has been widely assumed” (226). Edward Thomas Wilson’s 1974 study *Russia and Black Africa before World War II* produces evidence that disputes the claim that minimal Comintern activism occurred in Africa before World War II. His documentation of this activity illustrates the great organizational success of the Communist Party’s grass roots campaign in many colonies, while also attesting to the extensive international links of the anti-colonial movements. It also provides a window into how the African liberation movements appropriated features of the Communist Party’s Marxist anti-colonialism and then creatively transformed them to fit their specific political models. This latter aspect was crucial in the formation of African socialism, which will be discussed in greater detail later.

Padmore and James W. Ford were summoned to the Soviet Union in 1930 by the Profintern, the Comintern’s trade union organization, to head the Department of Negro Propaganda and Organization, a division of the newly created International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers (ITUC-NW). They opened an office in the Kremlin and began publication of the renowned communist journal *The Negro Worker*. Later that year Padmore helped organize the first international conference of black workers in Hamburg, which was attended by Americans, Caribbeans, Latin Americans, and South and West Africans. The representatives did not confine their discussions to trade-union issues, instead taking the opportunity to expound upon the

abject condition of blacks everywhere. As Padmore noted the following year, examples included:

the expropriation of land by the imperialist robbers in Africa; the enslaving of toilers through Pass laws and other anti-labour and racial legislation in Africa; lynching, peonage and segregation in the United States; as well as unemployment which has thrown millions of these black toilers on the streets, faced with the spectre of starvation and death. (Padmore qtd. in Young 226)

Through the Profintern, Padmore quickly established connections with nationalists from all over Africa, including Jomo Kenyatta from Kenya, Garan Kouyate from the Sudan, Herbert Macaulay from Nigeria, E.F. Small from the Gambia, and I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson from Sierra Leone. Through these links, and through the illicit circulation of *The Negro Worker*, Padmore and his colleagues were able to aid in the development of significant political power bases in Africa, proliferate anti-colonial propaganda, and beget an impression of a global nexus of African resistance.

2.4 Padmore's break from the Communist Party

The Communist Party's work in Africa underwent an ideological change after 1933. Concerned with the rise of fascism in Germany, the party switched to a popular front strategy and called for a termination of anti-imperialist propaganda against Britain and France. Although Germany had no colonies in Africa at this point, Padmore was told that *The New Negro* was to declare that the fascists were the

new enemy of the African and that Britain and France were the friends of democracy. As Edward Johanningsmeier notes, what was “most alienating for CP-linked nationalists like...Padmore was the fact that the Comintern's anti-fascist alliances of the 1930s and after 1941 effectively ended its previous support for national liberation movements in British and French colonies” (173). Accordingly, the ITUC-NW in Moscow was disbanded and support for *The Negro World* was retracted. Padmore condemned this change in philosophy and found himself bounced from the party. He left Moscow for Paris, and then traveled to London, where his character was heavily assaulted by the British Communist Party.

Padmore’s move away from the Communist Party was to become one of the defining moments of his career as a race leader, and effectively highlighted the deficiency of applying doctrinaire communist principles to specifically African problems. According to Young, Padmore’s

break with the party brought out a feature that had always been a characteristic of African and Caribbean communism, and which it shared with many forms of tricontinental communism, namely the absence of doctrinal inflexibility so evident in western communist parties. (232)

Padmore’s move, then, underscored a trend that had already been developing—namely, that communist ideas were to be creatively adapted to local and national African needs, and not to be employed in a theoretical, immutable way.

2.5 Mussolini invades Ethiopia

Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 also played an important role in Padmore's work. As the only black country that had never been fully subjugated by European empires, Ethiopia was generally viewed as a beacon of hope by blacks around the globe. The country had crushed invading Italian forces in 1896, which was the first recorded victory of an African country over any European country. The 1935 invasion was not repelled so easily—the Italians occupied Addis Ababa and battles waged on for six long years—but at no time did Mussolini's forces conquer the entire country. It was this invasion of Ethiopia twice in a span of forty years that was, according to Douglas Mack, “the catalyst which focused “Garveyites” and other black people on Ethiopia...” (49). The latter incursion yielded the first example of a global reaction by the black diaspora, as anti-colonial nationalist groups sprung up around the globe. In London at the time, Padmore and other activists established the International African Friends of Abyssinia (IAFA), which formed links with support groups in the Caribbean and U.S. Modern communication systems enabled news of rebellious activity in one colonial nation to quickly spread to activist groups around the world, which facilitated the first forms of coordinated response. Frank Furedi notes:

The response of the Black Diaspora to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia showed at once the intensity of resentment towards imperialist domination and the aspiration of freedom. Ethiopia became a symbol of independence from Western control for the colonies, and their reaction to the invasion revealed a depth of passion which caught

everyone unawares. Throughout Africa, Black America and the Caribbean, the invasion became a *cause celebre*. What was unique about this response was its generalized character. This was probably the first instance of a Third-World reaction to an instance of Western intervention. (Furedi qtd. in Young 233-234)

Moreover, the invasion represented a further blow to communism's chances in Africa when it was revealed that the Soviet Union had supplied Mussolini with oil for the invasion. As a result of this discovery, Padmore became even more critical of Stalin's regime, and the League Against Imperialism—established by the Communist Party in 1929—suffered a sharp decline in support.

In 1937, members of the IAFA went on to form the International African Service Bureau (IASB) as a center for the struggle of African liberation, of which Padmore was chairman. The organization was leftist and its primary objective was to cultivate a distinctive African political identity. In what stands as further evidence of Padmore's ideological transformation, the IASB joined forces with Du Bois' Pan-African Congress and ultimately became the Pan-African Federation (essentially the British chapter of the Pan-African Congress movement). The Federation published the *International African Opinion* journal and several of its leading members turned out radical works in the late 1930s. Padmore himself produced *How Britain Rules Africa*—"a vigorous criticism of all forms of British government in Africa"—in 1936 and *Africa and World Peace* in 1937 (O.B. 458). Young writes:

As the radical political agenda of these books might indicate, the Pan-African Federation effectively made the same demands as the Pan-African Congress: for self-determination and independence for

African peoples and other 'subject races', equality of civil rights for African peoples and the abolition of all forms of racial discrimination. The demands were framed so as to be applicable to all Africans and peoples of African descent throughout the world. (234-235)

Later, in 1956, Padmore reflected on the union of Du Bois's Congress and his IASB—which paved the way for the monumental Manchester Pan-African Congress in 1945—and noted that it “was destined to have the most far-reaching consequences on Africa in the years following the Second World War” (Padmore qtd. in Young 235). Padmore deserves much of the credit for this, as he was the central figure in transforming Du Bois' academic, primarily middle-class movement into one that was practically geared toward the emancipation of Africa.

Padmore trumpeted the end of his hopes for the Communist Party in Africa when he declared, “It is high time for the Negroes to stop depending on other people to fight their battles” (Padmore qtd. Young 233). He did, however, continue to admire Soviet politics and carried on his work with many leftist activists. While his respect for Lenin remained strong over time, his disenchantment with Stalin caused him to further distance himself from the Communist Party. Though Padmore remained a Marxist to the end, he did not—as C.L.R. James did—move towards Trotskyism, but instead became a champion of the socialist ideals of Pan-Africanism. His assessment of his former political adversaries, Du Bois and Garvey, softened considerably. After moving to London in 1933, he referred to Du Bois as the “father of Pan-Africanism” and stated that Garvey “was undoubtedly one of the greatest Negroes since Emancipation, a visionary who inspired his race in its upward struggle from the degradation of centuries of slavery” (Padmore qtd. in Tunteng, “Padmore's

Impact” 35). Twenty years later, he called Du Bois “the distinguished and prophetic Afro-American scholar and champion of oppressed people,” and used his famous ‘color line’ quote to conclude an essay about the Mau Mau (Padmore 372). These quotes reflect Padmore’s ideological metamorphosis—namely, his move from communism to Pan-African socialism and his assertion that Africa needed a political philosophy that was not derived directly from either capitalism or communism. This new philosophical approach to the colonial problem would define the remainder of his life’s work, and “in many ways stands as an emblem of the shifts in the politics of left anti-colonialism from the 1920s to the 1960s” (Young 233).

2.6 Pan-Africanism

Though the concept of Pan-Africanism was articulated in Africa in the 1860s by Tiyo Soga, the term itself was actually first used by Trinidadian Henry Sylvester-Williams in London at the inaugural Pan-African congress in 1900. Williams, who organized the congress, used the term “to signify the underlying unity of the African continent and the vision of an independent, united Africa” (Andrain 5). The Pan-African movement, which flourished in the 1920s and 1930s with the aid of the Harlem Renaissance and *negritude*, underwent significant ideological changes as the Second World War approached. Tracing the course of the movement has become essential to understanding the context and significance of the rapid political and social changes that took place in Africa in the middle of the twentieth century. Padmore and the hugely influential African figure Kwame Nkrumah, a close friend who later appointed Padmore as his top adviser in Ghana, were largely responsible

for igniting the ideological transformation the movement underwent in the 1940s. Nkrumah had initiated contact with Padmore (in London at the time) after reading some of his writings on the colonial question, and the latter was to remain his mentor for more than a decade. Nkrumah was the channel that enabled Padmore's writings to have such a profound effect on African political thought. Nkrumah cites Padmore as his greatest influence: "From the beginning," he said, "I was impressed with his indomitable spirit and his profound dislike for colonialism and every kind of oppression and subjugation" (Nkrumah qtd. in Tunteng, "Padmore's Impact" 36). It is impossible to understand Africa's growth during this period without examining the contributions of these two men to Pan-Africanism.

Broadly speaking, the Pan-African movement epitomizes the ongoing African search for organization and community, and the quest for unity in the face of European-made boundaries that have sliced up the continent. Its advocates emphasize that individual nations must subordinate their own interests to those of the greater good. In doing so, they "stress the community of interests and experiences of Africans and thereby call attention to the political and social issues which transcend the various territorial nationalist movements" (Andrain 5). As a symbolic goal, Pan-Africanism attacks all forms of colonialism, parochial tribalism, and competitive, individual nation-states, and communicates an abstract concept of a united, independent Africa. Padmore articulated this symbolic vision in the following manner:

In such a Commonwealth, all men, regardless of tribe, race, colour or creed, shall be free and equal. And all the national units comprising the regional federations shall be autonomous in all matters regional,

yet united in all matters of common interest to the African Union.

This is our vision of the Africa of Tomorrow—the goal of Pan-Africanism (Padmore qtd. in Andrain 13).

Within the broad goal of African unity, we can, according to a study by Charles F. Andrain, classify the movement into three general approaches. The first form of Pan-Africanism seeks to achieve economic and social progress through functional unions. Though rapid economic development is a principal goal, insufficient water supplies, large stretches of barren land, and a miserable infrastructure provide new African states with an immense challenge. Fearing European control of capital and a subsequent slide into a neo-colonial state, “Pan-African spokesman stress the need for functional cooperation to bring modernization to a vast continent still largely undeveloped” (Andrain 6). The *Conseil de l’Entente*, the confederacy of the four West African states of Niger, Upper Volta, Dahomey, and the Ivory Coast—in which the allied states agreed to set up similar constitutions and form a common foreign policy, armed force, and economic policy—is one example of a pragmatic African union.

The second approach to Pan-Africanism is influenced by the principles of *negritude* and thus strives to foster a sense of cultural unity among relatively homogeneous peoples and to re-establish Africa’s pre-colonial cultural heritage. Senegal’s Leopold Senghor and Equatorial Africa’s Fulbert Youlou promoted these ideas in failed attempts to resurrect the ancient African kingdoms of Mali and Bakongo, respectively.

The third variety of Pan-Africanism (and the one this thesis is most concerned with) constitutes alliances motivated primarily by ideological

considerations. Nkrumah's (and thus to some extent Padmore's) Ghana and Sekou Toure's Guinea are the most radical examples of ideological Pan-Africanism. Unlike functional unions, which aim for economic and social progress in the present, and cultural alliances, which strive to reclaim a mythical African past, Pan-African ideologists devote themselves to complete African independence as a means for realizing the ultimate aim of continental unity.

2.7 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress

The ideological Pan-Africanism of Padmore and Nkrumah constituted the philosophical underpinnings of the historic 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress, which came about largely because of their feverish organizational activities. As the main organizers of the assembly, it should come as no surprise that the congress reflected the ideological leanings of these two men. Whereas the early conferences essentially called for colonial reform within the existing colonial structure, this congress had a far more militant agenda. The dominant themes were Marxian socialism and the colonial world. The congress, which coincided with the communist-led World Trade Union Conference and had a much greater African representation than the previous meetings—which had been dominated by intellectuals and reformers from the U.S.—“went much further politically than its predecessors and for the first time clearly stated and enunciated the demand for independence and self-determination for Africa within the terms of an explicitly African nationalist and socialist agenda” (Young 238). The time was right to make such demands. With much of the colonial world weakened in the aftermath of

WWII, the prospects for African independence were no longer merely a utopian dream. By this point, forces of nationalism had been bolstered in colonial areas around the world, and the majority of the delegates at the conference were young African nationalists. Nkrumah maintains that the congress participants were

practical men and men of action and not, as was the case at the four previous conferences, merely idealists contenting themselves with writing theses but quite unable or unwilling to take any active part in dealing with the African problem. Like Garveyism, the first four conferences were not born of indigenous African consciousness.

Garvey's ideology was concerned with black nationalism as opposed to African nationalism. (Nkrumah qtd. in Tunteng, "Padmore's Impact" 37)

The 1945 congress therefore strongly reflected the ideological shift from the African American-driven quest for racial unity—led by Garvey and Du Bois—to the Padmore/Nkrumah African-defined concept of Pan-Africanism: that which "associates itself with all forces of progress and goodwill regardless of nationality, race, color, or creed" (Padmore qtd. in Tunteng, "Padmore's Impact" 37). Padmore's line of thinking, which denounced racial chauvinism of any kind, was therefore far more African in orientation than the component of the black diaspora who would have liked to preserve the racial component of Pan-Africanism. By the time he settled in London in 1935, there is little doubt that Padmore's immediate concern was for the liberation of the entire continent of Africa:

For throughout the length and breadth of the once Dark Continent—from Egypt to South Africa, from Kenya to the Gold Coast, not to

mention the vast Central African territories of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland—the indigenous races are struggling to throw off the yoke of colonialism and achieve their rightful place as free nations in a free world. (Padmore 355)

Thus by 1945 Padmore had focused most of his attention on Africa, “and one way or another, he hoped that anti-colonial revolutions would explode in that continent” (Tunteng, “Padmore’s Impact” 38).

And so with the 1945 Pan-African Congress, the Pan-African movement had been fully transformed from a politically abstract movement vaguely concerned with racial nationalism into a direct expression of African nationalism. Nkrumah later commented that

It was this Fifth Pan African Congress that provided the outlet for African nationalism and brought about the awakening of African political consciousness. It became, in fact, a mass movement of Africa for the Africans. (Nkrumah qtd. in Young 238)

Moreover, the congress heralded a transfer in power: it was a clear signal that leadership would henceforth spring from the mother country and New World blacks would be relegated to a secondary position. As Ali Mazrui reflected in “Towards a Pan Africana” in 1967,

Pan Africanism as an allegiance to the African continent was born out of Pan Negroism as a commitment to the Negro race and the sectors of the Negro race which were brought together in this way, included the English-speaking Negroes of British West Indies, and the United States. What loosened the ties between Afro-Americans and Africans

was the emergence of independence as the paramount slogan for the African sector. (Mazrui qtd. in Mboukou 281)

For Padmore, who construed the devastating effects of the war as a prelude to the disintegration of capitalism and colonialism, the congress—though officially a meeting of blacks—stood for an alliance of the colonial world at large. Though the majority of the delegates were primarily concerned with their own nation's struggle for independence, the congress's declaration—"Colonial and Subject Peoples of the World—Unite"—certainly reflected the influence of Padmore, who had long considered the colonial world his constituency (Padmore qtd. in Tunteng, "Padmore's Impact" 37). Padmore's own Pan-Africanism had developed as a result of his disillusionment with communism and his heightening sense that Africa needed a form of socialism that was specifically African rather than merely socialist. He would later argue in *Pan-Africanism or Communism?: The Coming Struggle for Africa* (1957) that Pan-Africanism offers the best ideological alternative to communism on one side and tribalism on the other, stating that it "looks above the narrow confines of class, race, tribe, and religion, and seeks first the federation of regional self-governing countries and, ultimately, their amalgamation into a United States of Africa" (Grundy 685).

2.8 African Socialism

The association of socialism with Pan-Africanism was reified with the 1945 Pan-African Congress. Subsequently Pan-Africanism came to be identified formally not only with the ideals of Pan-Africanism but also with the politics of African

socialism (Young 238). This notion has become a fixed component of Pan-Africanism. In her essay “Socialist Sources of Pan-African Ideology”, Dorothy Nelkin identifies the three central tenets of Pan-African thought as African unification, black nationalism, and African Socialism, and contends that the socialism theme—particularly through the work of Du Bois and Padmore—has been “the unifying ideology” throughout the history of the Pan-African movement (Nelkin qtd. in Le Baron 273).

For the remainder of his days, Padmore vigorously argued for a distinctively African political ideology. In *Pan-Africanism or Communism*, published two years before his death, Padmore declared that the “greatest psychological mistake” made by the West is its failure to realize that African leaders are determined “to be mentally free from the dictation of Europeans, regardless of their ideology” (Padmore qtd. in Robinson 248).

African socialism has been defined in a number of different ways by a number of key figures over the course of the African liberation movement. While it has become increasingly apparent that no single definition can be comprehensive, the socialist typological framework provided by A. Fenner Brockway in 1969 helps us organize African socialist regimes into four major groups:

There has been a clash in Africa between the European intellectual sources of socialism and the influences of Africa’s social evolution. The result has been four trends in socialist theory which can be summed up as communism or Marxist-Leninism, African Marxism, African Pragmatic Socialism, and African Democratic Socialism. (Brockway qtd. in McCain, “Perceptions of Socialism” 47)

The Marxist-Leninists, where Padmore started out, were active in various trade union movements but never consolidated their power in any African regime. They shared the Soviet belief that the tenets of scientific socialism command in all circumstances. The three remaining socialist sets disputed the rigidity of orthodox socialism, preferring instead to formulate a hybrid political doctrine that, while Marxist-Leninist in orientation, is grounded in African traditions. The result, according to Anderson, von der Mehden, and Young in their study *Issues of Political Development*, is a series of unorthodox and nebulous brands of socialism:

The Soviet Citizen, with his more rigorous conception of “scientific socialism”, is apt to be totally baffled by the free-wheeling unorthodoxy of the socialists of the emerging nations... Rather, the socialists of the developing nations endorse a bewildering variety of beliefs, theories and action programs. For the foreign observer to assume that he can anticipate the doctrines, intentions, alliances and programs of a leader once he has declared himself a “socialist” is a very serious mistake. (Anderson et al qtd. in McCain, “Perceptions of Socialism” 48)

Because African socialism lacks a precise doctrine, and because it represents such a wide range of orientations toward African politics, African leaders are often able to “safely project almost any notion of what their African socialist utopia should be like onto the political scene” (McCain, “Perceptions of Ghana” 49).

For Padmore, who was always committed to Marxism but began to feel that the black man was a mere pawn in the Communist Party’s activities, the leap from communism to African Marxism was a logical one. African Marxist regimes—of

which Nkrumah's Ghana is a prime example—have a greater propensity to use authoritarian methods of organization and administration than the African Pragmatic Socialists or the African Democratic Socialists. They remain Marxist in that they stand for international neutrality, acceptance of aid from any nation if no political strings are attached, an allowance for some privately-owned industries within careful limits, religious tolerance, and a recognition that the traditional African social structure can evolve into socialism in an indigenous manner (McCain, "Perceptions of Ghana" 48).

Certain elements of Padmore's Pan-Africanism do, however, repudiate a large part of the Soviet philosophy. In particular, the emphasis on the distinctive African personality, a lack of class struggle doctrine, and the support for positive, non-violent action all represent, as Padmore would later state, "a violent departure from orthodox Marxist strategy" (Padmore qtd. in Friedland and Rosberg 224). Padmore would remain adamant that Pan-African socialism must be seen as an alternative to, rather than an offshoot of, communism. He cited Mao Tse-tung's warning that the great mistake made by many Marxists was to view Marxism as a dogma and blindly follow its tenets, instead emphasizing that it must be used as a tool for intellectual understanding and as a loose guide for future social developments. Pan-African socialism, then, was to be seen as an effective substitute for the firm universalism of Soviet Communism and the constricted parochialism of tribalism—a third, distinctly-African way:

We must evolve our own form of socialism, suited to our own conditions and historical background...Evolve new forms of socialist

techniques applicable to our African environment and historical background. (Padmore qtd. in Friedland and Rosberg 227)

Padmore also maintained that African socialism needed to be a complete system, with political, economic, and social aims and objectives. While economically it called for common ownership of the means of production and distribution (with an allowance for some mixed state and private sectors), it also promoted the wellbeing of the people through social and political means. While outlining a platform for Ghana, Padmore wrote:

It cannot be too firmly stressed that socialism is more than an economic system. It is a social arrangement...the socialist system demands the maximum cooperation alone which will bring that abundance which will make the good life available for all in Ghana. (Padmore qtd. in McCain, "Ideology in Africa" 77)

And politically, Padmore's African socialism aims for democracy based on "fundamental human rights, social justice, and the rule of law" (Padmore qtd. in Friedland and Rosberg 229).

Following Ghana's independence in 1957, Padmore and Nkrumah were keenly aware of the dangers of neocolonialism, and this influenced their political ideology. They felt that Pan-African socialism—the political, economic, and social union of Africa—would enable Africa to eventually become a self-sufficient socialist culture that could free itself from the stifling economic domination of Western capitalism. This fear of a reversion to a neocolonial state also made Padmore and Nkrumah very wary of the African bourgeoisie. Padmore's hatred of imperialism, in all of its forms, allowed him also to understand the role this class played in the

maintenance of neocolonialism after political independence has been won.

Considering this class of Africans as traitors to the African Revolution, he once wrote, "Black capitalists are as much our enemies as white capitalists" (Padmore qtd. in Williams, "Nkrumahism" 128). The two men strongly believed that genuine independence could not be achieved with nominal political independence alone, but needed to be accompanied by real economic independence. Frantz Fanon would further this idea in the following decade.

Chapter III: Frantz Fanon

3.1 Violence in the colonial context

In a controversial preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, Jean-Paul Sartre endorses the advocacy of violence that is especially prevalent in the book's first chapter, "Concerning Violence", and urges readers not to shy away from Fanon's powerful indictment of the colonial system. He coldly tells his European brothers that this book will make them feel ashamed, but maintains that this shame is a burden all must own, for *all* members of the colonizing world are guilty of the atrocities carried out in the process of colonization. He speaks specifically to those who identify themselves as the liberal, or the humane, and asks them not to forget that their nations own colonies and in these colonies men are massacred in their name. No one will deny, he continues, that the men of Europe are the exploiters, and that this exploitation of the underdeveloped world has enabled her nations to grow rich and prosperous. And thus he plainly states: "With us, to be a man is to be an accomplice of colonialism, since all of us without exception have profited by colonial exploitation" (Fanon 21).

Perhaps the greatest ideological difference between Fanon and the two revolutionary figures I have discussed is that Fanon, though a firm believer in African unity, was not a Pan-Africanist to nearly the same degree. He argued that the tendency to speak more of African culture than of national culture was not an effective approach. Although Fanon regarded the struggle for independence as part of a broader, African-wide movement for a democratic and social revolution, he did

not believe that the historical circumstances of African peoples in different parts of the world could be so easily unified. A blanket notion of pan-African culture fails to consider the different conditions of Africans in a variety of locations, such as those in America or the Caribbean.

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. (Fanon 174-175)

In addition, Fanon was particularly skeptical of the *non-violent positive action* that constituted the guiding ideology of the Pan-Africanism that Padmore and Nkrumah espoused at the 1945 Manchester congress. Though he did speak of African unity, it was more in the context of direct, revolutionary action than in theoretical Pan-Africanism. In *Toward the African Revolution*, first published three years after his death, Fanon declares: “The slogan today must be: ‘Africans, men and women of Africa, to arms! Death to French colonialism!’” (Fanon qtd. in Young 276). Fanon was most certainly a product of his experiences in Algeria and was, above all else, a revolutionary.

The controversial opening chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth*, for which Fanon is best known, demonstrates this commitment to armed insurrection. In the chapter, Fanon argues that decolonization will only be achieved when the natives have fully supplanted the settlers—“The last shall be first and the first last”—and such an obliteration of the existing colonial system can only come to pass after a

violent and decisive struggle between the two parties (Fanon 30). Revolution is therefore all-encompassing: it is to be more than just a struggle for independence. According to Blackey, “For Fanon, revolution was part of the process of the regeneration of man and society, of self-liberation and rebirth. Only through revolution could a suppressed people undo the effects of colonization” (193). True liberation can only occur when independence is seized by the oppressed themselves, and not merely granted. For Fanon, who as a psychiatrist was particularly interested in the psychological effects revolution would have on the colonized man, it was the struggle itself—as much as its fruits—that would restore integrity and pride to a demoralized people. “Liberation,” he stated in *Toward the African Revolution*, “is the total destruction of the colonial system” (Blackey 193). And if violence is a necessary ingredient of this total destruction, so be it. After all, it was the colonizer, with his soldiers and his police, who created the atmosphere of violence in the colonial world in the first place. Whereas in capitalist societies the educational system and the underlying societal moral code infuse the exploited classes with a certain respect for the established social order, and the duty of policing the people is consequently lessened considerably, in the colonial world the soldier and the policeman serve as the intermediary between those in power and those who are oppressed. Moral constructs, therefore, are replaced with machine guns and tanks. These intermediary agents rely purely upon force, and unambiguously maintain the division between dominator and dominated. In such a way, the colonizer “is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native” (Fanon 31).

Fanon describes the colonial town as a world of contrasts, a world of absolutes. The zone occupied by natives is not complementary to the settlers’ zone.

The foreigners' town is one of strength, wealth, and cleanliness, whereas the natives' zone is dirty, immoral, and penurious. The native recognizes this and is overcome with feelings of anger and envy. The settler is well aware of his subject's desire to take his place, and tightens his yoke accordingly. The level of force intensifies.

In addition to force, the settlers use ideology to justify their actions and to dehumanize the colonized peoples (more on this later). According to Fanon, the dehumanizing mechanisms of colonialism have the effect of turning the native into an animal. The settler uses zoological terms to describe his subject's motions and his way of life. In spite of this, the native knows in his heart that he is not an animal. He hears the downtrodden peoples of the earth referred to as "the yellow multitudes" or the "black, brown, and yellow masses", and he can only laugh—for he knows the truth. The native is beaten and overpowered, but he is never truly tamed. He is treated as an inferior but he is never fully convinced of his own inferiority. His spirit of resistance, however crushed it may be, never disappears, and he desperately clings to the notion that you can never fully subjugate a man. He retains a sense of his humanity. And "it is precisely at the moment he realises his humanity that he begins to sharpen the weapons with which he will secure its victory" (Fanon 35). His muscles are tensed, and he is waiting for the moment where the settler lets his guard down.

The tension the native feels, and the violence the settler has brought into his world, manifests itself in aggressive behavior. Prior to the struggle, the native, desperately needing an outlet for his aggressiveness, often turns his wrath upon his own people. The colonial structure has engendered an atmosphere of perpetual tension, and this leads to misdirected violence and massive waves of crime. Tribal

warfare explodes and the individual, constantly on edge, looks for any excuse to wield his knife against another native. It should be noted here that Fanon's involvement with the Algerian struggle allowed him to make some interesting psychological observations about the supposed criminality of the colonized man. In Algeria, for example, it was affirmed that the Algerian was a born criminal. A theory saying as much was propounded, and scientific proofs were developed to support it. The following characteristics were solidified as scientific fact:

- 1) The Algerian frequently kills other men.
- 2) The Algerian kills savagely.
- 3) The Algerian kills for no reason.

These tendencies are explained in a number of ways. One theory claims that the African makes little use of his frontal lobes, and is therefore nothing more than a lobotomized European. This proposed explanation, which was actually taught as a subject in European universities, does much to explain the African's deficiencies:

The lay-out of the cerebral structures of the North African are responsible both for the native's laziness, for his intellectual and social inaptitude and for his almost animal impulsivity...The lack of integration of the frontal lobes in the cerebral dynamic is the explanation of the African's laziness, of his crimes, his robberies, his rapes and his lies. (Fanon 246)

This biological explanation of racial inferiority conveniently ignores the role that external circumstances (colonialism, hunger) might play in the formation of violent acts. That aside, as a victim of colonization the native will inevitably develop aggressive feelings, and these violent impulses must find an outlet. Fanon sees two

such outlets in traditional society, which are, as restated by G.K. Grohs, “a criminal reaction against one’s own tribesmen and the flight into dances and the wild mythology of indigenous religions” (Grohs 549). But when the struggle for freedom commences, these practices are pushed aside. This violence, which is always threatening to bubble over, is directed at a common enemy. Plans for freedom are undertaken and all energy is channeled in that direction.

For the common native, the solution to colonialism is a simple one: eradicate it. He cares little for the nuances and complex relationships that shape the struggle. He wants land and bread. Again, his demand is simply that the last shall be first. But the native intellectual realizes that the problem is far more complex than that. He understands his nation’s longstanding reliance on the superstructure the colonial power has crafted and realizes that an obliteration of the present system would leave his nation sorely lacking in higher civil servants, technicians, and specialists. In a sense, he has become inured to the western values he’s been taught and has seen instituted in his nation by the colonialist bourgeoisie. Against his better interest, he has accepted and internalized these Greco-Latin ideals. But this all changes when the struggle for liberation begins. The native intellectual steps down from his pedestal and takes a moment to feel the currents emanating from the people. He is awakened from his slumber. Mediterranean values are smashed to bits, and individualism is the first to go. Brother, sister, friend—the kind of language outlawed by the colonialist system—form the basis of a new vocabulary. The native intellectual recognizes the falseness of the idea that the only wealth is individual thought, and begins to champion the value of village assemblies and local committees. “Henceforward, the interests of one will be the interests of all, for in

concrete fact *everyone* will be discovered by the troops, *everyone* will be massacred—or *everyone* will be saved” (Fanon 38). Self-interest is denounced and unity becomes the rallying cry of the masses. When, as inevitably happens, an intellectual becomes wrapped up in lesser details and begins to stray from the unity of the movement, he merely needs to look to the people to be reminded of the ultimate aim. From the beginning, they are concerned only with obtaining bread and the land, and they stubbornly cling to this position. Their tenacity in this, seen as limited and myopic by some, “is in the end the most worthwhile and the most efficient mode of procedure” (Fanon 40).

3.2 Nationalist parties and the masses

As nationalist parties emerge, it becomes clear that a rift is developing between their objectives and those of the masses. The rank-and-file of the nationalist parties proceed in a manner inconsistent with the lofty rhetoric of national unity. They are less categorical in their demands: they wish to improve their own position—to replace the colonialist bourgeoisie with one of their own—rather than radically overthrow the system. The nationalist parties—their leaders and constituents—are based in the towns, and are out of touch with the wretched conditions of the rural masses. In an effort to improve their own lot, they speak of reforms and improvements of the current system. The dialogue with the mother country is never ruptured. Truly *nationalist* interests are discarded, as 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” (Fanon 48). This does not sit well with the masses, who have no desire to attain the settler’s position of status. They want the settler’s *place*. The last shall be first, they insist—compromise is not an option. And thus “it is clear that in the colonial countries the peasants alone are revolutionary, for they have nothing to lose and everything to gain” (Fanon 48). This may not seem like a startling conclusion, given that the peasantry indisputably constitutes the largest single group in African society. Yet it was a radical position at the time due to the prevailing notion for most of recorded history, as well as for traditional Marxism, that peasants make the worst revolutionists. Though Fanon recognized that peasants were highly conservative, disorganized, and largely unaware of colonial’s exploitative practices, he believed—particularly in light of twentieth century events in China and Vietnam—that the peasantry can become revolutionary when it is supplied with a suitable ideology, competent leadership, and efficient organization. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said notes that these crucial ingredients were lacking from early nationalist movements that similarly targeted the masses (such as Garvey’s), and that it was the infusion of radical revolutionary theory that helped transform liberation movements from utopian rhetoric to full-scale revolutions:

Whether in the Indian constitution, or in statements of Pan-Arabism and Pan-Africanism, or in its particularist forms such as Pearse’s Gaelic or Senghor’s *negritude*, conventional nationalism was revealed to be both insufficient and crucial, but only as a first step. Out of this paradox comes the idea of liberation, a strong new post-nationalist theme that had been implicit in the works of Connolly, Garvey, Marti, Mariategi, Cabral, and Du Bois, for instance, but required the

propulsive infusion of theory and even of armed, insurrectionary militancy to bring it forward clearly (Said 224).

Fanon believed that with proper ideology, leadership, and organization, the peasants, who had bloodthirsty instincts, would answer the call to revolution. With nothing to lose, the peasant is the first to ascertain, with complete certainty, that violence alone will achieve the desired means. The lines are drawn: there is no middle ground—it's colonization or decolonization, and the contest will be decided by force. Thus in 1956, when the *Front de Liberation Nationale* famously stated that colonialism only loosens its hold when the knife is at its throat, this sentiment merely expressed what Algerians intuitively knew: "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" (Fanon 48).

Sensing that danger is in the air, the colonialist bourgeoisie, hitherto inactive, is compelled to enter the fray. It meets with the intellectual and economic elite of the colonized country and asks: Can we settle this in a non-violent way? (Though well aware that they possess superior military strength, they also know that in a capitalist system it is not in the colonizing country's interest to wage a long and costly war. Colonies are markets in themselves, and it is not economically sound to smother them, to reduce them to blind domination.) The native elite are perhaps amenable to their proposal, but if the enraged masses begin setting fires to buildings and blowing up bridges in the interim, what then? The magnitude of the situation rears its head—it's discovered that the masses may well destroy everything—and compromise becomes a tenuous proposition. The nationalist parties are distressed. They don't know if they can stop the tide of violence, and they are not at all convinced that this

spontaneous aggression of the masses is an effective means of protecting their own interests. They also cannot repress the thought that, if push comes to shove, they will be crushed by the colonial power's superior strength. "For them, there is no doubt about it, every attempt to break colonial oppression by force is a hopeless effort, an attempt at suicide, because in the innermost recesses of their brains the settler's tanks and aeroplanes occupy a huge place" (Fanon 50). They cannot ignore Engels position that

the revolver triumphs over the sword, and even the most childish believer in axioms will doubtless form the conclusion that violence is not a simple act of will, but needs for its realization certain very concrete preliminary conditions, and in particular the implements of violence; and the more highly-developed of these implements will carry the day against primitive ones. (Engels qtd. in Fanon 50)

In short, superior weaponry will always prevail over will, and this terrifies the colonized elite. But Fanon is quick to remind his readers that history has shown the ability of an undermanned and lesser-armed army—driven by unshakeable national ardor and guerilla war tactics—to hold its own against a superior force. He cites the Spanish resistance to Napoleon's massive army in 1810 as one such example.

Despite their reservations, the nationalist parties do much to foment rebellion in the colony. Their speeches and articles, though failing to outline political and social programs in concrete terms, are nonetheless national in shape and character. National language continues to be emphasized, and the masses are encouraged to dream. It is clear that the parties are playing with fire. They have been warned to, "Think well before you speak to the masses, for they flare up quickly" (Fanon 54).

When a leader makes a fiery speech to the attentive masses, he is often above all else eager to make a show of force so that he will not actually have to use it. But already a line has been crossed. The masses sense that the time to act has arrived, and acts of isolated violence become more and more common throughout the colony.

The colonial authorities then decide to take some dramatic measures to curb the uprising. They arrest a few party leaders and organize military parades and air force displays in order to demonstrate their superior strength. But the masses are not impressed, and the tension increases. Everyone is prepared to take the next step, and “it is in these circumstances that the guns go off by themselves, for nerves are jangled, fear reigns and everyone is trigger-happy. A single commonplace incident is enough to start the machine-gunning” (Fanon 56). If and when this mass slaughtering begins, national consciousness, far from being repressed, is actually driven forward. It becomes clear that everything can and will be decided by force.

At this point, political parties have still not called for armed insurrection, and have made no preparations for such a rebellion. The colonialist power may decide to arrest the national leaders, which only inflames the masses, who demand their release. But by now the political parties have been overrun by the spontaneous reactions of the people. The freed leaders become relatively useless. It has become a contest in which the violence of the masses is pitted against the military forces of the occupying power, and there is no turning back.

3.3 The political education of the masses

In Fanon's chapter entitled "Spontaneity: Its strength and weakness", he continues to discuss the manner in which the nationalist parties hardly have the best interests of the nation at heart. These parties tend to initially approach the working-class people of the towns, who are the most politically-conscious element of the nation but represent only a tiny portion of the population (around one percent). This proletariat has enjoyed a relatively privileged position within the colonial regime, and is thus far less interested in a fierce struggle for national liberation. Here we see the major difference between a revolution in a capitalist country and one in a colonized nation:

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 colonized nation which is necessary and irreplaceable if the colonial machine is to run smoothly. (Fanon 88)

This fraction of society constitutes the most loyal followers of the nationalist parties and because of their comparatively privileged place within the colonial structure also constitutes the bourgeois segment of the colonized people. Fanon believed that to rely on the colonial proletariat for the revolution was tantamount to transposing Europeans conditions on Africa and thus had no use for them.

In the absence of a significant African proletariat, the peasants become the central revolutionary class. Yet the vast majority of the African nationalist parties have a deep distrust for the peasants of the rural areas. They regard them as an inert,

ineffectual mass, essentially the same view shared by the settlers. This similar perspective is hardly a surprise when we recall that colonialism has, whenever possible, bolstered its dominance by encouraging and organizing the petrification of the rural districts. Moreover, the nationalist parties mimic the methods of western political parties, who have determined that “the peasantry as a whole are the least aware, the worst organized and at the same time the most anarchical element” (Fanon 91). Fanon believes that this is a grave mistake on the part of the political parties. He argues that revolutionary groups must look to this lumpenproletariat for the force needed to drive out the colonial power. In traditional Marxist theories the lumpenproletariat is considered the lowest, most degraded stratum of the proletariat—particularly criminals, vagrants, and the unemployed—and is said to lack any form of class consciousness. Fanon, however, uses the term to refer to those members of colonized nations who are not involved in industrial production, particularly peasants living outside the cities—“that fraction of the peasant population which is blocked on the outer fringe of the urban centers, that fraction which has not yet succeeded in finding a bone to gnaw in the colonial system” (Fanon 129). He argues that only this group, unlike the industrial proletariat, has sufficient independence from the colonists to successfully wage a revolution against them.

As has been noted, inside the nationalist parties the desire to break free from colonialism is also linked with a desire to come to a friendly agreement with it. Yet within these parties, certain members begin to question this ideology and do in fact yearn for a truly revolutionary struggle. “For them the fact of militating within a national party is not simply taking part in politics; it is choosing the only means

whereby they can pass from the status of an animal to that of a human being” (Fanon 100). These men grow tired of the excessive legalism of the party and begin to engage in more audacious activities. Soon they are marked as targets for colonialist repression. Arrested, condemned, tortured, and often imprisoned, these men, once freed, emerge with an outlook on the liberation movement that is no longer compatible with the philosophy of their parties. An underground party is thereby formed, and this offshoot of the legal party soon finds itself ostracized as the original party strengthens its ties to colonialism. These men retreat to the hinterlands and are warmly accepted by the peasantry. They survey the true national character, and quickly realize they’ve been wasting their time with the nationalist parties.

They come to understand, with a sort of bewilderment that will from henceforth never quite leave them, that political action in the towns will always be powerless to modify or overthrow the colonial regime...They discover that the mass of the country people have never ceased to think of the problem of their liberation except in terms of violence, in terms of taking back the land from the foreigners, in terms of national struggle, and of armed insurrection. (Fanon 101)

The convergence of these militant outlaws on the run and the ever-ready masses can, of course, produce explosive results. While these men from the towns learn valuable lessons from the people, they at the same time provide a military and political education. The masses are willing, albeit impatient, pupils. It is not long before they urge the leaders to action, and the armed struggle has begun. And “once the match is lit, the blaze spreads like wildfire through the whole country” (Fanon 102).

The spontaneous violence of the masses gives a purpose to the long-forgotten elements of the nation who have hitherto occupied no significant place in society. The revolution produces unity throughout the nation. Tribes who have long been enemies suddenly reconcile. As more and more blows are rained upon the common enemy, national solidarity escalates. But it is not long before the second phase of the struggle commences—that of the enemy striking back. Following the explosion of spontaneous violence, the colonial forces regroup and reorganize, and initiate methods of warfare appropriate to the nature of the uprising. Militant local groups are the focal points of these counterattacks, and these groups, drunk with the optimism and fearlessness that has defined their campaign, lose sight of the ultimate objective—that of the liberation of the entire nation—and suffer heavy losses. Doubt begins to creep in, and the inadequacies of impetuous violence as a long-term solution become manifest. The guerrilla warfare that has emerged has isolated various warring factions throughout the country districts. “The national army of liberation is not an army which engages once and for all with the enemy; it is rather an army which goes from village to village, falling back on the forests...” (Fanon 108). This method is not without its advantages. It confuses the enemy and gives him the impression that he is floundering in spite of his technical advantages and his superior weaponry. But this cannot go on indefinitely. It becomes apparent to the leaders of the uprising that the various warring groups must be educated, and that an army and a central authority must be created. The leaders who fled to the country districts and were intoxicated by the collective power of the masses begin to understand that even massive peasant risings must be controlled and directed into certain channels. They realize that the movement must be transformed from a

peasant revolt to a full-scale revolutionary war, and that this change can only be brought about with a dramatic increase in national consciousness. As Fanon states:

You can hold out for three days—maybe even for three months—on the strength of the admixture of sheer resentment contained in the mass of the people; but you won't win a national war, you'll never overthrow the terrible enemy machine, and you won't change human beings if you forget to raise the standard of consciousness of the rank-and-file. Neither stubborn courage nor fine slogans are enough.

(Fanon 108)

If the masses are not educated politically, national unity will crumble away and the war will be all but lost. Thus patience, and not spontaneity, becomes the determining factor. Here we can see that Fanon, like Padmore before him, borrows much from the revolutionary theory of Lenin. As Blackey notes, "Lenin made a distinctive contribution to the theory and practice of revolution when he substituted party for class as the motive force. The party, he said, showed the masses the way" (202). The majority of revolutionary theorists since then have to some degree drawn from Lenin in their analyses of political parties and leadership. Fanon conceded that, despite the enormous potential for unified and spontaneous violent action on the part of the peasantry, a successful revolution could not be waged without efficient leadership. It was critical that the outlawed revolutionary leaders, as in the process described above, intervened at the moment when peasant hostility was ready to boil over. This union of the radical element of the national parties with the ever-ready masses was to form the political backbone of the revolution.

3.4 Fanon and Marxism

To the extent outlined above, Fanon can be considered a Marxist. This is not to say he adhered rigidly to the tenets of orthodox Marxism—or that he even considered himself a Marxist—but rather to say he was sympathetic with the Marxist approach to revolution and consequently was Marxist in the sense that Lenin or Castro or Mao are Marxist. Lenin created a blueprint for successful revolutions in the twentieth century when he tailored traditional Marxism to suit the conditions of Russia. Mao Tse-tung followed this blueprint when he altered Marxism-Leninism to meet circumstances in China. Subsequent revolutionaries have thus proceeded with the idea that revolutions should not be mere replications of previously successful upheavals but should, instead, be customized to fit a particular situation. It only makes sense, then, that African revolutions should be waged on the basis of African conditions.

Padmore and Nkrumah belabored this point, and Fanon, likewise, accepted Marx's basic analysis of society but modified it to suit an African context. He insisted, however, that Nkrumah's African socialism was merely derivative and that Africa had yet to develop its own ideology. In *Toward the African Revolution*, he declared that "the greatest danger that threatens Africa is the absence of ideology," and argued that the only way Africa could free itself from the grip of European economic and intellectual dominance was to devise an original, non-Western ideology (Fanon qtd. in Wright 682). But what had happened instead was that

African impatience with both colonial capitalism and its Marxist counter-products, together with the obligation to be original and to

refuse the loan of foreign conceptual tools, had driven the new political and intellectual leaders back upon doubtfully derived 'African Socialisms' which were in truth neither 'African ' nor 'Socialist' but variants on western bourgeois hegemonies. These experiments, leading neither outward into a new stage of political history nor genuinely inward into African traditional thought, had taken newly independent Africa—Fanon had Ghana in mind—nowhere except into deeper political and economic dependency upon the West. (Wright 682)

Fanon uses the example of Ghana to show that political liberation does not bring economic liberation, and without economic liberation there can be no true political liberation.

Fanon argues that, because of the legacy of colonialism, Africa has nothing to call its own. Since African political structures began with those which Europe left behind, “the black man started with what the white man had finished with, and was then left to finish what the white man had started” (Wright 680). Yet the oft-repeated claim that Africa needs to forge its own system based upon African conditions becomes more complex when one is asked to determine exactly what these conditions are, which is why there are manifold versions of African socialism. Fanon’s particular construction on African Marxism, according to Young, was to follow “Sarte’s translation of Marx’s dialectic of ruling vs. working classes, via Lenin’s oppressed vs. oppressor nations, into a dialectic of colonizer vs. colonized” (8). Fanon deviates from traditional Marxism by arguing that the division between colonizer and colonized is *racial*. Fanon sees the colonial society as a divided world,

in which the white settlers reside in their own area, with their own schools and hospitals. The white hates the Algerian, and the Algerian despises and envies the white. Early in *The Wretched of the Earth*, he writes:

When you examine at close quarters the colonial context, it is evident that what parcels out the world is to begin with the fact of belonging to or not belonging to a given race, a given species. In the colonies the economic substructure is also a superstructure. The cause is the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich. This is why Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem.

(32)

In this argument, we can see that Fanon modifies Marx by substituting race for class identity, “and in doing so in fact reverses the original move that Marx himself had made in transforming Amedee Thierry’s racial analysis of French history in *L’Histoire des Gaulois* (1828) into a class analysis” (Young 278-279). By taking aspects of Marxism-Leninism and injecting the race factor, Fanon is able to argue that while the division between the colonizer and the colonized is economic, it is not simply the product of economic disparity but is instead the consequence of the political and racial differences that operate as the fundamental form of the system (Young 279).

Yet Fanon’s writing can be enigmatic at times, and one can say that when he later argues that the peasantry—and not the urban proletariat or the nationalist parties—is the true revolutionary class, he is discarding the pure racialism of his theory in favor of a class-based analysis. To this extent, he was following the

Marxism of Mao, though without explicit references to socialism. Though Sartre declares in his preface to *The Wretched of the Earth* that, “In order to triumph, the nationalist revolution must be socialist,” there is no statement as explicit in the body of Fanon’s text. Fanon does acknowledge that existing structures need to be demolished, and he does declare that only a dramatic redistribution of international wealth can solve the crisis. He also insinuates that in the great worldwide battle of the capitalist and socialist systems, it is manifest that the developing nations, though in need of forging their own identity, ought to lean toward the principles of socialism:

Capitalist exploitation and cartels and monopolies are the enemies of under-developed countries. On the other hand the choice of a socialist regime, a regime which is completely orientated towards the people as a whole and based on the principle that man is the most precious of all possessions will allow us to go forward more quickly and more harmoniously, and thus make impossible that caricature of society where all economic and political power is held in the hands of a few who regard the nation as a whole with scorn and contempt. (Fanon 78)

Curiously, concludes *The Wretched of the Earth* with an affirmation of a new humanism, in which he implores all members of the under-developed world to abandon “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” (252). This new humanism supports G.K. Groh’s claim that, “For Fanon, race was no category; he knew only human beings as an entity transcending all races...there are nations and individuals, oppressors and oppressed,

but not an oppressor race and an oppressed race” (554). He tells his readers to forget about trying to follow in Europe’s footsteps, and to instead forge a new model for the future: to create a world that honors the humanist qualities Europe speaks of but never practices—concluding with the idea that, “For Europe, for ourselves and for humanity, comrades, we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man” (255). What is surprising about this affirmation of a new humanism is that “it derives from the very Pan-African constituency from which he distinguished himself,” yet conspicuously makes no reference to socialism generally or to the African socialist ideals that were being articulated by others at that very moment (Young 280). According to Blackey, it was Fanon’s wish to be free from both capitalism and any institutionalized form of communism that caused him “with sanguine—though it seems unrealistic—expectations” to look “to the Third World to create a humanistic society, apart from and independent of capitalism and communism” (196).

Interestingly, traces of Fanon’s “new humanism” can be detected in the work of prominent activists in South Africa, where Fanon’s work was hugely influential. John Noyes remarks upon the striking similarities between Fanon and Steve Biko in terms of the latter’s vague articulation of a humanist vision:

The humanist imperative in South African intellectual debate is widespread, and is certainly not confined to the post-apartheid period. Sounding remarkably like Frantz Fanon, whose anti-humanist critique of Eurocentrism thrived alongside a humanist vision of a new world order, Steve Biko stated in 1973 that his vision of the confrontation of the races led to ‘a true humanity where power politics will have no

place'. Biko speaks of 'a quest for a true humanity' that will bestow upon South Africa the greatest gift possible—a more human face. (Noyes qtd. in Geertsema 754)

3.5 Fanon's stance on violence

It must be noted that although Fanon was convinced that violence was necessary to overthrow the colonial system, it was not something he liked. Despite the tendency of some critics to label him as an unabashed champion of violence, allegedly for its own sake, Fanon detested violence and simply recognized it as a necessary evil given the circumstances in Algeria (Martin 383). Although he believed that violence served a cleansing function for the victims of colonization—declaring that this discovery “shakes the world in a very necessary manner. All the new, revolutionary assurance of the natives stems from it”—he did not condone the extent and degree of atrocities that were carried out on both sides of the Algerian conflict (Fanon qtd. in Blackey 205). He insisted that violence was necessary for a colonized people to achieve their liberation, but nonetheless condemned what Young refers to as “the raging, sadistic and sickening butchery of what went on in Algeria” (277). He considered it crucial that the rest of the world, if it were to support the colonized peoples' establishment of a new nation, must regard the revolutionary acts as discerning and self-controlled. Consequently he denounced the actions of those who jeopardized these hopes:

Because we believe one cannot rise and liberate oneself in one area and sink in another, we condemn, with pain in our hearts, those

brothers who have flung themselves into revolutionary action with the almost physiological brutality that centuries of oppression gave rise to. (Fanon qtd. in Blackey 205)

According to Blackey, Fanon and Guinea-Bissau's Amilcar Cabral, a revolutionary figure he is often compared to, were "essentially men of peace. Neither plunged immediately into the troubled waters of revolution without first trying more tranquil currents" (Blackey 192). Fanon conceded that means other than violence may be appropriate if dictated by the situation, stating, "If need be, the native can accept a compromise with colonialism, but never a surrender of principle" (Fanon qtd. in Blackey 205). (Here he likely had countries that weren't dominated by white settlers groups, such as Ghana and Sierra Leone, in mind.) While practicing in Blida, Fanon tried to work through nonviolent channels before eventually feeling compelled to join the rebels. He resigned from the hospital in 1956, stating the following position in his letter of resignation: "The function of a social structure is to set up institutions to serve man's needs. A society that drives its members to desperate solutions is a nonviable society, a society to be replaced" (Fanon qtd. in Blackey 192). In her autobiography, Simone de Beauvoir discusses Fanon and recalls the anguish he experienced when he thought about the consequences of violence, whether inflicted by the enemy or by his own side (Martin 383). Fanon, as a humanist, could never regard violence in strictly macro political terms. He could not ignore the suffering of individuals and never allowed the individual to be lost in a mass of statistics. He declared as much in *Toward the African Revolution*:

No man's death is indispensable for the triumph of freedom. It happens that one must accept the risk of death in order to bring

freedom to birth, but it is not lightly that one witnesses so many massacres and so many acts of ignominy. (Fanon qtd. in Martin 383)

Since Fanon was shaped by a very different political environment, it is easy to understand why he deviated ideologically from Garvey and Padmore. His involvement in the Algerian war—a conflict characterized by uncompromising violence on both sides—from 1956 onward conditioned him to oppose, on ideological grounds, the Marxist-Leninist socialism (with its accompanying doctrine of “positive action”) of Padmore and Nkrumah. Because the French had a large, well-established settler population in Algeria and seemed determined to hold onto the colony, whatever the cost, violence was the only recourse Algerian revolutionists had. Although *The Wretched of the Earth* was seemingly written with universal application in mind, we cannot dismiss the notion that when Fanon described violence as a cleansing force that freed the native from his despair and inaction, he was probably referring to Algeria specifically and not merely celebrating violence per se. He did acknowledge that while in Algeria the use of force was unavoidable, “other countries through political action and through the work of clarification undertaken by a party have led their people to the same results” (Fanon qtd. in Blackey 206). One would imagine, however, that he saw things trending in the direction of violence, and thus spoke generally of its necessity while denouncing positive, non-violent action. (In this manner, he correctly anticipated—and to some degree brought about—the turn the liberation movement would take in the following decade.)

A product of his experiences in Algeria, Fanon sought a radical political alternative, and first articulated this position at Nkrumah’s historic All Africa

People's Conference in Accra in 1958—reading the essay that would eventually become the first chapter in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Nkrumah believed that the conference would “serve to inspire and encourage Africans in other parts of the Continent to follow in the footsteps of the Gold Coast along the road of non-violent revolution instead of Mau Mauism,” but Fanon posed a stern challenge to this position (Nkrumah qtd. in Young 249). His polemical intervention was directed both at Nkrumah and at Francophone African leaders such as Leopold Senghor. Fanon was irritated with the latter because he felt that they had ridden the coattails of those who fought valiantly in Algeria, in that they had managed—aware that France lacked the resources to wage another costly colonial war—to quietly negotiate independence from France while the gruesome conflict in Algeria raged on. Fanon was upset that Senegal, in particular, expressed little support for the FLN in Algeria.

While it is fair to say that the development of Fanon's political ideology was largely a product of his environment, it is also important to note that his work, beginning with his aggressive intrusion at Nkrumah's conference—gave rise to a significant ideological shift in African politic thought. To understand the significance of Fanon's doctrines, we must pause and consider the following remark from Robert A. LeVine in his 1959 analysis of anti-European violence in Africa: “One of the outstanding facts about the past fifteen years of nationalist turmoil in subsaharan Africa is the infrequency with which Africans have resorted to violence against their European rulers” (LeVine 4). LeVine notes that, between the end of WWII and the 1958 All Africa conference, there was only one major disturbance of law and order directed against Europeans: the Mau Mau movement in Kenya, which raged on from 1952 to 1957. He also concedes that there were four less serious

outbursts of anti-colonial violence—in the Gold Coast in 1948, in Nigeria in 1950, and in South Africa and Nyasaland in 1953—but maintains that, overall, this is a phenomenal record of non-violence given the fervor of anti-colonial feeling and the sheer volume of nationalist activity.

But this was to change soon enough. As Robert Young notes, “Fanon’s intervention at the conference was the first auspice of a new mood of militancy that would crystallize fully in the next decade. *The Wretched of the Earth* signaled a new moment in African politics” (280). The political landscape had changed dramatically since the close of WWII, when the Pan-African socialism of Padmore and Nkrumah was the prevailing ideology. The African leaders at the historic 1945 congress were well aware that either the path of armed revolution or non-violence had to be chosen, and decided on the latter largely because of their familiarity with the successful strategies Gandhi had first put to use in South Africa. Nkrumah, who used positive action to lead Ghana to its independence in 1957 (the first African nation to achieve independence in the 20th century), was acutely aware that he was rejecting the alternative path to independence. In his 1949 tract “What I mean by Positive Action”, he explained that there were two ways to liberate a nation—violent revolution or Gandhian non-violent methods—and declared:

We advocated the latter method. Freedom, however, had never been handed over to any colonial country on a silver platter; it had only been won after bitter and vigorous struggles. Because of the educational backwardness of the colonies, the majority of the people were illiterate and there was only one thing they could understand—action. I described Positive Action as the adoption of all legitimate

and constitutional means by which we could attack the forces of imperialism in the country. The weapons were legitimate political agitation, newspaper and educational campaigns and, as a last resort, the constitutional application of strikes, boycotts and non-cooperation based on the principle of absolute non-violence, as used by Gandhi in India. (Nkrumah qtd. in Young 248)

Despite Fanon's objection at the 1958 conference and evidence of escalating violence throughout Africa, Nkrumah clung to his position of positive action, declaring, in an April 1960 conference in Accra devoted to Positive Action and Security in Africa: "We decry violence and deplore it. We are devoted to non-violent positive action" (Nkrumah qtd. in Young 248). His efforts were in vain, however, as the conference effectively signaled the end of positive action as a strategy. France conducted nuclear tests in the Sahara soon after, and Nkrumah's calls for positive action throughout Africa to protest the tests were too general—providing no specific plan to match Gandhi's brilliant strategies—and were ineffective as a result. This incident drove home the limitations of positive action—limitations that had already been exposed with the Pidgiguiti massacre in Portuguese Guinea in August 1959, in which fifty dockworkers were killed when striking dockers were forced back to work. An even bigger setback occurred in the South African Sharpeville massacre of 1960, in which 69 peaceful protesters were brutally murdered by the law and order forces of the South African government. Militant groups were formed as the oppressed began to decide that the time had come to fight back. One such group was South Africa's Umkhonto we Sizwe, a combative wing of the African National Congress (ANC), which launched the first organized acts of

sabotage against the South African government on December 16, 1961 and produced a powerful manifesto announcing a new policy of reciprocal violence:

Umkhonto we Sizwe will carry on the struggle for freedom and democracy by new methods, which are necessary to complement the actions of the established national liberation movement...The people's patience is not endless. *The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa...*The government policy of force, repression and violence will no longer be met with non-violent resistance only. (Umkhonto we Sizwe qtd. in Young 249)

In 1978 Ali Mazrui addressed the ideological shift from Gandhism to violence by first noting that African leaders such as Kenneth Kaunda and Julius Nyerere had successfully adopted Gandhi's methods in their nations' struggles for independence, but then noting that, in light of armed struggles in Algeria, Angola, Kenya, Rhodesia, Guinea-Biassau, and South Africa, the strategy of positive action had reached a definitive end. He believed that the eruption of violence in these nations indicated the limits of Gandhism—particularly in settler colonies—and concluded that this illustrated “the triumph of Frantz Fanon over Mohandas Gandhi” (Mazrui qtd. in Kebede 561).

From a contemporary perspective, though, we need to ask ourselves if this emphasis on violence actually benefited these countries in the long term. Messay Kebede's 2001 study of Fanon's legacy argues strongly that it *did not*. He declares that

Most of the guerilla movements that succeeded in seizing power proved particularly unable to establish stable and democratic regimes. Angola, Zimbabwe, Algeria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and so on, are patent examples, and this characteristically contrasts with the more promising evolution of South Africa where majority rule was established without the episode of a violent overthrow of the apartheid regime. (561)

Kebede argues that anger is best put to use when it is conserved and controlled—as Gandhi advised—rather than given full vent. He claims that history has shown that the outcome of spontaneous and impulsive violence is rarely positive, noting that “Guerilla movements interiorize violence so deeply that despite their often-generous goal, they end up by instituting violent regimes for the simple reason that they have lost the sense of true human relationships (559). He specifically cites Algeria as an example of the pitfalls of violence. Whereas Fanon believed that the ideals of the liberation war in Algeria would give rise to a modern and peaceful society, Kebede explains that the opposite has happened, stating: “That independent Algeria is still torn by violent conflicts and little engaged in a resolute process of modernization invalidates the alleged creative role of violence” (559).

3.6 The struggles after independence

Like Padmore and Nkrumah before him, Fanon was far-sighted enough to realize that the struggle was not only against colonialism, but against neo-colonialism as well. He was, however, not particularly impressed with the way

Ghana handled the post-independence stage. Most of the conclusions he reached on this subject were based on his observations of African and South American countries that had won their independence (Grohs 551). In *The Wretched of the Earth*, he carefully enters into a discussion of this problem by first analyzing the effects that a successful, violent revolution has on the masses of the newly-independent state. In the opening chapter, he notes that it is the intuition of the colonized masses that their liberation must, and can only, be obtained by force. This practice of violence, which constitutes their only work, promotes unity throughout the colony. It is a great binding force, as “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” (Fanon 73). It is the armed struggle that mobilizes the people and springs them forward in a common direction. “The mobilization 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” (Fanon 73).

Once liberation has been achieved, this collective rage and energy is not likely to subside, for the masses, who have forged ahead with remarkable alacrity, often realize two or three years after independence that very little has changed. Indeed, in the majority of cases, independence brings no immediate change for 95 percent of the population in underdeveloped nations. Thus in the second phase of the effort—the building up of the nation—the collective spirit of the people, imbued with the residual blood and anger from the fight against oppression, must tackle new challenges. They are now summoned to fight against poverty, illiteracy, and underdevelopment. The people soon realize that life is an endless struggle. But they are at

least ready to face these problems together, for the struggle for liberation has destroyed many of the separatist and regionalist ties that, though always extant, were deliberately reinforced by the colonial system. The all-inclusive nature of violence supplanted regionalism and tribalism with nationalism, and also did much to restore a sense of fearlessness and self-respect to the once hopeless masses. The people, whose consciousness has grown rapidly, are also well aware that decolonization has come about because of the actions of each and all, and will henceforth be highly suspicious of any political leader or system that seems to forget the role each and all has played as the nation's liberators. In this manner, the peasantry must continue to be central in the post-independent society.

The challenge presented to the newly independent nation is an immense one. The political leaders call on the people to set to work, to not only pull themselves up from the morass but also to catch up to the stages of development reached by the European powers. It is an impossible task. The under-developed nation can hang its hat only on an energetic workforce: it has no infrastructure to speak of, no doctors, engineers, or administrators. It is unrealistic to model the new nation after the opulent European world—a world made wealthy by the toils of slaves and stolen resources. When the colonialist country withdraws its capital and technicians, and applies further economic pressure, the national leaders can only turn to the masses and plead for an enormous effort. They are asked to contribute at a frenzied pace that can never be maintained. The alternative is to turn to the former occupying power for assistance and accept the grossly unfair conditions it will want to impose. In turn, the new nation becomes an economically dependent nation and again its people must ask: What did we fight for? In essence, the national liberation of the

under-developed nation has revealed its true economic state and made it seem even more desperate. The men and women enthusiastically throw themselves into the struggle, but can it ever be enough? The common interest, and the contempt for all actions that do not benefit the fledgling nation, give rise to a national morale that comforts the tired workers and gives them a new confidence in the destiny of their country. Again, though, it is hard to imagine that this frenzied pace can be maintained for long. It will soon become apparent that a complete break from the old system is needed and that everything must be reformed in a new mold. The natural resources of the nation must be made better use of, and this, of course, will require more than human output—capital and skilled labor are found to be sorely lacking.

And so it becomes clear that the new nation will not survive without economic aid from the stronger nations of the world. This aid, though, ought not to come as a loan, accompanied with the implementation of economic constraints that will stifle the new nation's long-term growth, but in the form of long overdue compensation from the colonial power. For colonialism and imperialism have not evened the score simply by withdrawing their flags and police forces from the occupied nation. Indeed,

For centuries the capitalists have behaved in the underdeveloped world like nothing more than war criminals. Deportations, massacres, forced labour, and slavery have been the main methods used by capitalism to increase its wealth, its gold or diamond reserves, and to establish its power. (Fanon 79)

It fact it is the duty of the liberated nation to *demand* what is owed to it, to reclaim some of the wealth that has been stolen from the under-developed peoples. The moral reparation of national independence is not sufficient, for it does not feed a nation of desperate and hungry souls.

3.7 Neocolonialism

In his essay “The Pitfalls of National Consciousness”, which makes up the third chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon warns of the dangers ahead for colonized nations if those who rise to power after decolonization betray the masses in order to advance their own interests. Following independence, the national middle-class rushes forward with no comprehensive program in place. Its primary goal is to take the place of the colonial bourgeoisie. It ultimately fails in this selfish endeavor, as it has no real economic power of its own and is in no way commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country. It is not “the inventive, productive, entrepreneurial class of the Communist Manifesto, but a parasitical bourgeoisie profiting from the colonial economy” (Grohs 550). Any wealth the national middle-class has managed to accumulate during the colonial process ought to be distributed amongst the people, but we see that this does not happen. Colonialism has enriched a small segment of the nation, while the rest of the population continues its path of under-development and poverty. Rather than aid these impoverished people, the privileged segment of the nation fiercely defends its interests. It effectively turns its back on the interior. Instead of disseminating the intellectual and technical capital that it has grabbed while going through the colonial universities, which would raise

up the nation as a whole, this class “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” (Fanon 122). In effect, this middle class simply becomes an intermediary between its nation and western capitalism—it has nothing better to do than to take on the role of manager for Western investors, and consequently develops a tourist industry that establishes its country as the brothel of Europe. This national middle class is engaged in neither production, building, nor labor, but is “completely canalized into activities of the intermediary type. Its innermost vocation seems to be to keep in the running and to be part of the racket” (Fanon qtd. in Blackey 200).

Though Fanon did not espouse all the prevailing tenets of the Pan-Africanism of his time, it was his hope that revolution would overflow national boundaries to produce a new humanism throughout Africa. This caused him to detest the national bourgeoisies for another reason, for he believed that nationalism should be a tool of liberation only and should then give way to larger aims. The national bourgeoisies impeded this goal, and “this is why we must understand that African unity can only be achieved through the upward thrust of the people, and under the leadership of the people, that is to say, in defiance of the interests of the bourgeoisie” (Fanon qtd. in Blackey 201). Fanon’s contention is that as these new bourgeoisies continues to exploit the masses, regionalism and tribalism return, and religious rivalries once again break out. Racialism results, as Africa is divided into Black (south of the Sahara) and White (north of the Sahara), and “Black Africa is looked on as a region that is inert, brutal, uncivilized in a word, savage (Fanon 131). In this manner, the national bourgeoisies effectively bar the way to African unity.

As the national bourgeoisie turns its back more and more on the masses and instead comes to rely upon the former colonizing power and other foreign capitalists, the nation sinks back into a form of neocolonialism. Instead of redistributing the productive energies of the nation, as Fanon advocates, a new black bourgeoisie has simply replaced the old white one. In time, the former mother country increases its demands and strengthens its hold on the national economy. The resulting distribution of wealth is appalling and nine-tenths of the population continues to die of starvation. This exploitation inevitably gives rise to discontent amongst the people, which only causes the regime to exact harsher measures. The army and the police, though this time African, keep the masses in line.

Having described this miserable state, in which nothing is changed or accomplished, Fanon states that it is in the nation's best interests to skip this pernicious, post-independence phase.

In under-developed countries, the bourgeoisie should not be allowed to find the conditions necessary for its existence 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. (Fanon 141)

The only way to avoid this phase is to progress rapidly from national consciousness to social and political consciousness. This can only occur with a program that has been devised by revolutionary leaders and taken up with enthusiasm and full understanding by the masses. Thus an actual program that concretely deals with economics and social relations is pivotal for the period following colonization. But

the national middle-class, in their selfish haste to replace the colonial bourgeoisie, proceeds with no such platform. The result is a national consciousness that is no more than an empty shell. It must be remembered that the achievement of independence is not the final step, but rather a new beginning that presents a fresh set of challenges for the fledgling nation. It is therefore crucial to construct a national consciousness that reflects the needs of the people both before and after independence is obtained.

It must be noted that while Fanon condemns the nationalist leaders for not having a concrete plan in place to deal with the economic and social issues that arise after independence, his own writings are often criticized along similar lines. He is censured by some critics for being too abstract in his ideas—for speaking the rhetoric of liberty and independence without paying enough attention to the details of creating a successful revolution or outlining a comprehensive plan to counter the post-independent pitfalls he inveighs against. In this sense, he is contrasted with Cabral, who emphasized that revolutionists could not fight for ideas alone, but for material benefits, improved tangible conditions, and a brighter future for children. According to Blackey, Fanon “paid little attention to the details of making a revolution; he was more interested in encouraging their occurrence” (195). Fanon had no time for the minor details of war. As a revolutionary figure, he wanted action rather than pedantic analysis, and therefore wrote to incite, to anger, and to rail against the evils of exploitation.

3.8 National culture

As Fanon notes in his essay on violence, the wheels of colonialism are not kept in motion by physical force alone. Ideological enslavement—the indoctrination of the idea that it is right and proper for some people to rule over others—is a tool used to make colonized peoples accept their lower ranking in the colonial order of things. The colonized must be made to see that their way of viewing the world is inferior to a worldview that reflects and supports colonial values. In order to exalt this Eurocentric interpretation of the world, it is necessary to first devalue and discredit the cultural values of the colonized peoples. Sartre discusses the dehumanizing effect of colonialism in his introduction, noting: “Everything will be done to wipe out their traditions, to substitute our language for theirs and to destroy their culture without giving them ours” (Fanon 19). And it is not enough to maintain that the native’s society is one lacking in value: indeed, the settler goes one step further and depicts the native himself as the personification of evil. Of the native, Fanon states:

He represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values. He is, let us dare to admit, the enemy of values, and in this sense he is the absolute evil. He is the corrosive element, destroying all that comes near him; he is the deforming element, defiguring all that has to do with beauty or morality. (Fanon 34)

This process did not, of course, occur overnight. Since the 15th century, ethnocentrism and xenophobia have characterized, fashioned, and conditioned the European attitude toward African peoples. Defined in Eurocentric terms, the African

never had the opportunity to be integrated as a social equal. According to Linus A. Hoskins, Eurocentric exclusiveness and its striving for global dominance left no place for the African except servitude and second-class citizenship” (247). Eurocentric ideology has refused to accept Africans on the basis of their humanity because of the color of their skin. As a result, Eurocentric history intentionally propagated the myth that Africa was a “Dark Continent”—dark not only because of the color of its inhabitants’ skin but because it had yet to be illuminated by European knowledge and superior moral and spiritual beliefs. The Dark Continent was a land overrun with cannibals, savages, and inferior, uncivilized, backward, primitive peoples, devoid of knowledge and culture and possessing evil traits and desires (Hoskins 274). According to Fanon, one of the greatest evils of colonialism is that “it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it,” explicitly warning Africans that if the gallant European—who, with his innate intelligence, beauty, and moral superiority, was sent to rescue Africa from the depths of its depravity—were to leave, the natives “would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality” (170).

With this in mind, Fanon wrote the chapter “On National Culture”, which was originally a statement made at the Second Congress of Black Artists and Writers in Rome in 1959. As he noted in the chapter “The Pitfalls of National Consciousness”, it is vital for a new nation to construct a national consciousness both before and after independence. In this statement on national culture, Fanon urges that it is the responsibility of writers and intellectuals to forge this national consciousness in their work. He asserts that the native intellectual needs to use the nation as his focal point because it allows him to address the specific historical circumstances and challenges

of one particular colonized location. The writer plays such an integral role in this process because the construction of a distinctly national consciousness is dependent upon cultural activities, as national consciousness and national culture are inseparable.

According to Fanon, three phases go into the creation of a specific national culture. First, the native intellectual mimics the dominant trends of the colonizing power's literature. The cultural traditions of the colonized nation are ignored and the intellectual class is distanced from the masses in a damaging way. This is essentially a useless and harmful phase. According to Blackey, Fanon warned that, in pursuing the goal for independence, "none of the African nations could afford to imitate western and capitalistic ways of life; in fact, none should *dare* imitate the west because it would only lead to a similar moral and spiritual debasement" (208).

Second, the native intellectual becomes disillusioned with the first phase and decides to concern himself with the cultural history of the people. He therefore renounces the colonizing power and glorifies all things indigenous. By turning backward toward his roots, the native intellectual "turns himself into the defender of his people's past; he is willing to be counted as one of them, and henceforth he is even capable of laughing at his past cowardice" (Fanon 176). This is quite similar to Garvey's crusade to assert the positive qualities of Africa's past, to glorify and celebrate all things African. On ideological grounds, though, Fanon would question the relevancy of *merely* asserting such ideas, and would argue that Garvey's platform fell short of what was necessary to effect an actual revolution. Little can be accomplished by passively displaying these ideas rather than actively putting them to work, which Fanon calls the literature of "just-before-the-battle" (179). The problem

is that the native intellectual becomes so immersed in the past that he begins to neglect the future. In this regard, Fanon's ideas call for a break from the teachings of Garvey and from the Negritude writings of predecessors such as Aime Cesaire and Leopold Senghor. Though he recognizes that the obliteration of Africa's cultural past is a weapon brandished by the colonial power, and that steps must be taken to restore belief in Africa's culture, he strongly believes that this, in itself, is an empty exercise. While he clearly sympathizes with certain aspects of Garvey's thought and that of proponents of Negritude—particularly their celebration of “blackness”—he argues that their call for a nostalgic celebration of a mythic African past does little to solve the problems of the present. Fanon was convinced of this as early as 1952, when he stated:

I am a man, and what I have to recapture is the whole past of the world...In no way should I dedicate myself to the revival of an unjustly unrecognized Negro civilisation...I am not a prisoner of history. I should constantly remind myself that the real leap consists in introducing invention into existence. In the world through which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself...Let us be clearly understood. I am convinced that it would be of the greatest interest to be able to have contact with a Negro literature or architecture of the third century before Christ. I should be very happy to know that a correspondence had flourished between some Negro philosopher and Plato. But I can absolutely not see how this fact would change anything in the lives of the eight-year-old children who labour in the cane fields of Martinique or Guadeloupe. (Fanon qtd. in Wright 680)

Fanon essentially considered the glorification of the African past by leaders such as Garvey, Senghor, Padmore, and Nkrumah as an opiate to distract the masses from their suffering in the present. As Derek Wright notes, “Cultural retrievals of usable alternative pasts, though necessary to extricate Africa from the corrupting swamp of colonial culture, had a small part to play in the alleviation of suffering” (681).

It is in the third, or fighting, phase where the native intellectual becomes directly involved in the people’s struggle for independence. Realizing that it is not enough to simply call attention to cultural traditions of the past, the intellectual tries to strike a dynamic relationship between the glories of the past and the struggles of the present. Fanon describes this as “a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature” (179). Unlike the second phase, which is merely an empty celebration of the past, this fighting phase uses the past with the intention of opening up the future. “To fight for national culture means in the first place to fight for the liberation of the nation,” and this is accomplished not only by debunking the myths propagated by colonialists but by constructing a new vision of the future (Fanon 187). Traditional culture is therefore modified in a way that forges a national consciousness that places the struggle of the people at its heart. For example, oral storytellers reinterpret tales of old in a way that brings them up to date and modernizes the kinds of struggles that the stories evoke. The intellectual must also be conversant with the day-to-day struggle of the masses. Only work that is unique to the moment of production, rather than a repetition of pre-existing cultural forms, will help unite the intellectuals and the masses. If this is handled properly, the artist becomes a radical player in the people’s struggle against colonialism.

Conclusion

At an assembly held to honor Marcus Garvey's memory in Kingston in 1965, Martin Luther King, Jr. told the crowd:

Marcus Garvey was the first man of color in the history of the United States to lead and develop a mass movement. He was the first man, on a mass scale, and level, to give millions of Negroes a sense of dignity and destiny, and make the Negro feel that he was somebody.

(King qtd. in Blaisdell iii)

Although Garvey's plans did not work out as he would have hoped, it is absurd to suggest that he was a marginal figure, or that his ideas have since faded into obscurity. Conversely, the spirit of his Pan-African ideals—his dream that those of African heritage will redeem Africa and drive away European colonial powers—are very much alive today, and have inspired a number of movements. One such movement is the Rastafari, who consider Garvey a religious prophet, and sometimes even the reincarnation of John the Baptist. In addition, his ideas about black nationalism laid the tracks for the foundation of the Nation of Islam. As Young notes:

Aspects of Garvey's black nationalism and black pride, together with the UNIA's insistence in its Declaration of Rights that black people should not feel bound to obey discriminatory laws, have always remained at the core of African-American political culture... (220)

Malcolm X, whose father was a member in the UNIA, would later write, "Every time you see another nation on the African continent become independent, you know that

Marcus Garvey is alive” (X qtd. in Blaisdell xi). Tony Martin echoed this idea with his declaration that it the liberation movements of the 1960s served to confirm Garvey’s greatness:

It took the Black Power revolution of the 1960s with its revival of Garvey’s red, black and green, his race pride, his self-reliance, his separatism, his anti-imperialism and his revolutionary nationalism to belatedly return to Garvey the recognition he deserves as a major, if not *the* major black figure of the century. (Martin qtd. in Blaisdell xi)

In addition, a recent study by Thandeka K. Chapman credits Garveyism for making numerous contributions to current doctrines of multicultural education. Chapman states that “Striking similarities appear between the UNIA's historical perspectives on the education of children of African descent and today's multicultural education for all children” and concludes by declaring: “Garveyism stands as a solid example of those grassroots political movements that fought for the social and financial equality of marginalized groups but have received very little academic attention” (426; 432). For all of these reasons, we can see that although Garvey’s plans for an African state never materialized to his satisfaction, his memory has been kept alive worldwide and he will continue to be viewed as one of the founding figures in the American civil rights movement.

In light of George Padmore’s enormous output, it is puzzling that his name is not as recognized on a universal scale as some of the other great race leaders. Although he was well-known in African circles, he was, according to Roger Kanet, “One of the most important men of the twentieth century-even though his name is

not well known and his exploits largely forgotten” (251). Though few would deny that his prodigious efforts on behalf of African liberation were genuine, he is, nonetheless, regarded as somewhat of an anomalous figure. His complex role as a Marxian revolutionary committed to the destruction of imperialism and colonialism, an African liberator, and a man who fought for the freedom of blacks in general makes it difficult to neatly characterize his career. His reputation as a race leader seems to be adulterated by his fixation with Marxism, which may explain why there is a lingering uncertainty about his position as a prominent black leader. He is rarely placed in the same class as Garvey or Du Bois. Yet a closer study of Padmore’s career, for those who take the time to do so, reveals a man whose deeply complex ideologies mirror the many dimensions of the movement for African emancipation. That he adapted his philosophies over the years to adjust to a changing world ought to be viewed as a strength rather than an inconsistency. There are no simple answers to Africa’s problems, just as there is no authoritative definition of Pan-Africanism or African socialism. But it must be remembered that, as leftist activists struggled for decades to mold the idea of a united Africa into something operative, it was Padmore who “gave this idea its most precise meaning, including the strategy toward achieving it” (Williams, “Nkrumahism” 121). Moreover, it was Padmore and his African conduit Nkrumah who were most responsible for turning Pan-Africanism into a full-blown socialist ideal. As a driving force behind the 1945 Pan-African Congress and one of the most important architects of African decolonization and African socialism, Padmore deserves a spot in the pantheon of great black leaders. If in fact, as Robert Young maintains, “African socialism was the great achievement of

twentieth-century African political theory,” shouldn’t we venerate one of the men who provided the impetus for it? (241).

Though there are certainly some inconsistencies in the writings of Frantz Fanon, his legacy speaks for itself. His works have inspired anti-colonial liberation movements for more than four decades, and, in light of historical events that occurred in the 1960s following the publication of *The Wretched of the Earth*, we can see that his analysis proved immediately useful for a number of fledgling nations and radical thinkers. His proposal to unite the exceedingly radical urban nationalists with the rural masses was put into practice by Cuba and by Southern and Northern Rhodesia in their struggles for independence. His admonition that the colonialist bourgeoisie has a strong tendency to prey upon the weaker classes, and that efforts must be undertaken to alter this course, has been widely acknowledged by African leaders, from Leopold Senghor to Sekou Toure. From an ideological standpoint, his insight into the dominant role played by capitalist countries in the international economy and his modifications of orthodox Marxism—particularly his declaration that developing nations must look to the lumpenproletariat, and not the workers, as the driving revolutionary force—have proved invaluable to political thinkers. And finally, his radical conclusion that only violence can force settlers to relinquish their privileges was soon adopted by Cuban revolutionaries and representatives of the Black Power movement (Grohs 555). It is for this last position that he is best remembered.

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