

**Idylls, Imitation, Ideology and Imperialism:  
A Fanonian Critique of National Liberation**

**By**

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# Contents

<a href="#"><u>Abstract</u></a> .....	4
<a href="#"><u>Introduction</u></a> .....	5
<a href="#"><u>Chapter 1: The National Bourgeoisie</u></a> .....	29
<a href="#"><u>Nationalism: A Bourgeois Ideology</u></a> .....	33
<a href="#"><u>Nationalism, Bourgeoisies and National Bourgeoisies in Africa</u></a> .....	38
<a href="#"><u>National Liberation as an Ideology of Western Modernity</u></a> .....	38
<a href="#"><u>Formation of the National Bourgeoisie</u></a> .....	42
<a href="#"><u>Indirect Rule</u></a> .....	50
<a href="#"><u>Prosperity, Democracy, Socialism: For the People or the Bourgeoisies?</u></a> .....	54
<a href="#"><u>The National Bourgeoisie and Capital Accumulation</u></a> .....	59
<a href="#"><u>Forced Removals</u></a> .....	61
<a href="#"><u>Underdevelopment</u></a> .....	63
<a href="#"><u>Debt</u></a> .....	67
<a href="#"><u>Fresh Fields?</u></a> .....	68
<a href="#"><u>National Bourgeoisie and International Imperialism</u></a> .....	70
<a href="#"><u>Modernisation?</u></a> .....	72
<a href="#"><u>Chapter 2: Racist and Consumerist Ideologies in Post-Colonial Societies</u></a> .....	79
<a href="#"><u>False Needs and Consumerism in Late Capitalism</u></a> .....	80
<a href="#"><u>Racism: A Modern Ideology</u></a> .....	88
<a href="#"><u>New Forms of Racism: Racial Identity and Discourse</u></a> .....	100
<a href="#"><u>Covert Racism</u></a> .....	100
<a href="#"><u>Racism Everywhere</u></a> .....	105
<a href="#"><u>The Need for Racial Identity</u></a> .....	109
<a href="#"><u>The Desire to Be White</u></a> .....	112
<a href="#"><u>The Desire to Be White Has a Neurotic Structure</u></a> .....	113
<a href="#"><u>The Desire to Be White as Desire to Consume</u></a> .....	116

<a href="#">Other Effects</a> .....	120
<b><a href="#">Chapter 3: Reification in The Politics of National Liberation</a></b> .....	124
<a href="#">Alienation and Fragmentation</a> .....	126
<a href="#">Democracy</a> .....	127
<a href="#">Dictatorship and Democracy</a> .....	129
<a href="#">The Right to Vote as Democracy</a> .....	135
<a href="#">Corruption: The Ideological Use of State Capture</a> .....	139
<a href="#">Marxism, Socialism and Social Democracy</a> .....	150
<a href="#">African Socialism</a> .....	158
<a href="#">Non-Violence</a> .....	165
<a href="#">National Liberation as Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution</a> .....	169
<b><a href="#">Conclusion</a></b> .....	171
<b><a href="#">Bibliography</a></b> .....	182

## **Abstract**

Decolonisation flooded through Africa after WW2, spearheaded by national liberation movements, apparently. In most cases, this did not lead to national sovereignty or independence, and did not alleviate poverty. Decolonisation eventually led to inequality, economic stagnation, and new, subtle forms of outside control. Fanon's incomplete work shows contradictions in national liberation (and the parties which represent it). Using Fanon's work, I criticise nationalism, the expected role of the national bourgeoisie, racism and consumerism, and reified conceptions of politics, democracy, corruption and socialism. Each of these reified conceptions, common to decolonial movements, is presented by the national liberation movements as the overcoming of problems of Western modernity. In fact, I show that these conceptions are all new forms of the problems they claim to overcome. I supplement Fanon's work with ideas and arguments from Marxism and psychoanalysis, as well as many interesting examples from decolonisation. These show how Fanon's predictions were frequently correct, though he lived to see few of them. I use Fanon's writing to show some of the ideologies underlying the worldview of national liberation. Those ideological motifs that are continually present include Freudian illusion, reification (I show how countries, leaders, people etc. are erroneously represented as independent of each other), false identification (particularly the representation of a whole thing by its parts or its symbols, including operationalism), interpellation of individuals as subjects, and images and symbols that manipulate the unconscious. These lead to false interpretations of decolonisation, and individuals celebrating their own domination. Fanon understands decolonisation as not an end to colonisation but a continuation of imperialism; we will read it thus, not as a break from the past but a continuation of its problems.

## Introduction

During the latter half of the twentieth century, Africa experienced great upheavals, in the phenomenon called decolonisation. Decolonisation was expected to bring national sovereignty, liberation, independence, democracy, non-racialism, and economic abundance to Africa. But even in its early stages, Frantz Fanon observed that the opposite was happening: imperialism, dependence, underdevelopment, poverty, racism, individualism and subjugation. For Fanon, Africa was achieving a “false decolonisation” leaving real power in the hands of foreigners and their “agents” among the politically ruling elites.<sup>1</sup> Fanon realised that decolonisation was being led by groups and leaders who were thoroughly influenced by new forms of imperialism: the changes were occurring within and as part of the system of imperialism. True liberation, he argued, would require the whole system to be overthrown.<sup>2</sup>

In this thesis, we will use Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* as a starting-point to analyse some of the ideologies surrounding decolonisation. In each chapter, we will look at one dominant idea of European modernity, bourgeois revolutions and/or colonialism and see how in a professed attempt to challenge or overcome it, national liberation actually copied it. *The Wretched of the Earth* is an important book because it shows that Fanon perceived many problems with national liberation while they were still in their infancy. It was his last work and strongly engages with his other writing, developing many conclusions from arguments in his earlier works. One of Fanon’s most important observations is how the liberation movements try to copy their dominators: “imitation” and “nauseating mimicry”. Reiland Rabaka notes<sup>3</sup> that this vital theme is most evident in *The Wretched of the Earth*, much less in Fanon’s other work besides *Black Skin, White Masks*. Fanon saw most decolonial and postcolonial movements and ideologies as little more than vague attempts to blindly copy the global north and west. Particularly, we will see that they emulate European modernity, on many levels: its ideas, ideologies, people, practices, political models, and more. This involves demanding and celebrating the real and perceived freedoms which come with bourgeois revolutions and the accumulation of capital.

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<sup>1</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, translated by Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 59; and Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of the Continent Since Independence* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2011), 126.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. (Both)

<sup>3</sup> Reiland Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory: Reconstructing the Black Radical Tradition, from WEB Du Bois and CLR James to Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral* (Lexington Books, 2010), 178.

### National Liberation and Nationalism

The main objects of Fanon's criticism in *The Wretched of the Earth* are nationalist and national liberation movements and parties. These are the groups that spearheaded the fight for decolonisation, and the parties that governed African countries after decolonisation. As the name implies, these groups mobilise themselves and the people on national bases, necessarily implying that liberation has to take the form of a revolution as a nation. Historically, African liberation movements began proclaiming nationalist objectives in the immediate post-WW2 era.<sup>4</sup> Although they may appear to contradict each other, nationalism has historically been linked (often by racism) to the bourgeoisie<sup>5</sup> and to imperialism.<sup>6</sup> Globalisation may appear inherently opposed to nation states and national sovereignty, and it has somewhat diminished the power of nation-states; yet thus far globalisation has actually led to the increase of nationalism.<sup>7</sup> In very many cases, national liberation involved creating a nation where there had been none. At the time of decolonisation (and partly a result of colonisation and colonial uneven development) most African countries consisted of various groups and varieties of different people, of different languages and differing stages of political and social development. Emerging from colonialism, most African people experienced their identities primarily on ethnic and racial, not national, bases.<sup>8</sup> This means that national liberation is a process not only of liberating nations, but also of creating nations; the processes of mobilising citizens on national grounds and giving them reason to identify on national grounds are largely the same. Many of these parties claim to not be nationalist, or to not be national liberation parties. Some of them saw themselves as pan-African or international, like Kwame Nkrumah or the African National Congress (ANC). Yet the parties that led the fight for decolonisation and took over government, and their successors, invariably use rhetoric of national liberation.

The national liberation movements, and the citizens and other forces that followed and supported them, want the nations to be liberated. Liberated from colonial rule. Their various demands include: that the nation achieve political and economic power; that racism be ended;

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<sup>4</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 133.

<sup>5</sup> Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 6, 122. See Chapter 1 of this thesis too.

<sup>6</sup> David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 44-5, 50.

<sup>7</sup> Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 157.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 132-3.

democracy; that the nation becomes able to make its own decisions, without foreign interference; that all people in the state are included in the nation; formal equality. They expect national liberation to bring modernisation, technology and wealth, to end poverty, and to help African nations catch up with Europe. In these ways, the idea of national liberation has many parallels with the aims of bourgeois-democratic revolutions. Indeed, it is common for national liberation parties to explicitly describe their aims as bourgeois-democratic revolutions, even while many simultaneously called their aims socialist, sometimes even proletarian revolutions. But we shall see that even those had aims parallel to bourgeois revolutions.

What are bourgeois revolutions? The archetypal bourgeois revolutions were the English, American and French (I would also argue that the great “socialist” revolutions here, such as the Russian of 1917, reforms led by Mikhail Gorbachev, and the Chinese revolutions led by Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, were called socialist but were really more bourgeois). These were revolutions which aimed to overthrow feudal systems. As such, bourgeois revolutions aim to topple monarchy and oligarchy, end class, bring all the people together socially and politically, include all citizens in political decisions, unite the nation with the people (rather than the sovereign), bring technology and modernisation, end poverty. They aim to end stagnation, oligarchy, aristocracy, corruption and imperialism, to establish freedom, justice, individual autonomy, and to unify all citizens with the nation and sovereignty. Ending foreign domination, including colonisation, was an aim of many of the early bourgeois revolutions, most obvious in the Dutch Revolt of 1586-1646 and the American Revolution of 1776. The archetypal bourgeois revolutions (particularly the French, but also the British, American and others) were nationalist revolutions, and symbols of the unification of the nation, the people and the sovereign.<sup>9</sup>

These aims are common to bourgeois revolutions, but the essence of bourgeois revolutions is that they bring the bourgeoisie to power and bring about the capitalist system. With bourgeois rule comes the development of a large proletariat force, which (on orthodox Marxist accounts) becomes the force with most revolutionary potential. The development of a proletariat class entails the setting free of people, that is separating the people from the means

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<sup>9</sup> Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 122. See Also Brian Jenkins, *Nationalism in France: Class and Nation since 1789*. London: Routledge, 1990.



of production, their source of livelihood.<sup>10</sup> These people then have to try to sell their labour for wages,<sup>11</sup> and many end up unemployed, often with no way to meet their basic needs.<sup>12</sup> Marx sees capitalism firstly as a mode of production: “the fundamental economic relationship of capitalism is constituted by the free labourer’s sale of his labour-power, whose necessary precondition is the loss by the direct producer of ownership of the means of production.”<sup>13</sup> We will see that this process of separating the people from the means of production began in Africa with colonisation but has been a fundamental part of decolonisation. Rhetoric about bourgeois and nationalist revolutions (especially that which celebrates them) usually does not emphasise these basic changes. Such rhetoric emphasises related changes, such as those described in the next paragraph, while missing the separation of the people from their means of survival.

(Genuine) bourgeois revolutions bring massive changes throughout society, including to the way that power operates. Importantly, the spread of the commodity and commodity relations is one of the developments that lessen the need for and use of direct violence to control citizens (we will apply this to racism in Chapter 2); as Hegel shows, “the spread of commodity relations diminished the weight of extra-economic coercion, and in doing so, it freed the economy – and broadly society – from the sphere of politics.”<sup>14</sup> Fanon observes that colonial regimes rely more on direct violence and repression (“the language of pure force”)<sup>15</sup> and that hegemony (the ways individuals are made to consent to their own domination) and ideology<sup>16</sup> occur more in “capitalist societies” (which he is contrasting with colonies),

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<sup>10</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Volume 1, translated by Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin, 1990), 875.

<sup>11</sup> For a detailed account of this process, see *ibid.*, 873-940.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 793-4.

<sup>13</sup> Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (London: New Left Books, 1977), 23. See also Karl Marx, *Capital Vol 1*, 274.

<sup>14</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 14.

<sup>15</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 38.

<sup>16</sup> For an interesting discussion of ideology, see Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London and New York: Verso, 1991). Eagleton discusses various definitions and theories of ideology, showing for instance that this complex concept goes beyond ideas, truth and reality. Pages 112-123 discuss Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) also contains interesting discussions of ideology: see especially 55-74. On 56, Williams argues that rather than attempting to find a single and correct definition of ideology, “it is more to the point to return the term and its variations to the issues within which it and these were formed”. It would also not be possible to provide a satisfactory definition of this complex term here, so in addition to referring the reader to the books mentioned above, I will explain each concept on its own – Lukacs and reification, Althusser and interpellation, Freud and illusion, Lacan and misrecognition, Marcuse and operationalism, etc. – when it is first discussed. The reader would do well to bear these theories in mind, for they are present in this thesis more than they can be mentioned, just as they exist throughout the society and our psyches without always being apparent.

making police, military, the law etc. less necessary for keeping the exploited submissive. “The colonial world is a world cut in two. The dividing line, the frontiers are shown by barracks and police stations. In the colonies it is the policeman and the soldier who are the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression.” Fanon contrasts this with “capitalist societies”, which have “an atmosphere of submission and of inhibition which lightens the task of policing considerably.”<sup>17</sup> Fanon notes that this “atmosphere of submission” is caused, among other things, by the educational system, the family, morality, religion, rewards, “moral teachers”, “counsellors”, “bewilderers”.<sup>18</sup> This is one of the many parallels between colonialism and feudalism. In the later stages of feudalism, many people experienced themselves as opposed to the sovereign.<sup>19</sup> This was both cause and result of power mostly relying on what Marx calls “direct extra-economic force”,<sup>20</sup> or similarly what Louis Althusser calls the “repressive state apparatus” to control the population. The repressive state apparatus includes the army and police force, and mostly involves real or threatened violence towards dissidents.<sup>21</sup> Althusser observes a turn towards ideology after bourgeois revolutions, although the repressive state apparatus is still used, and the two work together. Showing the strong influence of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, Althusser argues that ideology works by making individuals misrecognise themselves.<sup>22</sup> Ideological misrecognition expresses wishes (i.e. Freudian illusion).<sup>23</sup> Individuals experience themselves as more complete and influential than they really are. In this case, on an Althusserian account, individuals become complacent with their own domination after bourgeois and nationalist revolutions because they experience themselves as politically empowered, as part of the nation and sovereign.

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<sup>17</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 38.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995). This is a major argument throughout the book, but see especially the end of the first section (55-60) and first chapter of the second section (64-87).

<sup>20</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol 1, 899-900.

<sup>21</sup> Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, translated by Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, and New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 136-8.

<sup>22</sup> Louis Althusser, *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of the Scientists and Other Essays*, edited by Gregory Elliott, translated by Ben Brewster (London and New York: Verso, 1990), 29-30.

<sup>23</sup> Freud's powerful theory of illusion argues that desires influence beliefs; an illusion is something we believe because we want it to be true, not because evidence suggests its verity: Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, translated by James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961). Freud sees such thinking as inherent to group psychology; he argues that psychological groups (including nations and races) “have never thirsted after truth. They demand illusions, and cannot do without them.” Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, translated by James Strachey (London and Vienna: The International Psycho-Analytic Press, 1922), 19-20, 82, 101. Based on Freud, Althusser argues that ideology appears to describe reality but really expresses desires: Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, translated by Ben Brewster (London and New York: Verso, 1969), 234.

Some of these arguments were taken up by Althusser's student Michel Foucault, whose analysis of modernity has many parallels with Fanon's work. We will see many of these meeting-points throughout this thesis; for instance, both Fanon and Foucault see an ideology (though they don't call it ideology) of bourgeois-democratic-nationalist revolutions making the people experience themselves as having sovereign power. Like Foucault, we will be reading Fanon as interpreter and critic of modernity and modernism (and postmodernity and postmodernism). Both thinkers find sinister currents beneath the developments that came with modernity and postmodernity and their idyllic celebrations.<sup>24</sup>

During the colonial period, there were many debates over whether decolonisation should take the form of a bourgeois revolution or a socialist revolution ("socialist" in this case meaning a revolution that would overcome capitalism and bring about an entirely new mode of production, with the people collectively owning the means of production). A common argument for bourgeois revolutions (parallel to arguments between the Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and others in the early twentieth century) was that the colonised countries had a predominantly feudal mode of production and did not have the requisite economic development for a successful socialist revolution; on this view, what was needed was first a bourgeois revolution, which would effect the setting for a socialist revolution.<sup>25</sup> Many national liberation movements claimed that this was their aim: to lead bourgeois revolutions as a means to achieving socialism. As André Gunder Frank shows, this view assumes that all countries develop in the same way.<sup>26</sup> In reality, however, the colonised countries are not following in the footsteps of the developed countries. The developed countries developed with relative independence, and later through colonialism, whereas the (formerly) colonised countries try to develop in the era of globalisation and imperialism. The developed countries were once undeveloped, but the colonies are underdeveloped.<sup>27</sup> Because of this, we will see

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<sup>24</sup> Throughout this thesis I argue that Foucault and Fanon reached similar conclusions. In fact, it turns out that Fanon read some of Foucault's earlier works, and owned a copy of *History of Madness*: see Jean Khalifa, "Frantz Fanon's Library" in Frantz Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom*, 647. Attempts to read Fanon and Foucault together are most commonly found in queer theory, e.g. Terry Goldie, "Saint Fanon and the 'Homosexual Territory'" in Anthony Alessandrini (editor), *Frantz Fanon: Critical Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005). Alessandrini compares Fanon and Foucault interestingly in Anthony Alessandrini, *Frantz Fanon and the Future of Cultural Politics* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014). It is not clear whether Fanon read any work by Althusser, but he did read Althusser's major influences, including Baruch Spinoza, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Jacques Lacan, saying that Lacan's arguments helped him understand colonialism: Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Routledge: London and New York, 1994), 32. In retrospect, this explains why Althusser's, Foucault's and Laclau's work have been useful to my interpretation of Fanon.

<sup>25</sup> Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, 15-20.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

that the national bourgeoisies are usually part of imperialism, not a revolutionary force. Bourgeois revolutions would not be a step towards overcoming the problems of capitalist production, but towards further integrating the colonised countries into international capitalism and imperialism.

Understanding this, Fanon argues that the nationalist parties try to model African development on European development and examples without accounting for the differences between Africa and Europe; they fetishize Europe and European development.<sup>28</sup> The nationalist parties are formed along with an “intellectual elite”,<sup>29</sup> most of whom are “colonised intellectuals”.<sup>30</sup> They are a class of educated natives who really support imperialism, “unreservedly” championing clichéd European values which have become “lifeless, colourless knickknacks”.<sup>31</sup> These parties, leaders and intellectuals do not represent the people, but analyse and understand the people according to the ruling ideas, ideas that support imperialism. We will see that this applies to most of the decolonial leaders and ideas, who to a large extent were formed in, of and by Europe. We will apply this to nationalism, national liberation, Négritude, Pan-Africanism, democracy, corruption and others: ideas the liberation leaders learned in Europe and which (sometimes because of their specific bourgeois forms) tend to not challenge imperialism but support it. Faith in the revolutionary power of the national bourgeoisie is one of the ways that the colonised people try to mimic Europe and its development. A major theme throughout Fanon’s work is that oppressed people try to be like their oppressors. Fanon notes “it is very true that we need a model, and that we want blueprints and examples. For many among us the European model is the most inspiring.”<sup>32</sup> But this means that we should use this model when it will benefit us, and depart from it when it will harm us; Fanon sees the potentiality for solution to “all the great problems of humanity” in European thought.<sup>33</sup> He means that we should think about why this particular model inspires us, that we should recognise the ideological currents that make us

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<sup>28</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 108. The colonised intellectuals want to copy countries that appear “successful”, including the USA and many European countries. I will generally follow Fanon and Edmund Husserl and call this ideal “Europe” or “the West”, noting that this excludes some aspects of geographical Europe and includes things not part of geographical Europe, such as the USA. Husserl defines Europe not geographically but “spiritually”: “here the title ‘Europe’ clearly refers to the unity of a spiritual life, activity, creation, with all its ends, interests, cares and endeavours, with its products of purposeful activity, institutions, organisations.” Cited in Lewis Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man: An Essay on Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 6.

<sup>29</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 108.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-7.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 312.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 314.

see Europe as a model; Fanon wants us to transcend the boundaries of this society, but notes that we have to use the tools of this society for the task of transcending it. This mimicry includes that people of colour try to be white, colonised people try to be (like) colonisers, and underdeveloped countries try to be like the West. Fanon argues that we (all people, particularly people of colour) are overwhelmed by comparison, comparing ourselves to everyone we encounter.<sup>34</sup> For Fanon, comparison is in the identity of people of colour (a result of racial domination). “The Negro is comparison.”<sup>35</sup>

The national liberation groups try to be like the colonising and imperial classes. The European values they champion, including justice, liberty, equality, individual autonomy, etc. (often presented as something different, e.g. something innate in Africans), were thorough parts of modern colonialism and racism.<sup>36</sup> For instance, colonising armies saw themselves as heroes, spreading these civilised ideals to inferior people.<sup>37</sup> We will see that the values of national liberation are parallel, bringing some freedoms (e.g. political) but actually justifications for imperialism. Fanon notes that the Rights of Man is directly linked to the suffering of humanity;<sup>38</sup> the Europe copied by national liberation movements is integrally structured on exploitation.

For Fanon, national liberation is apparently spearheaded by the national bourgeoisies and nationalist parties, but really demanded by international capital. This interference shows why the colonies could not completely mimic European bourgeois revolutions, which occurred in different circumstances (particularly, with less foreign interference). Decolonisation doesn't happen because the people have suddenly become more revolutionary, or strengthened their revolutionary zeal (be it violence or negotiations). As he notes,<sup>39</sup> there are major global, structural and ideological processes and forces involved in decolonisation, and pressure on colonisation often comes from outside (including imperial) forces. Let us consider these forces by briefly looking at the historical trends around decolonisation.

## Timeline

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<sup>34</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 163-5.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>36</sup> Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds* (Johannesburg: Penguin, 2012), 35-6.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 312.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

1846-50: the first major crisis of capitalist overaccumulation occurs throughout Europe. This leads to a consolidation of bourgeois influence within governments, and new uses for capital within Europe. By around 1870, surplus capital is forced to seek new uses out of Europe, and modern colonialism receives a boost.

Late-19<sup>th</sup> century-WW2: Main period of colonisation of Africa: the “scramble for Africa”. Starting with colonisation and continuing today, “Europe is literally the creation of the Third World.”<sup>40</sup> From around the 1870s, African development slows relative to the rest of the world (in both potential and absolute terms) and European development increases as a result.<sup>41</sup> This underdevelopment only slows temporarily when Western countries want products for the Second World War and when they permit and use development for capital accumulation.<sup>42</sup> Many of the modern boundaries that exist to divide Africa into nation-states are decided at this time, notably at the 1885 conference in Berlin.<sup>43</sup> Colonialism brings capitalism to Africa: a proletariat class begins to be formed and various processes of capital accumulation lead to a flow of wealth from Africa, particularly to London, Lisbon and New York.<sup>44</sup> At this time, the main opposition to class power and colonialism comes from workers’ movements, which act on a regional scale.<sup>45</sup>

1940s: Working-class power grows, reaching an apex in Africa at the end of the 1940s; regionalism and Third-World solidarity descend from this point.<sup>46</sup> Working-class power declines from here, even though the working class continues to grow. Working class movements are split by racialism and racial conflict and overwhelmed by state oppression and nationalist movements, which strengthen throughout Africa from the 1950s, and are usually hostile to working-class and regional movements.<sup>47,48</sup> Both nationalist and workers’

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 102-3.

<sup>41</sup> Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Baltimore: Black Classics Press, 2011), 193.

<sup>42</sup> Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution: A Commentary on the Views of Frantz Fanon, Régis Debray and Herbert Marcuse* (New York: International Publishers, 1977), 39-40.

<sup>43</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 32.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 33-4.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>46</sup> Epifanio San Juan, “Postcolonialism and the Problematic of Uneven Development”, in Crystal Bartolovich and Neil Lazarus (editors), *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 238.

<sup>47</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 33.

<sup>48</sup> Fanon has been accused of downgrading the role of workers in the struggle against imperialism. See Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 165, 169-70, 173. I think there is some accuracy to this assessment. However, Fanon also provides the tools for understanding and critiquing the downgrading of the role of workers, especially in his critiques of racism and nationalism (I use these tools throughout this thesis). Woddis subsequently compares Fanon to Marx, and is perhaps too harsh when he declares “Fanon nowhere shows any understanding of Marxism”. We will see later that Fanon did understand some of Marx’s work and that the

movements express growing dissatisfaction with colonisation. The Second World War brings major changes to Africa, including rapid modernisation and industrialisation when colonial governments wanted to increase production of resources for the war.<sup>49</sup> The USA emerges as the world's strongest country (with far greater technology, production and military than any other state and very strong currency).<sup>50</sup> Many European states have been severely harmed by the war, having lost population, military and industrial capacity. (This includes the USSR, and it appears that the USA and UK prolonged the war in order to weaken the USSR.)<sup>51</sup> The USA now has influence over weakened European countries, which have borrowed large amounts of money from the USA. To extend its global influence it starts to provide "economic and military protection for properties classes or political/military elites wherever they happen to be."<sup>52</sup> It adopts a practice of forgiving European debt in exchange for policies that would open new markets to USA interests and increase its control in the face of the USSR. The USSR and Cuba have already been supporting national liberation movements in Africa;<sup>53</sup> the USA begins demanding African independence particularly after the war, but beginning significantly earlier.<sup>54</sup> With the Cold War beginning, the USA and USSR take new interest in the underdeveloped world, even though Western countries stop associating themselves with imperialism.<sup>55</sup>

1950s: Nationalism has emerged as a political force in Africa, but most nationalist leaders do not want political independence.<sup>56</sup> Even by 1959, new French president Charles de Gaulle is warning that secession would be "disastrous" for France's colonies, and bullying those who hint at wanting independence.<sup>57</sup> Kwame Nkrumah has advocated independence for Ghana and other African countries from at least the late 1940s, but even by the end of the 1950s he, Ahmed Sékou Touré of Guinea, and Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt are unique in wanting independence for African countries.<sup>58</sup> Martin Meredith sees the Suez crisis (1956-7) as

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two theorists complement each other. Woddis also admits that Fanon's theory of the working-class is undeveloped, and might have improved had he lived longer.

<sup>49</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 20.

<sup>50</sup> David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, 49.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>53</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 79.

<sup>54</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 21: When Churchill and Roosevelt drew up the Atlantic Charter in 1941, Churchill proposed that only European nations be given self-determination and the right to choose their own government. Roosevelt, however, thought that all colonised peoples should be given these rights.

<sup>55</sup> John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time* (London: Bantam, 2006), 5.

<sup>56</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 65.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 66,

marking the end of Britain's colonial ambitions.<sup>59</sup> With the approval of the political leaderships of the USA, UK, USSR, and other imperial governments, Ghana gains formal independence and majority rule in 1957. Between 1945 and 1960 (mostly before decolonisation) the economies of colonial Africa expand by 4-6 per cent per annum.<sup>60</sup> They have been sparked by demand from WW2 (which led to improved technology and productive apparatuses); African production continues to increase e.g. because of this improved technology and because the war has devastated many European economies, making Europe relatively unproductive in the short term at least. However the war has also led to discontent increasing in many African countries: Nkrumah's biographer David Birmingham sees post-war inflation in Ghana as the spark that set off the "African Revolution".<sup>61</sup>

1960s: major wave of decolonisation. The leadership of the developed world has come to generally desire political independence for Africa: e.g. USA and UK leaders have been supporting decolonisation for a while, and French and most other colonial leaders accept it too. The postcolonial "developmental era" begins in Africa. By this time, most nationalist leaders want political independence, and most see the state as the driver of economic growth. Newly independent countries experience relatively high economic growth. Foreign investors see African countries as high risk but high return, and are keen to invest here.

1970s: Postcolonial abundance turns out to be short-lived. "Almost all global indicators on health levels, life expectancy, infant mortality, and the like show losses rather than gains in well-being since the 1960s."<sup>62</sup> This decade marks the advent of neoliberalism, whose seeds are beginning to be sown in Africa. Commodity prices are tumbling throughout the world. During the 1970s, the liberation movements generally lose faith in the power of the state as an effector of economic growth; instead, they begin to say that states have prevented growth, and that markets should drive development. By the end of the 1970s, most African countries (Mauritius and Botswana are the main exceptions) have fallen into stagnation and "depressed" economic conditions which continue to the present.<sup>63</sup> The 1973 oil crisis leads to the last expression of third-world solidarity against imperialism, led by the OPEC nations.<sup>64</sup> Africa has almost completely undergone decolonisation by the end of the 1970s, but the fight

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 46-7.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>61</sup> David Birmingham, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Father of African Nationalism*. Ohio University Press, 1998), 18-19.

<sup>62</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 154.

<sup>63</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 39

<sup>64</sup> Epifanio San Juan, "Postcolonialism and the Problematic of Uneven Development" 238.



for national liberation continues, most explicitly in the south where white minority rule is reaching a formal end in Zimbabwe.

1980s: the “lost decade”: African economic growth has slowed drastically. The International Monetary Fund and World Bank begin interfering from at least 1979. This is the end of the “developmental era” and the first decade of “structural adjustment”, (the name given to the first two decades of the Washington Consensus), which reduces Africa’s industrial potential, increases poverty, especially of women and children, and leads to vast amounts of capital leaving Africa.<sup>65</sup> The move towards a form of “democracy” has been happening throughout the post-WW2 period, advocated e.g. by Nkrumah in the 1940s.<sup>66</sup> But the national liberation movements suddenly strengthen their demand for democracy during the 1980s. This form of democracy is characterised by the criticism of corruption and the right to vote. Mikhail Gorbachev’s rise to power in the 1980s represents the Cold War reaching its denouement and the withdrawal of Soviet influence from Africa; this leads to most “Marxist” African states and parties renouncing “Marxism-Leninism” and embracing social democracy.<sup>67</sup> Africa undergoes steep economic decline and greatly increasing population; economic growth is negative per capita. African incomes fall to below 1960s levels, government deficits increase, debt and foreign aid soar. The rise and manufacture of debt crises in the 80s and 90s is one of the many ways that other countries interfere with Africa and prevent its development.<sup>68</sup> Interest rates on borrowed money soar during the 1980s, and the price of gold has begun a major decline from \$850 in the late 1970s to \$250 in 1999.<sup>69</sup> During the 1980s, of the total expenditure of African governments, 16% went to debt repayment, 12% on education, 10% on defence and 4% on health.<sup>70</sup> Structural adjustment deals directly reduce standards of living in most poor countries.<sup>71</sup>

1990s: the second decade of “structural adjustment”. With the end of the Cold War, many African countries have been losing support from the USSR and its allies. Although European colonial rule of Africa has mostly come to an end in the 1970s, the independence of Namibia

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<sup>65</sup> Patrick Bond, *Talk Left, Walk Right: South Africa’s Frustrated Global Reforms* (Scottsville: University of KZN Press, 2006), 103, 106-7.

<sup>66</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 63, 122.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 312, 349.

<sup>68</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 162.

<sup>69</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 39.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

and the end of apartheid (both demanded by the USA and former colonial powers)<sup>72</sup> give national liberation a sense of completion: it now has to be not achieved but continued and reinforced. Western countries begin to associate themselves with imperialism again.<sup>73</sup>

I include this timeline partly to show the significance of global events and imperialism on Africa. As we see in Chapter 3, it is important (but often forgotten) to understand when individual countries are influenced by the rest of the world. Particularly, the Cold War coincided with and strongly affected the major part of decolonisation. It was the USA, emerging as the global hegemon, that wanted decolonisation. Fanon understands the Cold War in terms of the use and expendability of Africans and other damned people, in terms of capital accumulation and uneven development.<sup>74</sup> This is how I propose to understand it too. As John Pilger puts it, “The real Cold War was fought by ‘our’ governments, not against Russians, but expendable brown and black people, often in places of great impoverishment. This was not so much a war between East and West as between North and South, rich and poor, big and small.”<sup>75</sup>

We will therefore be looking at the dark side of decolonisation. We will understand colonisation as one stage of imperialism, and decolonisation as the beginning of the next stage, a “false decolonisation”, something demanded by imperial powers, that would set Africa up for new and increasingly exploitation under new forms of imperialism.<sup>76</sup> As Fanon argues, the withdrawal of flags and police forces symbolises decolonisation, but real independence means more than this.<sup>77</sup> Withdrawal of flags, Fanon argues, does not necessarily check “the main methods used by capitalism to increase its wealth, its gold or diamond reserves, and to establish its power”, including “deportations, massacres, forced labour and slavery”.<sup>78</sup> Fanon realised that decolonisation brought both freedom and oppression, just as Marx recognised the same about bourgeois revolutions.

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<sup>72</sup> John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 217.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>74</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 105; Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 191-7; Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 34.

<sup>75</sup> John Pilger, “Introduction” in David Edwards and David Cromwell, *Guardians of Power: The Myth of the Liberal Media* (London: Pluto, 2006), ix.

<sup>76</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 59.

<sup>77</sup> Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 33.

<sup>78</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 101.

In this thesis, we will look at three areas where national liberation mimics ideas and ideologies of modernity: the national bourgeoisie, racism, and politics. We will use Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* as the starting point. Fanon's most important point in *The Wretched of the Earth* is probably his observations of the way that African nationalism is generally an uncritical imitation of Europe, and its people and ideas. This argument will be the backbone of this thesis. In each chapter I explore one main area of mimicry by expanding on Fanon's arguments. National liberation was expected to overcome bourgeois problems. For instance, the national bourgeoisie was expected to usher in socialism; non-racialism and black empowerment were supposed to overcome racism; democracy was predicted to overcome imperialism, corruption and minority rule. But in fact, we will see that the antitheses of these problems tend to not challenge them successfully but challenge particular forms and symbols of them.

We will focus on African decolonisation. Most of our conclusions apply to decolonisation throughout the world, and the differences between African decolonisation and decolonisation in the rest of the world are largely due to the different times of colonisation and decolonisation. In fact, Fanon stressed<sup>79</sup> that the pattern of the "false" decolonisation of Latin America was being repeated in Africa.<sup>80</sup> Africa is a large continent, and African decolonisation a complex phenomenon. We will discuss the whole of Africa, however, in order to perceive and focus on patterns and trends in national liberation. This is to show similarities among the various movements, and to contextualise decolonisation historically. A reified viewpoint might focus on a single country: this would allow deeper exploration of individual details, but risk missing historical patterns and contexts. Stepping back and using wide-angled lenses will for instance enable us to see colonisation and decolonisation as successive stages in the history of imperialism, which is ongoing. The constraints of writing a Master's thesis sometimes means to miss the social totality, to analyse society as separate pieces of a whole. For instance, the size limit means that much must be left out, and specialisation means that a writer often has to wear blinkers. The prescriptions of form and style lead to pitfalls too, some of which I criticise in the writing of others (such as Jacques Pauw: see Chapter 3). Where possible, I try to avoid these problems. This helps to avoid reifying individual countries and people, to look for instance at relationships and trends among countries and throughout the world. In fact, one might argue that to write is to do the

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<sup>79</sup> Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 35.

<sup>80</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 153-4, 172, 201.

work of a Hegelian myth, Lacanian mirror or Althusserian map: to create a simplified and falsely complete representation of something too complex to be properly represented. (These points are starting to go beyond our compass, except that we should note that they will come up repeatedly in numerous contexts, and that I am aware of them and try to avoid their problems where possible.)

A related problem is that the liberation movements contradict themselves constantly: we shall see many examples of this. This makes it difficult to criticise them: one may criticise them for a particular stance, only to find their taking the opposite stance at the same time. Not only the parties but many of the leaders tend to simultaneously espouse contradictory views. They may call their policies of capital accumulation Marxist; they may be racist in their anti-racist or non-racial policies; they may try to remove power from the demos and call it democracy. To understand what they really want (insofar as politicians and political parties can be understood), it is often best to follow Fanon (and Marx): to focus our analysis on what they do more than what they say. “When the nationalist political leaders say something, they make quite clear that they do not really think it.”<sup>81</sup> (We should also bear in mind, however, that these actions often contradict each other.) For instance, in 1990 Mandela announced “the nationalisation of the mines, the financial institutions and monopoly industries is the fundamental policy of the ANC and it is inconceivable that we will ever change this policy”; a few years later he declared “for this country, privatisation is the fundamental policy”.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, we should note that terms like “national liberation”, “capitalist”, “imperialism” are theoretical terms. Hence, to discuss “nationalist leaders/parties” is to discuss individuals and parties which are not only nationalist, but have other qualities which are distinct (even contradictory) from their being part of nationalism or national liberation.<sup>83</sup> We will not try to find an essence common to these movements, but see them linked to each other by sharing “family resemblances” of national liberation, each movement and leader focusing on some aspects of national liberation and leaving or even departing from others.

Fanon died very young, and he wrote very little relative to the magnitude of his influence. Dying at the age of 36 in 1961, he only experienced the beginning of African decolonisation.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 59-60.

<sup>82</sup> John Pilger, “Mandela’s Greatness May Be Assured, But Not His Legacy”, 11 July 2013 <http://johnpilger.com/articles/mandelas-greatness-may-be-secured-but-not-his-legacy>; Dale Mckinley, *South Africa’s Corporatised Liberation* (Auckland Park: Jacana Media, 2017), 27-8.

<sup>83</sup> See Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, 7-12 for an interesting discussion of such use of theoretical terms.

Yet his insights are remarkable, and he predicted trends that only established themselves much later,<sup>84</sup> as we will see particularly with national liberation conceptions of democracy and corruption. This thesis is an extension of his work, largely in that I am expanding on his ideas and applying his ideas and predictions to events that occurred after his death. His writing tends to be infuriatingly condensed, and in need of elaboration like this. I also describe later events that prove and/or should be understood through Fanon's predictions, and I use ideas from Marxism and psychoanalysis to top up and/or interpret his arguments. One of the main reasons for Fanon's brilliance is his ability to avoid reifying viewpoints which might for instance look only at one country from the limited perspective of a single academic field and worldview. Fanon had a vast range of interests, and his multidisciplinary work draws from diverse influences, including Négritude, pan-Africanism, Marxism, existentialism, phenomenology, Hegel, Sartre, and psychoanalysis. Fanon was a dialectical thinker,<sup>85</sup> and he was exposed to Marx's ideas by his older brother Joby and by his teacher Aimé Césaire, who identified as a Marxist.<sup>86</sup> Dialectical thinking lies behind many of Fanon's insights; this will be apparent throughout this thesis. We will see many points where Fanon's and Marx's arguments about bourgeois revolutions and national liberation run parallel to each other; at many points they agree and meet. Fanon's vital arguments about mimicry seem mostly due to his Marxist influence.<sup>87</sup> (Fanon might be accused of using European ideas. This is something one should do, he says, but critically. His use of those influences mentioned above is not mere mimicry, but critical evaluation. That's how he differs from those he criticises.)

Fanon has been massively influential throughout the world, inspiring decolonial movements throughout the colonised world. However, more often than not and much like Marx (and really any thinker of such stature), I think Fanon would criticise the movements which claim to be inspired by him.<sup>88</sup> Fanon has been very influential, and to a lesser or greater extent, many who claim to have been inspired by his work seem to have misunderstood it; I think if he were alive today, Fanon would be critical of e.g. Amilcar Cabral, the Civil Rights Movement, Malcolm X, Steve Biko, Black Panther Party, nationalist parties, postcolonial studies, even the recent student protests in South African universities. Che Guevara appears

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<sup>84</sup> Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 36-8, 175 also notes that "Fanon was cut off in the midst of his development."

<sup>85</sup> Reiland Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory*, 168.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>87</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 174.

<sup>88</sup> Stressing both the brevity of Fanon's arguments and the tendency of writers and activists to misinterpret Fanon (and make interpretations that contradict each other), Henry Louis Gates compares Fanon's books to Rorschach Tests. Henry Louis Gates, "Critical Fanonism", in *Critical Inquiry* 17(3): 457-70.

to be one of the few genuine Fanonians.<sup>89</sup> It is important thus to read Fanon's writing on its own terms and to read it critically. To read a work on its own terms, to explore its form, to comprehend it from a broad angle: these are skills from literary studies.<sup>90</sup> This is something that many scholars on Fanon fail to achieve. For instance Rabaka notes Marx's influence on Fanon and notes that readers not familiar with Marx will miss a lot in Fanon's work, yet Rabaka's interpretations of Marx are not always convincing.<sup>91</sup> The multidisciplinary quality of literary and cultural studies is one of the qualities that make it a privileged viewpoint for reading Fanon.

Like Fanon's work, this is a multidisciplinary thesis. Fanon realised that we need to understand human society as a totality, that (especially capitalist) society is very complex and understanding it in isolated parts can lead to problems. Fanon's method of understanding society and efforts to have a broad intellectual background thus inherently oppose reifying bourgeois ideology (see Chapter 3 for more on this). Fanon chose to study psychiatry because he liked that it brought together various fields, including psychology, philosophy and medicine. He realised this would give him a broad view and help him to understand historical trends, individual and group psychology, both colonised and coloniser.<sup>92</sup> In addition to his formal study of psychiatry, Fanon studied classics, and his work shows knowledge of and engagement with literary and cultural studies, history, economics, among other fields. Ziauddin Sardar notes Fanon's wide-ranging knowledge and calls him a "polymath ... not afraid to use any and all the tools and methods at his disposal: Marxism, psychoanalysis, literary criticism, medical dissection, and good old aphorisms."<sup>93</sup> To explore the relationship of literature to Fanon's thinking would require another thesis, but I will list some points here. Fanon saw a dialectical relationship between theory and revolutionary struggle, and this was evident in his life. Fanon's revolutionary practice (throughout the world, particularly in Algeria) and his revolutionary theory are strongly intertwined. Similarly, Fanon did not limit himself to understanding literature as a critic: he understood literature through creating literature. Fanon was "passionate about language, poetry and theatre", and he wrote at least three plays (two survive), which editors Jean Khalfa and Robert Young argue "throw a

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<sup>89</sup> Lewis Gordon, Denean Sharpley-Whiting, and Renee White (editors), *Fanon: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 163.

<sup>90</sup> Interestingly, Marx was known for his insistence that readers try to study his work on its own terms, e.g. reading each book as a whole and casting presumptions aside. For a fascinating discussion of this, see David Harvey, *A Companion to Marx's Capital*, (London and New York: Verso, 2010), 1-14.

<sup>91</sup> Reiland Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory*, 174-6.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>93</sup> Ziauddin Sardar, "Foreword to the 2008 Edition" in Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, xi.

striking philosophical light” on his political and psychiatric writing.<sup>94</sup> Fanon is of a tradition of intellectuals who create literature and show the revolutionary potential of literature. This tradition includes most explicitly Sartre, Césaire and Marx.

In many ways, this thesis is about ideology. The critique of ideology, much like Fanon’s writing, is a meeting-point of psychoanalysis and Marxism. I think Fanon should be understood as both Marxist and psychoanalyst. But I will not show the influence of these theories on Fanon so much as show where they enhance Fanon’s work, and Fanon’s work enhances them. The major theories of ideology we will read with Fanon’s work include reification, false equivalence, interpellation, and operationalism. These are present throughout this thesis. Fanon is very aware of the role of the unconscious and the manipulation of desire, as we see particularly in Chapter 2. Ideology, propaganda, advertising all use the manipulation of unconscious desires, and this is especially possible with modern technology, which makes it possible for instance to surround individuals with images and advertisements.<sup>95</sup> Fanon engages very clearly with ideology in his theory of racism. We will see in Chapter 2 that racism, for Fanon, has to do on many levels with (Freudian) illusion, desire, subjectivity, and the unconscious. We will see particularly in Chapter 2 that Fanon (after Freud)<sup>96</sup> aimed to locate and understand problems in the unconscious and make them conscious, in order to overcome them. He did this in both his psychiatric practice and his political writing. Fanon realised that his own freedom and that of the world (including Algeria, Martinique and France) were “inextricably linked together”.<sup>97</sup> The psychoanalyst in Fanon identifies hidden processes, not only in the individual mind but even in global processes of decolonisation. To identify unconscious problems such as unconscious racist views will help with effecting social change (in this case to end racism and end the desire to be white).<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Jean Khalifa and Robert CJ Young, “General Introduction” in Frantz Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom*, edited by Jean Khalifa and Robert CJ Young, translated by Steven Corcoran (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).

<sup>95</sup> See Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, translated by James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1960), 21 for a discussion of the connections of images with the unconscious and language and concepts with the conscious. This theme will recur throughout this thesis. It is related to the idea of *doxa*, attributed to Plato and developed by Pierre Bourdieu; *doxa* describes the things we take as self-evident, beliefs from what Plato called the “lower”, animalistic, unreasoning part of the soul.

<sup>96</sup> “The whole theory of psychoanalysis is, as you know, in fact built up on the perception of the resistance offered to us by the patient when we attempt to make his unconscious conscious to him.” Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, 100. See also Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 76.

<sup>97</sup> Reiland Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory*, 166.

<sup>98</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 74. For more on the relations between individual psychology and group psychology, psychology and politics, neurosis and ideology, see the case studies at the end of Frantz

Freud's story<sup>99</sup> of the brotherly horde overcoming the father was intended as an explanation for the origins of totemism. But it arguably tells us more about bourgeois-national revolutions than totemism. In this story Freud describes a society where a band of brothers is led and dominated by a despotic father, who oppresses the brothers and monopolises all indulgences. The brothers unite to destroy the father; they consume his body and come to identify with him. They set up a new society, based on equality, contract, and guilt about overthrowing the father. Their overwhelming ambivalent feelings about and towards the now imaginary father become the basis of a religion. The religion includes rules to maintain equality and to appease the father, more powerful in death and now part of each brother. The story of national liberation has the same structure. Colonialism was a system where the people experienced themselves as opposed to the sovereign power (the coloniser). National liberation ideology tries to make all people in the former colony experience themselves as having partaken in decolonisation. This experience is bolstered with ceremonies (voting, holidays). Ideologies of formal equality (including non-racialism and the right to vote) mask new forms of inequality. Individuals participate more in their own domination. Hegemony and ideology are the counterparts of the "first attempt at a religion".

These arguments show that Fanon's work and mine are both very literary: with literary foundations, informed by literature and literary theory and critique, having similar functions to literature, etc. This is work of interpretation; this is evident in Fanon's studies of individual psychology, of group psychology, his interpretations of national liberation. Fanon's work of interpretation and my interpretations of Fanon and decolonisation and are both strongly based in literary theory, as the careful reader will observe. Fanon saw revolutionary potential in art. Art goes beyond the constraints of this society and its thinking, enables critical thinking and reflection on society. This can be seen clearly in his plays and his analysis of literature by Aimé Césaire, Mayotte Capécia and René Maran in *Black Skin, White Masks*.<sup>100</sup> Fanon's work and mine are fundamentally literary in that they perceive the social totality, they

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Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*. These themes are also present throughout the essays in Frantz Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom*.

<sup>99</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Resemblances Between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*, translated by James Strachey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2001), 154-77.

<sup>100</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom* sheds much light on Fanon's literary influence, including his analyses of writings by Richard Wright and Chester Himes. Khalifa writes "it is well known in particular that Fanon read a lot of poetry and theatre": his large library included novels, plays and poetry by those writers mentioned above, as well as Jorge Luis Borges, Bertolt Brecht, Albert Camus, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Howard Fast, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Homer, Victor Hugo, Franz Kafka, Ezra Pound, William Shakespeare, Leo Tolstoy, Walt Whitman, and others. Jean Khalifa, "Frantz Fanon's Library" in Frantz Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom*, 634-74.



critique ideology, and they are of and about interpretation. Both use and are strongly informed by literature and literary theory, even if this is not always immediately apparent. My work, like Fanon's, has these qualities largely because of the influence of continental philosophy, including the critical social theories of Marxism and psychoanalysis. Like such work, literary studies is the study of humans, their creations, and their interpretations of their world. For more on the revolutionary potential of literature, see Herbert Marcuse's writing.<sup>101</sup>

Throughout this Introduction, I have stressed the parallels between Marx and Fanon, and the influence of Marx on Fanon. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels observe that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas", that the class which controls the means of production "has control at the same time over the means of mental production".<sup>102</sup>

We will find here that the ruling ideas of colonisation, decolonisation and national liberation were bourgeois ideas. The dominant worldviews and ideologies were originally ideas of the bourgeoisie, they were taught to national liberation leaders in Europe and the USA, and they support bourgeois imperial interests. (However, we should remember that these ideas are the ruling ideas because of ideology, even when some propaganda might have been involved.)

These ideas have historically been used to hide oppression: as Fanon notes, they talk of rights, liberty, humanity but they are part of regimes that bring suffering to humanity and destroy rights and liberty. "When I search for Man in the technique and the style of Europe, I see only a succession of negations of man, and an avalanche of murders."<sup>103</sup> This

contradictoriness has made its way to national liberation too. In each chapter I will discuss a situation where the national liberation movements try or claim to strongly oppose imperialism, but end up actually supporting it. (Of course, Fanon uses these ideas too; but he uses them critically, seeking subversive strands of European thought and discarding those that support the domination of people by each other. Those he criticises copy Europe ideologically without such critical evaluation.)<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Especially Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), and Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance" (with RP Wolff and Barrington Moore), in *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1965.

<sup>102</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The German Ideology" in Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, edited by David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 192.

<sup>103</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 312.

<sup>104</sup> Christopher Miller, *Theories of Africans: Francophone Literature and Anthropology in Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) makes such a critique of Fanon. Miller criticises Fanon for his "post-Enlightenment Western thought", particularly his nationalism, which is based on colonial borders. Miller draws on Homi Bhabha for this argument, however noting like Bhabha that Fanon's nationalism is a means to an end: we will see that Fanon wants theories like nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and Négritude to be "self-destructive". While Fanon's thinking does contain contradictions and at times he does follow ideological elements of "post-

In the first chapter we will discuss the national bourgeoisie. The national bourgeoisies were expected to lead their countries to prosperity, development, and catching up with European production, technology, and affluence. However, we will find that European countries reached their comparatively high levels of affluence through the exploitation of their colonies; African countries usually lack such advantages. When European bourgeoisies were able to be revolutionary, this was achieved with relative independence. When African national bourgeoisies try to be revolutionary, they end up being manager figures for foreign bourgeoisies, in part because they take over managerial roles formerly played by colonising classes for imperialism. Controlling capital in Africa, European countries can control the direction of the revolution. If they prepare for genuine decolonisation, they withdraw their capital: “The spectacular flight of capital is one of the most constant phenomena of decolonisation.”<sup>105</sup> These foreign bourgeoisies are far more powerful (the result of ongoing imperialism), and thus have vast control over decolonisation. Foreign bourgeoisies, making up the de facto ruling class, have the ability to command African countries, and “to mobilise [their] human and natural resources [their capital] towards political, economic and military ends”: this is how Harvey defines imperialism.<sup>106</sup> The original bourgeois revolutions were driven by new forms of capital; new forms of capital in national liberation revolutions come from imperialism. The national bourgeoisie is given a role not of enriching and empowering the people, but of enriching itself by assisting the foreign bourgeoisies. It aims to mimic the imperial bourgeoisie, which is presented (through a reified view) as having become successful on its own, not through imperialism. A socialist revolution (the name falsely given to many national liberation struggles) means that state power, including “the armed forces, the police, security, judiciary, prisons, Government departments and ministries, economic institutions of the State, the mass media” are transferred from “the hands of those loyal to capitalism” to “the working class and its allies”.<sup>107</sup> But in this case we find transfer to capital, assisted by the scavenger hands of the national bourgeoisie.

In the second chapter I emphasise the mimicry of “successful people and countries”. This motif is crucial throughout this thesis, but here we focus on the psychological causes and effects. Fanon sees mimicry as a major part of the contemporary human experience, and a

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Enlightenment Western thought”, I think he mostly uses it critically, focusing on its truly subversive elements and discarding those elements used for domination of people by people.

<sup>105</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 103.

<sup>106</sup> David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 26.

<sup>107</sup> Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 17.

major part of national liberation and contemporary racism. The national liberation movements copy Europe and increasingly, the USA. As David Harvey puts it, “The emulation of US consumerism, ways of life, cultural forms, and political and financial institutions has contributed to the process of endless capital accumulation globally.”<sup>108</sup> In this chapter we emphasise how racist ideologies are changing and linked to consumerism. We will find that racism originates historically with capitalism (an ideology that justifies cruelties in capital accumulation) and that more racism comes with more capital accumulation in decolonisation. Racism was originally used to justify slavery of people of colour; this use continues, but new forms of racism are also used to make them “free” wage-labourers. In the attempt to overcome racism, national liberation strengthens new forms of racism. In the first phase of mimicry, the native intellectuals copy Europe exactly, trying to prove that they are European. In the second phase, they copy Europe by asserting their opposition to Europe (e.g. by romanticising and reifying precolonial life).<sup>109</sup> These new forms are linked to consumerism and nationalism. They make individuals feel empowered (feel like capitalists and colonisers) when they participate in capital accumulation processes of consumerism and debt. Racism and antiracism were originally ideas of the European bourgeoisie. The new racism sees blacks as both white and black. It tries to incorporate blackness into what Fanon sees as the inherently contradictory concept of humanity that emerges with European modernity.

Both bourgeois ideas and bourgeois ideology are copied in national liberation. In the final chapter, we will see that this thinking fragments the world into isolated pieces, rather than seeing all these pieces as part of a whole. People, politicians, and countries are represented this way. Politics is also presented this way, as well as democracy and corruption. Human creations and ideas become things that control humans. This is a society in which, as Fanon puts it, the tool possesses the man.<sup>110</sup> We will see that this leads to problematic conceptions of democracy (whose meaning becomes reduced to symbols of democracy) and corruption (social problems are represented as little more than ethical choices of individuals). Thus Fanon argues, after Marx,<sup>111</sup> that political emancipation is an improvement within the status quo, but represented as an overturning of the exploitative status quo. These ideas in particular

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<sup>108</sup> David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, 41.

<sup>109</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 222.

<sup>110</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 180. The alert reader will notice the parallel (and possible reference) to Marx’s theory of commodity fetishism in this metaphor, as well as the related theme of reification.

<sup>111</sup> Karl Marx, “On the Jewish Question” in Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, 46-64. As Fanon puts it, the people receive political rights but their poverty and hunger persist.

came with World Bank and International Monetary Fund influence in Africa, albeit boats in an ideological current that began arriving beforehand, and that was observed by Fanon. Continuing with the theme of reification we will see how national liberation, like idealist and rationalist ideology, sees ideas and material reality as completely separate from each other. The young Marx and Engels saw such separation as the essential operation of ideology.<sup>112</sup> We will see this operation in representations of socialism, Marxism, democracy, capitalism, dictatorship, imperialism, colonialism etc. as individual personalities and choices. We will also see it in the politics of national liberation, African socialism, and philosophies of non-violence. All of these conceptions represent the current society as having achieved its and our goals by eliminating conceptions that go beyond it.

For Leon Trotsky, the concept of a national democratic revolution (or national liberation) inherently relegates the “national question” to the political. National and racial freedom thus appear achievable through political action alone. Before the major trend of decolonisation began, Trotsky argued that the exploitation of nations and races is part of class exploitation. This means that “the historic weapon of national liberation can only be the class struggle.”<sup>113</sup> All the examples in this thesis show how national liberation breaks down potentially anti-capitalist and anti-imperial identities, substituting them with ethnic, national, racial, gender, and sexual identities. While their seeds sometimes existed before, most of these identities are modern, noticed and experienced much less before modernity. This is not to say that these identities are unimportant or untrue, but rather that they have come to have (and in many ways been created for) ideological and reactionary functions.

Fanon sees human potential that transcends the given society: he emphasises that we should “discover” humanity.<sup>114</sup> He understand both those who benefit from and are exploited from domination (imperial, racial and other) as harmed by this domination: black and white, coloniser and colonised, etc.<sup>115</sup> Where national liberation often becomes rigid in trying to oppose its objects of attack, Fanon’s patience enables him to move beyond such Manichaeism. Thus, rather than become lost in binaries or identities, he recognises all as human. “I recognise that I have one right alone: That of demanding human behaviour from

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<sup>112</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, 176-184.

<sup>113</sup> Quoted in Dale Mckinley, *South Africa’s Corporatised Liberation*, 14.

<sup>114</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 179.

<sup>115</sup> Fanon thus calls for “revolutionary solidarity” among all of Africa, and all colonised countries: Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 173. In fact, Fanon goes beyond this, arguing that there has been and should be “revolutionary solidarity” across national and racial divisions, that all people can join the anti-imperial struggle: Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, 147-78.

the other.”<sup>116</sup> Fanon’s project is international, one that aims to include all people and challenge all forms of domination. He and I show the value of critical theory, critical thinking, and literary thinking for understanding humans and their oppression – in the face of ideology. Let us examine these ideologies, starting with how the national bourgeoisies help to set their countries up as “brothels” for imperialism.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 154.

## **Chapter 1: The National Bourgeoisie**

In this chapter, we will develop Fanon's arguments and observations about the national bourgeoisie, using the history of decolonisation to show how Fanon's perceptions and portentous predictions have proved correct. Fanon argues that a national bourgeoisie, a small group of the colonised class, emerges towards the end of the colonial period. This group owns limited capital and participates in the exploitation of the nation. Fanon calls it a parasite on the nation and on imperialism.<sup>118</sup> We will start by exploring the history of nationalism as a bourgeois ideology. (Fanon has been criticised for his commitment to nationalism, including his National Liberation Front membership, but he also espouses very anti-nationalist views, noting that modern national borders are the result of often arbitrary decisions made by European colonisers.)<sup>119</sup> We will trace the history of faith in nationalism and the bourgeoisie, as it came to Africa from Europe. Fanon sees national liberation as a blind copy of European modernity; we will see national liberation as a Western ideology that came to Africa to exploit Africa. We will then see examples of the formation of national bourgeoisies in Africa, particularly of how they are formed, as Fanon argues, with the consent of and by imperial interests. We will expand Fanon's arguments to look at the national bourgeoisie as a class that manages imperialism, capital accumulation and the restoration of class power. We will focus on four ways it does this: it separates the people from the means of production; it underdevelops the economy and develops it in ways to assist imperialism; it makes the people dependent on international capitalism, through hegemonic practices such as debt; it prevents the people from using their wealth and potential. These practices are presented in the ideology of national liberation as ways that the national bourgeoisie benefits the people.

Fanon argues that a decolonial revolution will only successfully end imperial rule of the country if it is "socialist". "If its career is cut short," he warns, "if the native bourgeoisie takes over power, the new state, in spite of its formal sovereignty, remains in the hands of the imperialists."<sup>120</sup> The nationalist parties present the national bourgeoisie as being revolutionary, one with the people, having the same interests and aspirations as the people. But in this chapter, we will see how mercilessly the national bourgeoisies accumulate capital for themselves and foreign bourgeoisies, against the interests of the people. The nationalist parties and leaders aim to cultivate national bourgeoisies at the expense of the poor (with few

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<sup>118</sup> Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 35.

<sup>119</sup> Reiland Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory*, 171-5.

<sup>120</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 11.

exceptions like Julius Nyerere and, for a short time, Ahmed Sékou Touré), and are ruthless towards workers and people occupying resources (particularly land) wanted by the bourgeoisie. Many leaders who appeared very socialist actually cultivated national bourgeoisies, such as Gamal Abdel Nasser who claimed to despise national bourgeoisies,<sup>121</sup> or Amilcar Cabral who hoped the national bourgeoisie would disintegrate after leading the struggle for national independence.<sup>122</sup> Of course, this is not something that the national bourgeoisies want; “now that they [the nationalist parties] have fulfilled their historical mission of leading the bourgeoisie to power, they are firmly invited to retire so that the bourgeoisie may carry out *its* mission in peace and quiet.”<sup>123</sup> The nationalist parties insist that their main or sole aim is to bring the national bourgeoisies to power, which they make a symbol of the end of colonialism. The national bourgeoisie represents that we now all have the opportunity to become capitalists. When the people feel united with the national bourgeoisie, this is because of the strength of racist and nationalist ideologies, which are “deployed to legitimise the rule of a postcolonial elite over a nation-state.”<sup>124</sup> In this chapter we will see that national bourgeoisies usually form with the consent of colonising powers: that in fact, they are deliberately formed by the powers of imperialism. We will see that this is because national bourgeoisies do not help the people, but rather themselves and, sometimes willingly, sometimes not, imperialists.

Europeans began visiting Africa many centuries ago, but mainly to set up small trading posts on the coasts of what are now Algeria, Angola, Namibia, South Africa and Mozambique, en route to Asia. They seldom ventured inland: they usually found that the Americas were more suitable to their endeavours, poorly defended and thus safer than Africa, and often more fertile.<sup>125</sup> The Portuguese did try to experiment with sugar plantations on the coasts of Africa fairly early, but it was really the 1846-50 crisis in Europe of capital overaccumulation that led to new desires to colonise Africa.<sup>126</sup> From the late nineteenth century, European colonisers settled in Africa in order to find wealth and capital, and markets for their goods. They did this by selling goods, by finding natural resources, and by plundering, exploiting and oppressing many of the people they encountered. It was only from the second half of the nineteenth century that they began to see Africa as a source of wealth, venturing inland to seek ivory,

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<sup>121</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 217.

<sup>122</sup> Amilcar Cabral, *Unity and Struggle*, 134-5, 143; Patrick Bond, *Talk Left, Walk Right*, 211; p160 of this thesis.

<sup>123</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 170. Original emphasis.

<sup>124</sup> Phillip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 147.

<sup>125</sup> Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, 310.

<sup>126</sup> David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, 42-3.

diamonds, precious metals, timber, rubber etc., and also land and markets. The European colonists from the mid-nineteenth century wanted to seize the means of production, whereas earlier European and Arab invaders took wealth (mainly slaves) but left the means of production untouched.<sup>127</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, Europeans controlled 35% of the world's land-surface; this increased to 84% by 1914.<sup>128</sup> Less than ten per cent of the African continent was controlled by European powers by 1870, and more than 90% by 1902. The "scramble for Africa" occurred from the 1870s until the First World War. For instance, the British only valued southern Africa as part of a route to India – until diamonds were discovered in 1867 (and subsequently gold in 1886); this led to a massive influx of British, including Cecil John Rhodes, who quickly began moving inland and taking control of the means of production.<sup>129</sup> It is true that colonisation occurred in many forms over centuries, as Europe progressed from feudalism to capitalism. But colonisation was mostly an event of modernity and increased massively when Western Europe was thoroughly capitalist. Fanon shows that once European powers realised they could use Africa as more than stopping points on the way to Asia, European capitalism initially tried to use Africa as a source of raw materials which could be used to create and sell goods in European markets. But "after a phase of accumulation of capital", Africa's was given the role of a market, and the colonised populations were turned into consumers.<sup>130</sup>

It was common for nationals of the colonial countries to settle in the colonies: they would sometimes extract wealth for their own use, sometimes to send it to the mother country, usually both. When they settle, we call them colonists: colonialism can thus occur within a single country. The word *colonisation* comes from the Latin words *colonus* and *colere* which mean respectively *farmer* and *to cultivate*. A related process is imperialism. From the Latin *imperium*, which means *to command*, imperialism has to do with the relation between two or more countries, in which one country exercises power over another. Imperialism does not necessarily involve relocation or even movement of people. The process of the European colonisation of most of Africa, as well as parts of Asia and the Americas, involved both

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<sup>127</sup> Jeff Guy, "No Eyes, No Interest, No Frame of Reference: Luxemburg, Southern African Historiography and Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production" in Patrick Bond, Horman Chitonge and Arndt Hopfmann (editors), *The Accumulation of Capital in Southern Africa: Rosa Luxemburg's Contemporary Relevance*, 30.

<sup>128</sup> Philip Hoffman, *Why Did Europe Conquer the World?* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015), 2.

<sup>129</sup> Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 29, 33-4: shortly after, Rhodes' business partner Charles Rudd conned King Lobengula into awarding the British South Africa Company the right to search for minerals in what is now Zimbabwe.

<sup>130</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 65.



colonialism and imperialism: a group of settlers attempting to enrich themselves, and helping to enrich the mother countries. Modern colonisation was often (but not always) a method of imperialism; some parts of colonisation made up the first stage of bourgeois imperialism, that is, imperialism that is part of global capitalism and led by the bourgeoisie. (In this thesis, most of the examples of “colonisation” we discuss are both colonisation and imperialism.)

In the early stages of colonisation, there is a clear division between coloniser and colonised. One is dominator and the other dominated. Coloniser and colonised were distinguished by nationality, race and ethnicity (but by religion under pre-modern colonialism). One’s identity as coloniser or colonised is clear from physical appearance (including skin tone) and if not, by laws, identity documents, etc. Fanon describes this binary division as “Manichean”,<sup>131</sup> noting that this means that under colonial rule, the participation of individuals in their own colonial domination does occur, but is much more possible after decolonisation.<sup>132</sup> Fanon also argues that colonial conditions are relatively clear, and make it very difficult and rare for members of the colonised group to own capital.<sup>133</sup> Later, however, groups of people come to exist in the middle, people who are not strictly dominator or dominated, for instance people who simultaneously exploit others and are exploited by the ruling class. The deepening of the division of labour pushes more people into the unclear space between employee and boss.<sup>134</sup> Feudal and colonial societies are characterised by a relatively strict class division which is usually sustained by the state. On the other hand, the capitalist economy drives relative class differentiation, which is supported by the state and celebrated by the ruling beliefs.<sup>135</sup> The division of labour increases in proportion to commodity production and particularly in proportion to capitalist production; it thus deepens in Europe as capitalism becomes the dominant mode of production.<sup>136</sup> Middle classes expand greatly worldwide under the capitalist system: this includes an increasing number of people who have manager roles; in Africa, middle classes (including national bourgeoisies) proliferate especially after the Second World War. Such managers exist throughout imperial domination, especially as the capitalist mode of production becomes prevalent in the colonies. For Fanon, the national bourgeoisie has such a manager role.<sup>137</sup> The national bourgeoisie is a class made up of the

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 41-2, 50-1, 84, 93.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 144-5.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>134</sup> Frédéric Lordon, *Willing Slaves of Capital*, 24.

<sup>135</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol 1, 455-491.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 455.

<sup>137</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 150.

colonised group of individuals, which has ownership (usually limited) of some means of production and earns income from the exploitation of workers. For Fanon, decolonisation makes possible the formation of a small native class “which accumulates capital”.<sup>138</sup> At the time of decolonisation, Meredith identifies “a small elite – no more than about 3 per cent of the [African] population” that benefited financially and managed to accumulate capital: this happened largely through political activity.<sup>139</sup> Thus arises the managerial class of the national bourgeoisie.

### **Nationalism: A Bourgeois Ideology**

We saw in the Introduction that workers’ movements and nationalist parties were the two main forces in Africa that challenged colonisation, and that after the Second World War it was nationalism that dominated African struggles for liberation: nationalist movements increased in number, size and force and nationalist and racist ideas began to shape most workers’ movements.<sup>140</sup> Workers’ movements arose as colonisation increasingly took the form of “primitive accumulation” (“the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production”)<sup>141</sup> and turned indigenous Africans into classes of wage-labourers, which happened especially during the latter half of the nineteenth century, particularly after the Berlin (“Scramble for Africa”) Conference of 1884-5 and the discoveries of gold and diamond fields in many parts of Africa around this time.<sup>142</sup> Under colonial rule, society was divided along (relatively well-defined) capitalist classes from an early stage, and the people were oppressed on these lines: as workers, or as formerly independent peasants whose land

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 144, 129-30 at the same time, 80% of the African population had no access to basic health services and education, and was engaged in subsistence agriculture; 10% of the population earned a wage.

<sup>140</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 31-38; Phillip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 146-8 show that globally from the 1950s, “worker” movements that adopted nationalist policies and views became successful; those that didn’t were unsuccessful and/or repressed.

<sup>141</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol 1, 875.

<sup>142</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 35: “Using traditional techniques to strip land from indigenous peoples – ‘hut taxes’, debt peonage systems and fees for cattle-dipping and grazing, as well as other more direct forms of compulsion – the settlers drew African men from the fields, into the mines and emerging factories.” Cecil John Rhodes’ Glen Grey Act soon established the first “native reserve”, a forerunner to the 1913 Land Act.

In South Africa, the prophecy of Nongause in 1857 (that the Xhosa people should destroy their resources in anticipation of future abundance) led to the first major conversion of large groups of rural Xhosa people who owned crops and cattle into wage labourers and forcing them to move closer to the mining towns like King William’s Town. Xolela Mangcu, *Biko: A Biography* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012), 80-2.

and wealth were stolen, etc. In the seventeenth century colonial powers often used “brute force” and “the power of the state” to hasten this process:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins, are all things which characterise the dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation. Hard on their heels follows the commercial war of the European nations, which has the globe as its battlefield.<sup>143</sup>

Similarly, Fanon describes

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.<sup>144</sup>

These were attempts to seize the means of production and create proletarian classes, or to use people as slaves, indentured workers etc. in the cases that this led to more extraction of surplus value than wage-labour would yield.<sup>145</sup> Modern colonisation was led by the bourgeoisie and part of the international system and oppressed people by dividing them into capitalist classes. However, workers’ movements have historically been ineffective at challenging it. One of the primary reasons for this is that racist and nationalist ideology permeated workers’ movements. While some workers’ movements were racially divided before the 1950s, both black and white workers’ movements challenged the state and the status quo and many black, white and mixed worker movements were repressed. Others imploded from ethnic, racial and similar conflicts. National liberation movements seized the opportunity to fill this void. They emphasised the oppression of individuals as members of national, racial and/or ethnic groups. In the South African example, the ANC benefitted from the repression of workerism. It formed its alliance with Cosatu only after Cosatu lost the greatly toned its demands down,<sup>146</sup> and quickly became the dominant national liberation movement in South Africa, generally retaining this status until the end of apartheid and arguably, after. The parties that make up the FLMSA (the Former Liberation Movements of Southern Africa) – ANC, CCM, FRELIMO, MPLA, SWAPO, ZANU-PF – initially espoused

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<sup>143</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol 1, 915.

<sup>144</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 101.

<sup>145</sup> Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, 17-22.

<sup>146</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 31-8.

an apparently radical, “Marxist-Leninist”, worker focus, but abandoned these views in favour of nationalism and social democracy.

One historical reason for popular support to turn from workerism to nationalism was that ideologies of racism and ethnicity permeated society, starting with modernity, increasing with apartheid and arguably with the World Wars (we will explore the psychological reasons for this later). Because of this, communist parties and trade unions tended to suffer schisms on racial lines.<sup>147</sup> Nationalist and related ideology therefore contributed strongly to the downfall of workers’ movements and the rise of nationalist parties. Bourgeois ideologies and direct influence from representatives of the bourgeoisies (such as the USA and UK governments) caused workerism and worker movements to disintegrate. At later stages of colonialism and imperialism, as we shall see, the entirety of society enforces national identities<sup>148</sup> whereas worker identities dissolve (replaced by national, racial and consumer identities). The process is self-sustaining: nationalism aims to be the primary identity;<sup>149</sup> this challenges working-class identity, participating in its breakdown, and national identities are ready to replace working-class identities once workers discard or lose them.

In order to fully understand the roles of nationalist parties and national bourgeoisies in anti-colonial struggles and neo-colonial imperialism, it is necessary to explore the historical links of nationalism to the bourgeoisie. Marx and Engels show that nationalist beliefs enable non-bourgeois individuals to identify with bourgeoisies through how nationalism insists that our ties to others of our nation are prior to class divisions within nations.<sup>150</sup> Emile Durkheim argues that the division of labour prevents solidarity among people, and that state propaganda, including nationalist, is necessary to create solidarity.<sup>151</sup> Historically, nationalism arises as middle classes arise, and becomes a dominant ideology as the bourgeoisie becomes the ruling class. Thus “only in nineteenth century Europe and America and in twentieth century Asia and Africa have the people identified themselves with the nation, civilisation with national civilisation, their life and survival with the life and survival

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> E.g. Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995) shows how nationalist ideology is continually produced throughout ordinary, everyday, apparently innocent and non-political parts of society, including weather reports, sports matches, plants, food, and language.

<sup>149</sup> Modern nationalism aims to be the primary identity of national subjects, overriding other forms of identity; this is the view of e.g. Spencer, Wollman and Eric Hobsbawm, and even Adrian Hastings and Susan Reynolds, who see nationalism as predating modernity but remaining a secondary identity until modernity. Phillip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 5, 42.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 9-11.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 20, 34, 83, 88.

of the nationality.”<sup>152</sup> The modern democratic nation (in which the nation is identified with the people) is generally seen as beginning with the French Revolution of 1789: this was a foundational moment for the close ties of nationalism and democracy (the link between struggles for self-determination and for self-government).<sup>153</sup>

Nationalism is a philosophy of the bourgeoisie and of the middle classes.<sup>154</sup> Fanon points out that national unity was achieved in European states at the time that the “national middle classes had concentrated most of the wealth in their hands.”<sup>155</sup> The bourgeoisie used nationalism in its ascent to power in Europe.<sup>156</sup> Dale Mckinley argues that “nationalism as an ideology, and thus as a political and social framework for societal development, is central to the needs and demands” of international capital, domestic capital, colonialism and imperialism.<sup>157</sup> Nationalism began in England in the seventeenth century (spreading to the Dutch Republic, France, USA, and then throughout Western Europe).<sup>158</sup> This was shortly after “the revolution that laid the foundation of the capitalist mode of production” which, according to Marx, occurred in England in the sixteenth century.<sup>159</sup> The ideology of nationalism was strengthened with subsequent bourgeois revolutions, including 1776 in the USA and 1789 in France, which marked the unity of the people with the nation. Nationalism and liberalism were generally seen as compatible, even synonymous, in this period, particularly until the revolutions of 1848 (and although they temporarily diverged at this point and again with the World Wars, the dominant contemporary view is that nationalism and liberalism are compatible).<sup>160</sup> Nationalism thus first arose with the English middle class.<sup>161</sup> It became a dominant ideology in the USA and France, and spread to Italy, Poland, Germany and Greece next, in the early 19th century, pulled along by rallying bourgeoisies. This is largely because bourgeoisies used nationalist propaganda and ideology to mobilise popular support, particularly from workers in the industrialised countries of Western Europe and peasants in Central and Eastern Europe; successful bourgeois revolutions occurred when

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<sup>152</sup> Hans Kohn, *Nationalism*, 11.

<sup>153</sup> Phillip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 121.

<sup>154</sup> David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, 44.

<sup>155</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 95-6 this led to “industrialisation, the development of communications, and soon the search for outlets overseas.”

<sup>156</sup> David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, 44.

<sup>157</sup> Dale Mckinley, *South Africa's Corporatised Liberation*, 16.

<sup>158</sup> Phillip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 30-3, 122, 142-3.

<sup>159</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol 1, 876-8.

<sup>160</sup> Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 6, 114-8.

<sup>161</sup> Hans Kohn, *Nationalism*, 18. Shortly after, capitalism and nationalism both arose in the Dutch Republic.

the masses were mobilised nationalistically to support the bourgeoisies.<sup>162</sup> According to Kohn, the historical purpose of nationalist political movements “was to create a liberal and rational civil society representing the middle-class”, and this was vital to the bourgeoisie’s rise to power.<sup>163</sup> At this time, Kohn sees both nationalism and the English middle class finding their “foremost expression in the political philosophy of John Locke”. For instance, Locke emphasised property, particularly property earned through labour rather than conquest; Locke saw the individual (his liberty, dignity and happiness) as the basic element of national life; and Locke insisted “that the government of a nation is a moral trust dependent upon the free consent of the governed.”<sup>164</sup>

In their support of the bourgeoisie and opposition to feudalism and its effects, liberal and nationalist philosophers attributed to the bourgeoisie the ability to improve the lives of all. They argued that bourgeois rule would bring labour, trade, property, education, liberty, democracy, equality, opportunity, and increased national wealth; they associated war, debt, corruption, poverty, unemployment and oppression with feudalism.<sup>165</sup> The people would become citizens of a nation, rather than subjects of a sovereign. Feudal society was characterised by explicit class divisions, and the British and French revolutions were attempts to end this hierarchy, including aristocracy and monarchy, and to bring to these countries republicanism, democracy and equality. Decolonisation similarly involves the attempt to abolish social hierarchy, starting with the USA attempting to end England’s dominance and establish an egalitarian state in 1776: the USA is the first and standard modern post-colonial state.

The national bourgeoisies and nationalist parties of decolonisation profess very similar goals to these. The nationalist parties especially of the post-WW2 era stated combinations of the following goals, which are part of “national liberation” and “national independence”: political independence, full citizenship for all, the end of governance by colonists, participatory social democracy, human dignity, national, racial and social justice, and the end of racial and gender oppression.<sup>166</sup> The new system will benefit the nation through trade, foreign investment, rising equality, rising standards of living, creation of wealth, and opportunity. They see the

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 40-2.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 29, 53: according to Kohn, nationalism and middle classes throughout Europe “gained in numbers and economic strength”, particularly from 1859 till 1871.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 18, 29. According to Kohn, it was a radically new conception that property should be based on labour.

<sup>165</sup> Gareth Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty?*, 135.

<sup>166</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 18.

national bourgeoisie as progressive because it is expected to develop, strengthen and expand the economy,<sup>167</sup> enrich the people (by enriching itself and providing jobs: the wealth “created” will “trickle down”<sup>168</sup>), and increase international trade. The idea that the national bourgeoisie will improve the lives of the people through economic development assumes that all countries develop along a given line, that Third World countries are at developmental stages that were experienced by First World countries at some point in the past, and should copy the histories of First World countries on their paths of development. The nationalist leaders, Fanon argues, “reason that if the European nations have reached that stage of development, it is on account of their efforts: ‘Let us therefore,’ they seem to say, ‘prove to ourselves and to the whole world that we are capable of the same achievements.’”<sup>169</sup> Fanon argues that this idea ignores the relations between countries, which involve some countries preventing development of others. The national bourgeoisie’s proposed means of development strengthen the country’s integration into imperialism, dependence and underdevelopment. This, Fanon notes, is started when the native elites are created and groomed by the imperial bourgeoisie to manage its interests after decolonisation.

## **Nationalism, Bourgeoisies and National Bourgeoisies in Africa**

### National Liberation as an Ideology of Western Modernity

The national liberation movements employ ideas that should, according to Fanon, be means to an end, but are made into ends per se (this is an example of reification). One example is of nationalism, an idea that may help to unite the people (as a nation), but which can lead to various problems (which we shall see throughout this thesis). Fanon argues that nationalism should be self-destructive, that national boundaries are obstacles to the struggle against imperialism, which is a global fight.)<sup>170</sup> For Fanon, the nationalist parties are led by “native intellectuals”: individuals who study in the West, permanently wish to identify with the

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<sup>167</sup> E.g. CCM (after Nyerere) committed to expanding the economies of Tanzania and Zanzibar by strengthening the private sector.

<sup>168</sup> This was (and remains) the ANC’s propaganda, for example: John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 208, and Dale McKinley, *South Africa’s Corporatised Liberation*, 21 describe “black empowerment” as the ANC’s strategy to empower a new black capitalist class, let the wealth and empowerment “trickle down” to the black majority, and hope for the “empowered class” to eventually choose to “overturn the capitalist system”.

<sup>169</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 95.

<sup>170</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 170-4. On 191-7 he uses the Congo as an example of how nationalist identities and ideologies impede the anti-colonial struggle and make it easier for foreign powers to meddle in Africa.

imperial bourgeoisie, and whose recommendations for anti-colonial struggles and postcolonial development are simple facsimiles of Europe.<sup>171</sup> Let us see some examples of how the national liberation leaders did just that. We just explored the link between nationalism and the bourgeoisie, and saw that nationalism is a thoroughly bourgeois philosophy. Nationalist ideas and parties, and small elites among native populations, spring up suddenly throughout Latin America, Asia, and Africa during the modern colonial period,<sup>172</sup> the time that Europe faced capital accumulation crises which pressurised the bourgeoisie to expand its empire outside Europe. These elites are the groups that take over formal political power after colonisation. The nationalist parties of Africa were historically linked to emerging middle classes and imperial bourgeoisie.<sup>173</sup> These were strong ties, which usually existed from the inception of nationalist parties. The national liberation leaders were members of the groups that would become national bourgeoisies. Fanon observed that these links between nationalist parties and national bourgeoisies explain their obsession with compromise with imperial and colonial regimes: compromise would secure the interests of both imperial and national bourgeoisies.<sup>174</sup> The colonial classes see compromise as a means to prevent the destruction of their property (which may occur with violent revolution); the national bourgeoisies see compromise as a means to secure their own power, because “they are not clearly aware of the possible consequences of the rising storm, are genuinely afraid of being swept away by this huge hurricane”.<sup>175</sup> Thus at the sign of violent struggle, “the elite and the nationalist bourgeois parties will be seen rushing to the colonialists” to exclaim that compromise is needed.<sup>176</sup>

Those nationalist parties were part of the national bourgeoisies from their inception. In other cases, nationalist parties became linked to (and usually part of) the national bourgeoisies when they turned from other philosophies towards nationalism (as with Samora Machel and Robert Mugabe). (This was one of the reasons that the PAC broke away from the ANC in South Africa in 1958 and formed the PAC the following year: they saw the ANC as a liberal democratic party which appealed to the wealthier people of colour and white liberals and

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<sup>171</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 107, 178.

<sup>172</sup> Hans Kohn, *Nationalism*, 11.

<sup>173</sup> Dale Mckinley, *South Africa's Corporatised Liberation* shows this of southern African liberation movements. E.g. 19: “the majority of the founding members of the ANC were drawn from the newly emergent black petty bourgeoisie.” See also Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress (1912-1952)* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971).

<sup>174</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 62.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*



whose leaders mostly had university education; in contrast, the PAC saw themselves as more progressive, rural and appealing to the poor;<sup>177</sup> the PAC also argued that the ANC's discourse was dominated by the interests of the oppressing class<sup>178</sup>). Nationalist parties are committed to bourgeois values (freedom, democracy, formal equality), and see themselves as benefitting their nations through the creation of national bourgeoisies, the establishment of formal equality of all citizens, the encouraging of foreign investment, and the modernisation of the economy. Nelson Mandela claimed that the goal of the ANC was to "open up fresh fields for the development of a prosperous non-European bourgeois class."<sup>179</sup> To expand the power of the national bourgeoisie was the ANC's objective from its inauguration, partly because it was originally led by individuals who represented the seeds of a national bourgeoisie.<sup>180</sup> It was also an early personal goal of Mandela's: if the ANC came to power, he promised in 1956, "for the first time in the history of this country the non-European bourgeoisie will have the opportunity to own in their own name and right mills and factories, and trade and private enterprise will boom and flourish as never before."<sup>181</sup> Mandela was far from unique in this vision: the aim for individuals from the colonised group to come to own wealth, specifically by forming a national bourgeoisie, is an integral part of national liberation. (Sometimes this is presented as a version of the "two-stage theory", as we will see with examples of other members of the ANC and Amilcar Cabral in Chapter 3.)

National bourgeoisies and nationalist parties are created by imperial powers. This point is argued by Fanon, who sees nationalist leaders returning from colonial institutions "clamouring" for nationalism with little understanding of how to achieve nationalism.<sup>182</sup> During the colonial period the nationalist-leaders-to-be are educated in the West, are formed in the West; after decolonisation, this applies to the "colonised intellectuals" and "intellectual elite", classes of educated natives who really support imperialism and try their best to copy the West.<sup>183</sup> This is how the bourgeois-democratic values of nationalist leaders (including the

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<sup>177</sup> Xolela Mangcu, *Biko*, 96.

<sup>178</sup> Ndumiso Dladla, "Contested Memory: Retrieving the Africanist (Liberatory) Conception of Non-Racialism" in *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* (Volume 64, Issue 4), 101-127.

<sup>179</sup> Ann Talbot, "South Africa 20 Years after Mandela's Release". 15/02/2010, <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2010/02/pers-f15.html>

<sup>180</sup> Dale McKinley 19 shows that historically, the ANC represented the national bourgeoisie first, and the black population second: "the majority of the founding members of the ANC were drawn from the newly emergent black petty bourgeoisie"; also Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 36: historically the ANC "was dominated by *petit-bourgeois* leaders championing extremely moderate strategies."

<sup>181</sup> Ann Talbot, "South Africa 20 Years after Mandela's Release".

<sup>182</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 150-3.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

earliest, fundamental ones) are learned, and how they are copies of Europe. The problem is not that these leaders studied in the West, but that they learned particular ideas which they tried to apply to the Third World, and that they mimic and fetishize Europe without critical analysis of imperialism. And even when these ideas have genuinely emancipatory potential, this is usually the form of emancipation that comes with bourgeois ideas, that is the emancipation that comes with capital accumulation. This of course brings to mind Marx's observation of the ruling ideas being, in every epoch, the ideas of the ruling class.<sup>184</sup> As Peter Alter puts it,

The intellectual and political leaders of the national liberation movements – men like Mahatma Gandhi, Ahmed Sukarno, Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold S Senghor and Jomo Kenyatta – had mostly lived and been educated in Europe. They made no secret of the fact that they were using an ideology whose power to change, to emancipate and integrate peoples had been proved in Europe.<sup>185</sup>

There is a trend of national liberation leaders being educated in this way. This is how many of them became committed to nationalism, democracy, civil rights, the bourgeoisie, and some forms of socialism and social democracy. For example, Pan-Africanism arose in London in the early twentieth century; it influenced leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, particularly, and Haile Selassie, Ahmed Sékou Touré, Thomas Sankara and Julius Nyerere directly from Europe, and indirectly through the American examples of Marcus Garvey, WEB du Bois and Malcolm X. Similarly, Négritude arose in Paris, where Léopold Senghor, Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas and others learned or developed its ideas. In the case of anti-racism, non-violence and civil rights, the USA Civil Rights Movement was a major influence on African nationalists in the post-WW2 era. Curiously, even religious fundamentalism (especially Christian and Muslim, such as Omar al-Bashir's extreme Islamist nationalism) was often learned in this way.<sup>186</sup> The national liberation leaders learned European and American ideas, often in Europe. Even when these ideas appeared to oppose Europe, whiteness and imperialism, we will continue to see that Fanon was correct to accuse them of copying European bourgeois ideas.

Hans Kohn similarly sees nationalism and ideas of national liberation spreading to Latin America, Asia and Africa from leaders educated in and by the West. Let us briefly look at some of the original and fundamental decolonial nationalist leaders and struggles, which (in

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<sup>184</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, 64.

<sup>185</sup> Peter Alter, *Nationalism* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), 143-4.

<sup>186</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 469.

addition to their Western forebears) became the models for African national liberation. “Father of the Turks” Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, known by UNESCO as “the leader of the first struggle given against colonialism and imperialism”,<sup>187</sup> brought Western laws, customs, modernisation and democratisation to Turkey which he had learned in the West (these were subsequently copied by Iran, according to Kohn). These included the Latin-based Turkish alphabet (which replaced the Ottoman Turkish alphabet), full universal suffrage, and equal civil and political rights to women in the 1930s, (in fact, before many Western countries).<sup>188</sup> Kohn sees England and the USA as inspiring the earliest decolonial nationalist struggles when they granted independence to Egypt (1922, completed in 1936), Iraq (1932) and the Philippines (1934).<sup>189</sup> He shows that the Indian National Congress was founded (1885) and led mostly by “English liberals” until it was taken over by Bal Gandahar Tilak (“Father of Indian Unrest”), who Kohn sees as symbolising the merge of Hindu nationalism with Western nationalism. The INC was later led by Ghandi, who was inspired by Western religious, liberal and nationalist ideas.<sup>190</sup> Similarly, nationalism in other parts of Asia such as China was led by individuals such as Sun Yat-sen, “Father of the Nation” of the Republic of China, and Hu Shih, both of whom had been “trained in the West”, training which shaped their struggles against the imperialism from e.g. Russia, Japan and Western Europe.<sup>191</sup> African soldiers who fought for their colonial rulers learned nationalist ideas in these wars; for instance, in the Second World War, in the British fight against the Italian occupants of Ethiopia, and in India and Burma, where African soldiers were inspired by local nationalist movements.<sup>192</sup>

### Formation of the National Bourgeoisie

It is important to understand how the national bourgeoisie arises. In order to be a nationalist party, a group only needs certain ideas (complex and contradictory, as we have already seen), a small amount of group cohesion, and charisma if it is to be successful. It is more difficult to become a bourgeoisie. In capitalist societies there are two main classes, one which owns the means of production (capitalist/bourgeois) and one which does not (Fanon emphasises that

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<sup>187</sup> Jacob Landau, *Atatürk and the Modernisation of Turkey* (London: Routledge, 2019).

<sup>188</sup> Hans Kohn, *Nationalism*, 83.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-6.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>192</sup> Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 21.

the latter includes proletariat and lumpenproletariat). One of these classes can only exist if the other also exists.<sup>193</sup> In order to be a bourgeoisie, a class must also own capital, with which it exploits and dominates the rest of society. Marx writes that the means of production “only become capital under circumstances in which they serve at the same time as means of exploitation of, and domination over, the worker.”<sup>194</sup> This contradicts the national bourgeoisie’s aim to improve the conditions of all: it is really an essential part of the national bourgeoisie’s interests to exploit wage-labourers, maintain certain levels of unemployment, and exclude the majority from access to capital (“The constant generation of a relative surplus population keeps the law of the supply and demand of labour, and therefore wages, within narrow limits which correspond to capital’s valorisation requirements”).<sup>195</sup> This alone shows why the national bourgeoisie is not revolutionary: like the nationalist parties, its “dominant ideological framework [is] one of class aspiration.”<sup>196</sup> In fact, Fanon sees the national bourgeoisie (whom he appropriately calls “new colonists”) as even more aggressively exploitative than the original colonists.<sup>197</sup> Augusto Pinochet (under direct influence from the “Chicago Boys”) wanted to use a new national bourgeoisie to improve the lives of Chileans: “to make Chile not a nation of proletarians, but a nation of proprietors”.<sup>198</sup> This is an example of how the people are made to identify with the new class of capitalists on national and racial lines, to experience themselves as an elite. (Spencer and Wollman show that linking the ideas of the people and the elite is an inherent part of nationalism, as can be

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<sup>193</sup> Karl Marx *Capital*, vol 1, 932-3 “Capital is not a thing, but a social relation between persons which is mediated through things.” Marx criticises “the political economist” for obsessing over the “material substance” of the means of production and forgetting the exploitation that turns them into capital, something that Mandela and Pinochet both do in the surrounding citations.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 933.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 899.

At this point, I ought to point out that “unemployment” is a misnomer: Bauman shows that “unemployment” implies a deviation from a standard (“employment”), and is therefore appropriate in cases where such a standard exists, i.e. where all people have a realistic chance of being employed (where the unemployed are a “reserve army of labour”). But in our postmodern world, particularly in the formerly colonised countries, such a standard does not exist. While the main economy continually erodes other economies, an increasing number of people exists completely outside the main economy, with no prospect of becoming employed. “The ‘margin’ is no longer marginal”, and the “reserve army of labour” has become “truly and fully the ‘redundant population’”. See Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and Its Discontents* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 35-7, 43. The reader would do well to bear this in mind: that the national bourgeoisie has a role of excluding many individuals from the economy and the consumer game. Fanon recognises the growing role of the lumpenproletariat, the most wretched of the earth.

<sup>196</sup> Dale Mckinley, *South Africa’s Corporatised Liberation*, 29.

<sup>197</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 54.

<sup>198</sup> Mundo Andino (Andean World), “Augusto Pinochet biography data. Chilean coup d’etat. Pinochet human rights violations.” 08/09/2008, <http://www.mundoandino.com/Chile/History-pinochet>

seen in the notion of “sovereign people”.)<sup>199</sup> We have just seen that Mandela, and most national liberation movements, had very similar aims to this. If an entire nation is made into capitalists, who will do the labour of the proletariat? It could be an unseen proletariat (not acknowledged as human or as part of the nation because of e.g. race or gender), or a proletariat who believes himself to be bourgeois or sees himself as making temporary personal sacrifices for the benefit of the nation. Or it could be members of another country, subjugated to the imperial nationalist demands of the (superior or “chosen”) nation of capitalists. But these options surely contradict the social democratic aims of the nationalist parties, especially since national liberation demands are often articulated in pan-African rhetoric. The struggle against apartheid, for instance, was represented as a Pan-African struggle, even a global struggle,<sup>200</sup> yet xenophobic attitudes are rife among South Africans, who are “more hostile to immigration than citizens of any country for which comparable data is available.”<sup>201</sup>

The majority of capital in the land has been appropriated by the colonisers,<sup>202</sup> whom the national liberators are reluctant to challenge, despite their revolutionary rhetoric. This poses the question: how will the national bourgeoisie come to own capital? After rapidly changing his mind about his pledge to take over the mines, banks and monopoly industries (“a change or modification of our views in this regard is inconceivable”),<sup>203</sup> Mandela hoped to overcome this problem by developing “fresh fields” for the new bourgeoisie to appropriate. This could be achieved by finding resources that had not been valuable until recently (hence not taken by the colonisers), or by creating new needs in the people, which can be fulfilled by new businesses (Chapter 2). But while “fresh fields” are sometimes opened when possible, and while some capital is transferred into native hands, the majority of the country’s wealth remains in the ownership of colonial and imperial enterprises.<sup>204</sup> Mandela’s new strategy was to “reintroduce the market to South Africa”, and foreign investment tripled immediately after apartheid, led by American companies.<sup>205</sup> (It is also important to remember that massive wealth has already been transferred out of the country during colonisation, accelerating with

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<sup>199</sup> Phillip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 32. Fanon and Foucault also recognise this, as we will see.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 8, 100-3.

<sup>203</sup> John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 219.

<sup>204</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, “Preface” in Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 8.

<sup>205</sup> John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 219.

the Second World War,<sup>206</sup> and not destined to be repaid.<sup>207</sup> Wealth continues to flow from the poor to the rich within the country, and the outflow of wealth statistically increases after decolonisation,<sup>208</sup> as does inequality in most cases.<sup>209</sup>)

Of course, there are ways that the native population can come to own capital. This could happen gradually, for instance through a wealth tax,<sup>210</sup> or suddenly and violently, by seizing it from the capitalist class. This can lead to the existence of a national bourgeoisie or to a socialist state. But the national liberation movements tend to strongly oppose wealth taxes, as we have just seen in the South African case, and to subscribe to philosophies of non-violence when dealing with the coloniser (forgetting these philosophies when they deal with other natives, as we shall see later).

Thus postcolonial countries depend heavily on foreign capital<sup>211</sup> for economic development. What happens when they attempt to separate themselves from imperialism, for instance by cutting all ties with Europe, expelling the colonial population and/or stopping the flow of capital from the former colony? This is a way for the native population to come to own capital, although imperial forces try their best to prevent it. When colonial forces are genuinely forced to leave, they often take as much capital from the country as they can, leaving it with little industry. Fanon describes that “the spectacular flight of capital” is a

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<sup>206</sup> Patrick Bond, *Talk Left, Walk Right*, 40-3; John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 238-9. When Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo demanded financial reparations for wealth taken from Africa during colonisation, he was attacked by Thabo Mbeki and Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, who preferred to ask imperial countries for “donor aid”. Similarly, Mbeki, Dlamini-Zuma, Alec Erwin, Frank Chikane and Nelson Mandela opposed even very moderate wealth and income taxes (including the proposition of a 0.5% tax of incomes exceeding R2 million), and opposed lawsuits led by South African apartheid victims aimed at getting firms that had benefited from and supported apartheid, “aiding and abetting gross human rights violations” in defiance of UN sanctions (such as Sasol, Gold Fields, and Anglo American) to make reparations. They insisted that these are South African problems only, and should therefore be settled in South Africa and not in international or American courts; Mandela called the apartheid reparations lawsuits “outside interference”. Stiglitz, on the other hand, argued that accountability for those who had “helped to support that system, and who contributed to human rights abuses” would improve South Africa’s economic growth and development.

<sup>207</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 101-3 and Patrick Bond, *Talk Left, Walk Right*, 42-3.

<sup>208</sup> Patrick Bond, *Talk Left, Walk Right*, 107, 202-5 and David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 74 describe how Africa is “subsidising the rest of the world”(Joseph Stiglitz’ phrase) through debt repayment and capital flight.

<sup>209</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 24, 31, 55, 118, 136.

<sup>210</sup> The ANC described the proposition of very moderate wealth taxes as “controversial” and “counterproductive”, and Trevor Manuel declared that the liberation struggle was not about money. Patrick Bond, *Talk Left, Walk Right*, 41-2, and John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 238. Sampie Terreblanche’s findings that a 0.5% tax on incomes over R2 million per year (during the 1990s) could end poverty were quashed by the ANC.

<sup>211</sup> Of course, “foreign capital” is a strange term, which includes capital that was developed from wealth stolen from the colonies.

regular part of decolonisation: the bourgeoisie withdraws its capital if it fears losing it.<sup>212</sup> This makes it difficult for countries to separate themselves from imperialism. These threats made by imperial and colonial classes are described in VS Naipaul's novel *A Bend in the River*. After the colonial class leaves the town at the bend in the river, gardens and streets look alike; it has become a "ghost town", which "had been destroyed, had returned to the bush", "abandoned".<sup>213</sup> "There had been a boom before, just at the end of the colonial period, and the ruined suburb near the rapids was what it had left behind."<sup>214</sup> Almost identically, Robert af Klinteberg described Malabo as a "ghost town", like "a place hit by war or plague" after the Spanish colonisers left Equatorial Guinea, destroying everything they could.<sup>215</sup> This is why Samora Machel warned Mugabe to not appear too revolutionary at independence: "You will face ruin if you force the whites into precipitate flight."<sup>216</sup> Capital flight happened in some countries during the early period of decolonisation, and is something we would hope for national liberation movements to prevent. A telling example is of Guinea, which became independent in 1958. At the time, Guinea was led by the relatively radical prime minister Ahmed Sékou Touré, a trade unionist of modest background who later allied himself with the USSR for some time, aimed to prevent the emergence of a national bourgeoisie, and nationalised Guinea's resources for a short period (partly in order to prevent the French colonisers scurrying out with anything of value they could take). Guinean independence led to a mass exodus of the French, who took with them everything they could, including lightbulbs, telephones and cutlery, and destroyed everything they could not take: windows, pictures, furniture.<sup>217</sup> The following year, new president of France Charles de Gaulle threatened that Algerian secession from France would bring "the most appalling poverty, terrible political chaos, widespread slaughter, and soon after the bellicose dictatorship of the Communists". When de Gaulle granted Algeria independence, the colonial class left after bombing hospitals, libraries, shops, promising to leave behind nothing but "scorched earth".<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 103.

<sup>213</sup> Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, *A Bend in the River* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1979), 4, 16.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>215</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 197-9.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 65-7. At this time most nationalist leaders, including Leopold Senghor and Felix Houphouët-Boigny, did not want political independence (i.e. this was before colonial countries realised that it was in their interests to grant independence to their colonies).

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-1.

Sometimes postcolonial governments and national liberation movements appear to seize wealth from colonial classes, and similarly appear to break their ties with imperialism. But on closer analyses, these are usually ways that they are integrated into the imperial system. Because of its vast economic power, the imperial bourgeoisie usually can manipulate decolonial and anti-imperial struggle according to its will. So when postcolonial governments seized wealth from the colonial class, it was common for imperialists to actually support the revolutionaries. Liberation movements and armies come to fight in imperial chess games, particularly during the Cold War. This resulted in continued control of the country by imperial forces via national bourgeoisies, and only limited capital owned by the new bourgeoisies, who remain managers for imperialism. Wars are profitable: the ruling class encourages wars and prolongs preventable wars in Africa to make Africa a place of war, corruption and political instability and to profit directly. For instance, armaments companies and the governments that represent them profit from selling weapons to both sides of conflicts (conflicts which also serve as advertisements for their armaments),<sup>219</sup> and resources are purchased cheaply from middleman militia. Such wartime resources are cheap because they are collected or created through slavery or theft. Some examples of colonial powers permitting revolutionaries to seize wealth, only to co-opt the struggles and wealth:

- When Nasser tried to nationalise the Suez Canal and other foreign-owned resources in Egypt (including banks, insurance companies and other businesses), this led to a war that ended British colonialism but strengthened British global imperialism. “The aggression against Egypt by Israel, France, and Britain in 1956 to overthrow the nationalist regime of Gamal Abdul Nasser strengthened the latter’s [Britain’s] hold on Egypt and on the imagination of Arab peoples from Iraq to Algeria.”<sup>220</sup>
- The Angolan Civil War is one of many wars where one side (in this case both Unita and FNLA) was supported by the USA (and China, apartheid South Africa, and the Congo led by USA-asset Joseph Mobutu)<sup>221</sup> and another (MPLA) by the USSR (and its allies), and later France. The Chinese government supported all three rival nationalist groups. Both sides were thus funded by countries that wanted imperial control of Angola. The USA funded Jonas Savimbi, spending US\$250 million “on covert operations to provide arms shipments to Unita”.<sup>222</sup> The civil war continued

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<sup>219</sup> Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 103.

<sup>220</sup> Hans Kohn, *Nationalism*, 90.

<sup>221</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 240-2.

<sup>222</sup> Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 58-60



after the Cold War ended. De Beers purchased diamonds from both sides, paying Savimbi US\$5 million per year for them, knowing that this money would be used for the war.<sup>223</sup> Now, José Eduardo dos Santos and his family have amassed vast wealth from plundering Angola of oil and diamond wealth (which they have secured in Brazil), making them part of the national bourgeoisie. They accomplished this by helping and with the assistance of sinister individuals such as the De Beers' rival the "King of Diamonds" Lev Leviev (of investment company Africa-Israel and Israel's largest diamond company, Leviev Diamonds).<sup>224</sup>

- The British initially depicted Kwame Nkrumah as a communist threat. But later, the British and the USA came to support him. They liked him (and used him to access Ghana's economy)<sup>225</sup> until he nationalised large parts of the economy and developed alliances with the USSR, China, and Cuba, enemies of the USA and UK, and announced plans to reduce dependence on foreign capital and investment, and uplift the people through welfare. The CIA turned to support the National Liberation Council, which overthrew Nkrumah. The NLC subsequently implemented neoliberal policies, notably privatisation, and invited the IMF and World Bank to help manage the economy. Ties to the USSR, China and Cuba were cut, and ties with apartheid South Africa, which had been severed under Nkrumah's leadership, were recreated.<sup>226</sup>
- Omar Al-Bashir seized power in Sudan with the support of China; when he seized the means of production this opposed some interests of Western imperialism but consolidated a national bourgeoisie that would support Chinese imperialism.<sup>227</sup>
- Francisco Macías Nguema was supported in his journey to presidency by the Spanish administrators of Equatorial Guinea, who incorrectly "believed he could be turned

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 17, 107 Savimbi earned US\$60 million per year for these diamonds, although SADF sources estimated that he sold far more diamonds than this.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Initially, Nkrumah's government used government spending to grow the economy and employment, building schools, hospitals, roads, factories, shipyards, mines and other industry "at an unprecedented rate"; but this had more to do with bribery and impulse than a careful study of what the country needed: see Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 154. The most telling example is the Volta River Hydroelectric Project: predicted to bring accessible electricity to the people of Ghana and surrounding countries, it was really a corrupt, World Bank-supported scam intended to provide subsidised electricity to Kaiser Aluminium (rather than the people), at a time when Ghana would not benefit from aluminium production, especially considering that the aluminium industry is only viable on "heavily subsidised electricity". "Ghana's disastrous economic history and resultant political instability over forty years can be ascribed to that project." Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Money: One Man's Crusade Against Corruption* (Houghton: Umuzi, 2007), 167-8.

<sup>226</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 99-100.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 469, 553-4.

into a trustworthy collaborator relied upon to do their bidding.”<sup>228</sup> Macías ruled for only 145 days, during which he attacked many Spaniards, leading to many deaths and a mass exodus. (Much of the wealth left behind was taken by government officials, members of the national bourgeoisie). Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, Macías’ nephew, led a coup that overthrew Macías. This coup was supported by the Spanish, USA and Cuban governments. But Obiang was also less amenable to imperialism than he had initially appeared. During his rule, Obiang seized much of the country’s wealth, particularly oil, for his own ownership. He became one of the wealthiest heads of state in the world, with more power than most to defy imperialism.

This was not to be allowed. In 2004, shortly after massive new oilfields were discovered in Equatorial Guinea, Mark Thatcher was convicted for supporting a coup d’état to overthrow Obiang. During their trials, Thatcher’s friend Simon Mann and his assistants admitted that the United States, British, Spanish, South African and Zimbabwean governments were part of the conspiracy to overthrow Obiang.<sup>229</sup>

We have just seen that in a climate of class differentiation, it is nationalist parties who lead the anti-colonial fight. The nationalist parties and their philosophies are strongly influenced by imperial interests: to a large extent, they are created by imperial interests. These parties, who espouse both nationalist and social democratic aims, see the creation of national bourgeoisies as a symbol of political independence, economic development, democracy, and the end of poverty and of problems associated with colonialism and absolutism. If a national bourgeoisie develops, this means that members of the nation gain capital. But most of the country’s capital is owned by the colonial class and by foreigners, and there are therefore only limited means for a national bourgeoisie to develop independently. New opportunities for finding wealth and owning capital are limited. If a new bourgeoisie develops by overthrowing the colonial class, it is often able to do so only through the help of new imperialists. National bourgeoisies therefore cannot usually develop independently. They are created by and thoroughly depend on those who already control capital: the colonial class, the current imperial class (usually European countries and firms), and new imperialists (particularly the USA and its corporations). We will look at some examples of national bourgeoisies being deliberately created, and then we will explore the reasons for their creation, seeing that they have a role of enabling capital accumulation.

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 198-200; Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 108-9.

### Indirect Rule

Fanon criticises the national bourgeoisie, nationalist parties and “colonised intellectuals” as members of the oppressed group who assist with their own oppression. He observes that it is a common, old colonial practice to pacify the people with small concessions (including jobs and money), to quell revolutionary potential.<sup>230</sup> Although “Manichean” colonial society has more obvious a binary division than postcolonial society, we saw that class diversification began with capitalism (and therefore began relatively early during the colonial period). So it is an intrinsic part of modern colonisation that the colonial class creates, as Fanon puts it, a national middle class to manage Western enterprise and set its country up as the brothel of Europe.<sup>231</sup> During the early stages of colonisation, the British used a system of “indirect rule” in their colonies, by creating an indigenous “new class of intermediaries paid to transmit government orders.” They employed existing African authorities, as well as individuals who had “no traditional legitimacy at all”, to maintain British rule: to maintain order, supply labour and other resources, and collect taxes.<sup>232</sup> Later, colonial officials continued to prefer dealing with professionals, such as lawyers and businessmen, and with what they called “men of property and standing”, particularly in political matters.<sup>233</sup> To choose which individuals would join this class was often arbitrary and used to create divisions among the colonised (as with German, Belgian and French colonisers setting up first the Tutsi and then the Hutu as the manager class in Ruanda-Urundi).<sup>234</sup> (A South African example: after the 1846 Frontier War, the colonial government introduced a “qualified franchise. All adult males who earned 25 pounds could vote”; they hoped this would break alliances between the Xhosa and Khoisan, because Xhosa men tended to be financially better off and therefore more likely to be able to vote than their Khoisan counterparts.)<sup>235</sup> Colonial officials often required a native managerial class, which would later become the national bourgeoisie.

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<sup>230</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 208.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>232</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 19. Meredith points out that this led to conflict among the colonised, because e.g. the colonisers expected individuals to obey the authority of those they saw as inferior or different, e.g. members of rival tribes.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 134-7.

<sup>235</sup> Xolela Mangcu, *Biko*, 63: by 1865, “significant numbers of Xhosa men began to qualify for the franchise” (throughout this time the British destroyed their homes and food and began turning them into wage-labourers).

The British used “indirect rule” first, but other colonial powers quickly copied this model.<sup>236</sup> They would empower those authorities who would control the population on their behalf in return for financial, political and other rewards. During the early twentieth century, the British brought south Asians to Uganda to “serve as a buffer between Europeans and Africans in the middle rungs of commerce and administration”, investing in their education and employment to maintain a strict class-race differentiation, with Ugandans at the bottom, Asians in the middle and the British on top.<sup>237</sup> The German colonisers and later Belgians strictly enforced the Hutu-Tutsi ethnic and class division (e.g. with a system of identity cards specifying the tribe of the holder) in Ruanda-Urundi, initially setting the Tutsi minority up as a native ruling class.<sup>238</sup> The French commonly rigged elections in Algeria, reserving an exact number of seats for amenable Muslim candidates, and helped Mohammed ben Youssef become king of Morocco in 1927 in the incorrect belief that he would be politically malleable.<sup>239</sup> This is a major way that the colonial powers came to influence the national liberation movements later. It explains the strong connection between nationalist parties and national bourgeoisies. The nationalist parties are strongly linked to national bourgeoisies, not only because they believe in their revolutionary power or support the interests of the national bourgeoisies, but also because their leaders are usually members of national bourgeoisies, as we have seen. This alone portends a lot about postcolonial governmental policies. This is partly because the nationalist parties actively seek financial support, which they get from national and foreign bourgeoisies. It is also because the foreign institutions that create national bourgeoisies use individuals who will look after their interests.

“Indirect rule”, however, is not unique to colonialism. It is precisely the role taken over by the Fanonian national bourgeoisie. The colonial practice of enriching a small native class as a means to indirectly control the population, and to mollify the people, continues throughout the colonial and postcolonial periods. With decolonisation, this practice works increasingly as a Freudian illusion: through the national bourgeoisie, all citizens are made to feel part of the nation, through e.g. the granting of civil rights. When the people are part of the nation, and

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<sup>236</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 7, 21. On 286, Mamdani argues that “Britain was the first to marshal authoritarian possibilities in indigenous culture” and discusses how the other colonial powers, following Britain, created and exacerbated tribal differences in order to facilitate “indirect rule”; this often involved empowering one arbitrary ethnic group of “natives” to rule over others. He notes that indirect rule, through the empowerment of tribal chiefs, continues today throughout much of Africa.

<sup>237</sup> Jan Jelmert Jørgensen, *Uganda: A Modern History* (Taylor & Francis, 1981), 43. See also Jean-Marie Henckaerts and Louis Sohn, *Mass Expulsion in Modern International Law and Practice* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1995).

<sup>238</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 135.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 49, 52.

the national bourgeoisie is identified with the nation (for instance, through race and being seen as individual overcomers of colonisation), success of the national bourgeoisie becomes the illusion of success of the people. The achievements of “the nation” are presented as shared by even the most wretched citizens.

According to Fanon, the national bourgeoisie aims to become part of the capitalist system: including to own capital and exploit the rest of society with it. In the South African example, despite claims to the contrary, the historical goal of the ANC leadership was for “a specific section of the black population to become an integral part of the capitalist system.”<sup>240</sup> Cyril Ramaphosa is the embodiment of the national bourgeoisie, whose formation often takes the form of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), and the related affirmative action. BEE is usually associated with post-Mandela South Africa, but the apartheid government began such “restructuring” at least in the 1960s under different names. This practice was actually very prominent in southern Africa by the 1970s: the apartheid governments of South Africa and Zimbabwe were pressurised by the British and “white monopoly capital” to create “a black compradorist ownership class” to effect political stability and prolong their rule.<sup>241</sup> “Like the ANC government today, the apartheid regime in its last decade understood the value of a black ‘middle class’ as a buffer in a brutally unequal system.”<sup>242</sup> The apartheid government recommended that Zimbabwe make similar “concessions” (i.e. groom a black national bourgeoisie), and BJ Vorster advised Ian Smith that white minority rule was unsustainable in Zimbabwe. Smith subsequently allowed Abel Muzorewa to be elected as prime minister in 1979, the year of the Lancaster House Agreement.<sup>243</sup> In South Africa, the apartheid government provided many black businessmen with bargain loans and other financial support, for instance from the Industrial Development Corporation. It is through these loans

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<sup>240</sup> Dale Mckinley, *South Africa's Corporatised Liberation*, 19 writes that this was the foundation to what would become the ANC's approach to “black economic empowerment”.

<sup>241</sup> Leonard Gentle, “Black Economic Empowerment: The South African Social Formation”, in Patrick Bond, Horman Chitonge and Arndt Hopfmann (editors), *The Accumulation of Capital in Southern Africa: Rosa Luxemburg's Contemporary Relevance* (Johannesburg: The Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, 2007), 128-9. Gentle sees the 1990-4 period in particular as “redefining the future political landscape” through the creation of a black middle class.

<sup>242</sup> John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 207.

<sup>243</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 130. On 340-2 Meredith discusses how the economic boom of the 1960s and 1970s in Southern Africa (South Africa was the second-fastest-growing economy) led to a shortage of labour; white businessmen wanted to end apartheid job laws and create a black middle class; they realised this and the granting of rights to blacks would help to further the interests of white capital, e.g. by reducing government control of wages and ushering in “later”, more “advanced” forms of capitalism. This is one of the factors that show a flow from apartheid to national liberation (even though they are usually presented as completely different).

that Cyril Ramaphosa became a very successful businessman and capitalist, and later president.<sup>244</sup>

Let us hear from Moeletsi Mbeki, younger brother of Thabo, on this. Mbeki argues that when the British granted South Africa independence in 1910, they had to choose between giving political control to Afrikaner nationalists or black nationalists. The British gave control to Afrikaner nationalists primarily because the Afrikaners owned more wealth, according to Mbeki. But even at this time, the British realised that this “model was clearly defective” and unstable:

Big business however, had anticipated this and came up with its solution. It would transfer just a small part of its wealth to individual leaders of the ANC, and thus co-opt them. These leaders found the offer of instant wealth hard to resist, and were easily co-opted – and thus corrupted.<sup>245</sup>

Thus, Crawford-Browne observes, MI6 “and other covert organisations” had “infiltrated” Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) from the 1980s, possibly earlier: “huge bribes were paid with deliberate British government connivance to unleash a culture of corruption to subvert a young and immature democracy.” According to Crawford-Browne, this was to help the ANC to be elected after apartheid, to “ensure that British interests received preferential treatment”, to ensure that South Africa would be economically dependent on Britain, and to continue to supply cheap natural resources to Britain, including platinum, diamonds, gold, coal and iron ore.<sup>246</sup> The new bourgeoisie that emerged from MK included Nelson Mandela,<sup>247</sup> the Mbeki family, Tokyo Sexwale, Joe Modise, Jacob Zuma, Toni Yengeni, and many other future leaders of South African politics and industry (most of whom were later found to be “corrupt”, as if their very formation wasn’t a form of corruption: see Chapter 3). The imperial interests that give some capital to emerging bourgeoisies often do so under the pretext of supporting liberation movements against illegitimate regimes like apartheid. But this financial assistance comes at a cost, and it is not intended to be used to improve the situation of the people of the nation. Most of the time, it may be called aid but is really bribery: controlling and corrupting the new leaders so they will manage imperialism. It is because of this bribery that Andrew Feinstein, former ANC Member of Parliament and author of *The*

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<sup>244</sup> John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 207-8.

<sup>245</sup> Cited in Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 7-8

<sup>246</sup> Ibid. in Ibid., 4, Crawford-Browne recounts that British and American governments and corporations tended “to lavishly fund all parties” in order to “hedge their bets”.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 16: “When he left office in 1999 after only one term of five years, Mandela’s various foundations were estimated to be worth R1 billion. That most certainly could not have been earned from his presidential salary or royalties from his autobiography *Long Walk To Freedom*.”

*Shadow World: Inside the Global Arms Trade*, called the financial district of London “the most corrupt square mile on the planet Earth.”<sup>248</sup>

So we have seen that Fanon is correct: the national bourgeoisie is created by imperial firms, governments, financial conglomerates, and other organisations.<sup>249</sup> We have seen why Fanon concludes that it is a class of managers and aspiring colonists. Imperial institutions give capital to the new bourgeoisie, with the expectation that the nationalist party and new bourgeoisie will submit to them and assist with imperial endeavours. We turn now to the ways that the national bourgeoisie benefits new and old imperialists. One way is to create a climate of corruption. The practice of paying bribes sometimes purely to corrupt will be explored in Chapter 3. National bourgeoisies are created in order to manufacture an appearance of progress, particularly against racism, inequality and poverty, and thus pacify the people and redirect their aggression from the bourgeoisies.

#### Prosperity, Democracy, Socialism: For the People or the Bourgeoisies?

According to Fanon, when the national bourgeoisie demands decolonisation and nationalisation, this “quite simply means the transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are a legacy of the colonial period.”<sup>250</sup> Colonisation divides individuals into two main constructed groups (usually races) with one benefitting from the domination of the other. National liberation aims at ending the domination of one race by another (which it equates with domination *per se*). Once governments are forced to confront the systematic exploitation of one race by another, they often attempt to do this through policies such as affirmative action, which is the practice of allocating limited opportunities, resources, jobs or political positions to some members of the currently disadvantaged or “previously disadvantaged”, when those disadvantages may otherwise make these opportunities unavailable. Affirmative action is a remedy for discrimination and a means to enforcing equality.<sup>251</sup> This usually happens not through the redistribution of existing opportunities, but the allocation of new ones. Affirmative action can be class-based (e.g. in some Israeli

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>249</sup> “The principal actors [of our world today] are no longer democratically controlled nation states, but non-elected, unbound and radically disembedded financial conglomerates.” Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and Its Discontents*, 45.

<sup>250</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 152.

<sup>251</sup> Samuel Myers, “If Not Affirmative Action, Then What?” in Samuel Myers and Bruce Corrie (editors), *Racial and Ethnic Economic Inequality: An International Perspective* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 185.

universities, the economic status of the student's neighbourhood is taken into account in fee calculation, albeit not individual financial status, nationality or ethnicity; at the end of his presidency, Jacob Zuma attempted to make higher education free for students of household incomes of less than R350 000). But it is usually race, ethnicity and nationality which are taken into account, and (more recently) gender and disabilities (because affirmative action is linked to ideologies, like nationalism and national liberation, that deny the existence or minimise the importance of class).

Affirmative action (a phrase coined by John F Kennedy) became common throughout the world after the Second World War.<sup>252</sup> However, the practice began as part of colonial primitive accumulation, particularly by the British in nineteenth-century India in an attempt to create a national bourgeoisie that would look after British interests and later gain *de jure* rule of India: the official explanation was of course that affirmative action would remedy discrimination against the lower castes and be a step towards effecting national autonomy.<sup>253</sup> Affirmative action is not intended to combat poverty or inequality *per se*, but to address racial inequality: not to make the people wealthier, but to provide a limited number of opportunities to the "previously disadvantaged", a phrase which implies that the structural and essential impoverishment of the majority and enrichment of an elite is unique to the previous regime. However, affirmative action is presented by the national bourgeoisie and national liberation parties as a means to overcome poverty and to help the people as a whole. This ideology can only be successful if disadvantaged and advantaged, or ruler and ruled, are equated with particular races or nationalities. The ideology and propaganda of national liberation saturate everyday life with images of people of colour and women doing well: such advertising implies that oppression is over, because oppression is equated with one of its forms. A part of oppression is represented as the entirety of oppression. In the next chapter, we shall explore the psychological reasons that such ideology is successful. Terms like "black empowerment" are ambiguously misleading: they imply (and through advertising are made to imply) that all black people are empowered, when the empowerment usually applies only to a small elite. The "success" of such policies saturates the media, black faces are placed at the fronts of white-owned companies, and success stories (especially of "self-made" people of colour) are lauded by politicians and media. In the early post-apartheid era, "the names of black empowerment 'partners' were added to the boards of the mining companies" and other white-

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.



owned companies in a pretence of nationalisation “to mask a regime of impunity.”<sup>254</sup> For instance, when Pilger asked him whether it was still possible for all the people of South Africa to share in the country’s wealth, Mandela insisted that he would prefer transformation that would not “challenge big business”. The people, he said, “are beginning to share in that [the country’s] wealth. You now have blacks, coloureds and Indians involved in companies that command billions in assets, something totally new in this country. You see in Johannesburg many blacks now buying properties in the wealthy suburbs.”<sup>255</sup> These do not make up the people but a specific class: specifically, the national middle class that Fanon criticises, a reactionary class that mimics and identifies with the national and foreign bourgeoisie.<sup>256</sup>

It is not only a national bourgeoisie that develops; there is also an expansion of a “middle class” of managers, skilled workers, professionals etc. Fanon includes these in the national middle class; he sees them as reactionary because of their identification with the ruling class.<sup>257</sup> They are the lucky few of the oppressed group, mostly supporting the imperial system because they receive benefits from it.<sup>258</sup> Yet national liberation ideology also presents this group as progressive, as symbols of its achievement. When people of the former colonised join this class, this is supposed to indicate that opportunities have opened and that the formerly oppressed is no longer condemned to blue-collar work or feudal subsistence. This is related to affirmative action. White-collar work arises in Europe during the main colonial (late modern) period, and its subsequent increase in the underdeveloped world coincides with decolonisation but is not the result of decolonisation, rather of capitalist modernity. The illusion of progress does not only depend on the cultivation of a capital-owning native class; it also happens through the natural development of a native middle class that enjoys bourgeois freedoms, “the cultivation of a middle class that relished the joys of home ownership, private property, individualism, and the liberation of entrepreneurial opportunities.”<sup>259</sup> (They are satisfied with just enough rewards to keep them attached to the imperial system; their integration into this system keeps them “unconscious” and separates

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<sup>254</sup> John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 204, 237.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

<sup>256</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 112.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>259</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 61 argues that this is a way to “forge consent” to systems of “personal responsibility”, and create a replacement for working-class identity once it has been destroyed.

them from revolutionary potential.)<sup>260</sup> A specific operation of inequality and poverty has been overcome: it is used as a propaganda tool to insist that inequality and poverty have been or are being overcome, when they have worsened. The “immoderate money-making of the bourgeois caste, and its scorn for the rest of the nation” really bring poverty to the people.<sup>261</sup> Extreme and worsening inequality in Africa shows the truth of Fanon’s observation: in South Africa since 1994, for instance, average black household income has dropped, and average white household income has risen.<sup>262</sup>

Ubiquitous images of black success,<sup>263</sup> even when apparently innocent, are ideological. The Freudian unconscious is mostly confined to visual images: that is how it represents and understands concepts. Etienne Balibar and Pierre Macherey, for instance, argue that ideology should be associated with the unconscious, for example because ideology and the unconscious are both of the realm of visual images, sharing devices like condensation, displacement, elision, transfer of affect, considerations of symbolic representability.<sup>264</sup> Individuals do not even need to consciously observe such everyday images for them to have an unconscious, ideological effect.

In addition to advertising and imagery, one of the ways that BEE and affirmative action are ideological is that they are misnomers, functionalist language encouraging one-dimensional thinking. Herbert Marcuse describes that such language is borrowed by politics from advertising.<sup>265</sup> Functional language is when a concept is reduced to the meaning of the phrase that describes it, a phrase which has the function of producing a standardised reaction, often because concepts are replaced with images (Chapter 2: images and the unconscious versus concepts and the conscious). One example we have seen is that of liberation parties calling themselves “socialist” when they are committed to capitalism.<sup>266</sup> (Cote d’Ivoire was one of the few African countries which admitted to capitalist policies.) “Black Economic Empowerment” suggests that that which is black gains economic power. This evokes images of moguls, sports stars, celebrities, images which are constantly seen, and seen in (perceived) positions of power. “The effect is again a magical and hypnotic one – the projection of

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<sup>260</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 112, 120-3, 208. We will explore consumerism in the next chapter.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>262</sup> John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 211.

<sup>263</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 77 discusses how images of successful blacks are used to make other blacks think their wretchedness is the result of their own personalities, not imperialism.

<sup>264</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Ideology*, 135.

<sup>265</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1991), 103.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 87-9.

images which convey irresistible unity, harmony of contradictions.”<sup>267</sup> But the reality, as we are seeing, is that these are policies that continue and increase the disempowerment and impoverishment of the majority of (black) citizens. This contradiction is further disguised by the practice of calling it “BEE”, which moves further from the concepts (of *black, economic, and empowerment*), and closer to the ubiquitous images of the few “successful” black people: the initialism is further from the concepts it describes than the phrase “black economic empowerment”.

De Beers helped to “empower” the South African people through creation of a national bourgeoisie as it moved to London. When Mandela’s friend (Chairman of De Beers at the time and currently the third-richest African) Nicky Oppenheimer sold 26% of De Beers to “black empowerment group” Ponahalo Investment Holdings in 2005, he claimed “De Beers is here to make a profit, but we must benefit the people and communities where we operate.”<sup>268</sup> One wonders whether these people and communities include exploited and dying mineworkers, or the victims of the civil war in Angola where De Beers supported the war. Those “people and communities” who certainly benefitted include the new class of ANC capitalists, such as Manne Dipico (who got R343 million from this deal), Moss Mashishi, and Cheryl Carolus.<sup>269</sup> Oppenheimer certainly benefited from this deal without giving up much, if any, profit: a 2014 Oxfam report found that he and Johan Rupert together owned as much wealth as 50% of the South African population (the same report found that South Africa was the most unequal country).<sup>270</sup> This was not benefitting the people and communities, but restoring class power by giving control of some of the means of production to new members of the new bourgeoisie, in a way that benefits the principal bourgeoisie.

In fact, earlier we saw that the strategy of creating a native ruling class to control the population on behalf of the foreign ruling class was common from the early stages of colonisation. It also has the function of persuading the people that national sovereignty has been achieved and oppressive laws overcome. Thus BEE, Ramaphosa’s “philosophy” for the new South Africa,<sup>271</sup> is a farce, a mask over the lack of improvement and often worsening conditions. In fact, the small new capitalist class that arises, Fanon’s “new colonists”, tends to

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<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> Cited in Dale Mckinley, *South Africa’s Corporatise Liberation*, 75. The Oxfam study, “Even It Up: Time to end Extreme Inequality”, can be found at <https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file-attachments/cr-even-it-up-extreme-inequality-291014-en.pdf>

<sup>271</sup> John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 204.

be more ruthless than its colonial counterparts (in its drive to be like the colonists). The nationalist parties, who represent the new and original/foreign bourgeoisies rather than the working class, unemployed etc., do not hesitate to enable increased exploitation of workers, often under neoliberal policies. In South Africa, members of the “struggle aristocracy” can be the most pitiless towards workers, as demonstrated by the Marikana Massacre. Similarly, “Renaissance woman” Mamphela Ramphele, who was described as “epitomising black empowerment” when she was awarded a senior position at the World Bank, callously and frequently retrenched and fired many low-paid workers when she was the Vice Chancellor of UCT.<sup>272</sup> These examples support Fanon’s argument that the new bourgeoisie is even more ruthless in its exploitation of workers and demand for benefits from the state than the colonial bourgeoisie.<sup>273</sup>

### **National Bourgeoisie and Capital Accumulation**

The demand for benefits and exploitation of workers that Fanon observes are examples of capital accumulation and discipline of the labour force. The role of the Fanonian new bourgeoisie is, of course, to act as a manager for imperialism. This leads us to the next way that the national bourgeoisie supports imperialism. The imperial powers that create the national bourgeoisie use individuals who will continue to provide them with cheap resources, including cheap labour. The first step is to create a large and desperate working class, in the name of “development” and later, “structural adjustment”.

The purpose of the national bourgeoisie is capital (often “primitive”) accumulation. Sounding both Durkheimian and Fanonian, Mckinley argues that the job of the new government and bourgeoisie is “to manage the form and content of capitalist rule”, using nationalism to create social cohesion and secure the conditions for capital accumulation.<sup>274</sup> Practices such as “black economic empowerment” are examples of this. To be a national bourgeoisie, a class must own capital. Some of this comes from its imperial creators (the legacy of imperialism). But largely, the new bourgeoisie is created through wealth taken from the people.<sup>275</sup> This frequently occurs directly, in forms of “primitive accumulation”, such as seizure of land from the poor, or the government selling or giving away resources which might have been

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 206.

<sup>273</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 154.

<sup>274</sup> Dale Mckinley, *South Africa’s Corporatised Liberation*, 134.

<sup>275</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 167.

collectively used (water is a good example in Southern Africa).<sup>276</sup> Thus it is the reverse of land expropriation, the promise of the ANC and other liberation movements, which happens: land is taken from the poor and given to the rich. The EFF's "nationalisation" policies point sinisterly in this direction, the direction of Mugabe's form of nationalisation: the seizure of resources from the people and redistribution among a new elite, in the name of the people and by taking advantage of the widespread national distress.<sup>277</sup> A blatant example is Joseph Mobutu who, directly supported by the USA, French and Belgian governments, "nationalised" 2000 foreign-owned businesses in 1973 (and more the following year), handing them to his friends and relatives as private property. He claimed these practices were challenging colonialism and helping the people. The "Father of Zaire" was worth US\$5 billion in 1980. He became one of the richest people in the world while the people of Zaire remained impoverished.<sup>278</sup>

It was common for liberation governments to spend vast amounts of state wealth on personal expenditures in the name of the people: Fanon argues that they and the national bourgeoisies demand more benefits from the state than settlers ever did.<sup>279</sup> Because the national bourgeoisie is perceived by the people as part of the oppressed group, the capitalisation of any "natural economy", as Rosa Luxemburg describes it,<sup>280</sup> does not usually require or appear to involve violence: rather, it is presented as the liberation of the people by the people. Examples like the waBenzi and "black diamonds" actually see their bribery, theft of land from the people, theft of state funds and Western habits as anti-colonial and anti-white revolutionary actions that benefit the people.<sup>281</sup> "Senegal's budget for 1964 showed that 47 per cent of the total was allocated to civil service salaries. In the Central African Republic and in Cote d'Ivoire the figure was 58 per cent; in Congo-Brazzaville, 62 per cent; in Dahomey, 65 per cent."<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Patrick Bond, *Talk Left, Walk Right*, 143-172; Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Money*, 143-64 shows how the SANDF, led and supported by the World Bank, European governments and the new bourgeoisie in South Africa, invaded Lesotho in 1998 to (among other things) privatise water and other resources in processes of primitive accumulation.

<sup>277</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 48.

<sup>278</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 243-4.

<sup>279</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 154.

<sup>280</sup> Rosa Luxemburg, "Excerpts from *The Accumulation of Capital*" in Patrick Bond, Horman Chitonge and Arndt Hopfmann, *The Accumulation of Capital in Southern Africa*, 8.

<sup>281</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 147 suggests that this is because of the ideological equation of state with white man/coloniser: stealing from the state can thus be seen as a Robin Hood action of stealing from the coloniser and letting the spoils trickle down to the people.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

## Forced Removals

A large proportion of the new bourgeoisie's wealth is thus simply stolen from the public. With a critical analysis of colonialism, imperialism and national liberation, "the people come to understand that wealth is not the fruit of labour but the result of organised, protected robbery."<sup>283</sup> Forced removals, which are usually (ideologically) associated with colonialism, are a tool of postcolonial governments to reinforce class divisions, increase the separation of the people from the means of production, and gain control of means of production. When they are criticised, they are justified as part of the national cause (to help with modernisation and development), and governments promise (insincerely) to compensate the people (indirectly from their tax). When forced removals are a legacy of colonialism, the capitalism-committed new government does not repair them (but often forces more people to move as a "means" to repairing colonial forced removals).<sup>284</sup> Forced removals were common in Haile Selassie's Ethiopia, especially after the English had helped drive the Italians out, and at the time that Selassie was abolishing slavery.<sup>285</sup> Forced removals continued in Ethiopia with successive regimes. Selassie's successor Mengistu Haile Mariam conducted forced removals as part of "modernisation", "industrialisation", "land-redistribution" and "Marxist-Leninist" policies. Mengistu began to separate the people from land he wanted through false promises of improved homes, running water, electricity and fertile land in other parts of the country. Later, during the Ethiopian Red Terror, Mengistu turned to forced removals, which he called "the core of our socialist structure."<sup>286</sup> This was an attempt to create an agricultural proletariat in the south (he announced that only the able-bodied would be resettled: the old and young were to remain in the drought-stricken areas with no means of subsistence, a blatant lumpenproletariat class) but also to depopulate areas of rebel activity. In Equatorial Guinea during the 1970s Macias, and later Obiang embarked on a project of forced removals to create a proletariat near the plantations in Equatorial Guinea after many Nigerian contract workers left because of punitive conditions.<sup>287</sup> After overthrowing Nkrumah, the NLC (guided by the Bretton Woods institutions) practiced forced removals and forced labour in Ghana.<sup>288</sup> In South Africa and Zimbabwe, forced removals increased with the abolition of

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<sup>283</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 191.

<sup>284</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 525.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, 172-3. i.e., primitive accumulation to make bourgeois rule possible.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>288</sup> Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 167 describes how disobedient miners were "gunned down".

apartheid governments,<sup>289</sup> the opposite of the land expropriation sometimes promised by the ANC during the apartheid era, for example with the Freedom Charter (“The people shall share in the country’s wealth!” and “The land shall be shared among those who work it!”). Forced removals are still carried out by the South African government, but it is particularly private forced removals (which are difficult to measure) that have increased, especially on farms e.g. when industrialisation (or illness, disability or similar misfortune) makes some workers less valuable to their employers: “surplus”,<sup>290</sup> destined to join the lumpenproletariat class. 737 000 individuals were removed forcefully from white-owned farmland in the final decade of apartheid, and 942 000 in the following decade, half of which were children.<sup>291</sup> Cosmas Desmond, expert on forced removals and author of *The Discarded People*, returned to the “resettlement camp” Limehill in 1998 and noted that forced removals were common again the new constitution and laws had “entrenched the right to private property”, making it easier to evict tenants.<sup>292</sup>

These examples of forced removals show how postcolonial governments make their interests appear to be the interests of the people, and make the actual interests of the people appear colonial and reactionary. The separation of the people from the country’s wealth is portrayed as a move from racism and colonialism towards socialism and modernisation. In 2002, De Beers, the Botswana government and the World Bank embarked on a project of forced removals of Basarwa/San Bushmen in the central Kalahari, in order for De Beers to mine for diamonds. When San activists protested, Botswana government officials accused them of allying themselves with racists in Britain.<sup>293</sup>

These are some of the most explicit ways that the national bourgeoisie accumulates capital for itself and its foreign counterparts. The national bourgeoisie also accumulates capital indirectly, for instance through privatisation of public resources and discipline of labour power: through “neoliberal prescriptions of labour flexibility, externalisation of labour contracts, informalisation and increased labour segmentation”.<sup>294</sup> We see throughout this

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<sup>289</sup> John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 200.

<sup>290</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol 1, 798.

<sup>291</sup> John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 200-1. Desmond: “What the constitution did was entrench the right to private property.”

<sup>292</sup> Cited in *Ibid.*, 200-1 (In some ways, the new constitution and the 1997 Security of Tenure Act appear to make evictions more difficult. However, Desmond and Pilger argue that especially pertaining to rural areas and farms, among the most wretched of South Africa, “the law proved a sham. Ninety nine per cent of evictions never reached the courts.”)

<sup>293</sup> Patrick Bond, *Talk Left, Walk Right*, 214.

<sup>294</sup> Leonard Gentle, “Black Economic Empowerment: The South African Social Formation”, 132.

thesis that the nationalist movements criticise colonialism (as bourgeois ideas condemn totalitarianism, communism, fascism, dictatorship etc.) for characteristics of “extra-economic force”: the state violence, repressive laws, political control of individuals. In contrast, national liberation is represented as freeing the people by ending extra-economic force. Yet this is just a further development of capitalism. In South Africa, Leonard Gentle describes, “the victory over the apartheid state has brought to an end the extra-economic intervention into the wage relation.”<sup>295</sup> Decolonisation brings an upgraded form of capitalism, one with less “extra-economic force” (later often taking neoliberal form). It brings new forms of coercion, not necessarily less coercion. This is how decolonisation is equated with freedom. Tellingly, a secret 1985 white house meeting decided that apartheid was “bad for business” (as US newspapers described apartheid) because of the protests generated by explicit state violence, and that the US would have to pressure SA to “move rapidly away from apartheid”. The US Congress quickly passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act.<sup>296</sup>

### Underdevelopment

Since national liberation is presented as a bourgeois-democratic revolution, national liberation movements aim to free the people from violence, including freeing labour from what Marx called “direct extra-economic force”.<sup>297</sup> Labour is freed from state and police intervention, but it is controlled by market laws, consumerism and desperation. As the capitalist mode of production is swept from sector to sector, subsistence labour is gradually eliminated and people are made entirely dependent on money. The national bourgeoisie leads the dislocation of these rural societies, taking the bread from the people’s mouths.<sup>298</sup> At the same time, however, we observe precisely the opposite tendency: the move towards more advanced forms of capitalism include countless examples of widespread slavery and of the use of the police, the army, and foreign and mercenary armies disciplining workers, particularly miners, in the freed countries. These are examples of post-colonial governments strengthening pre-capitalist (including many colonial) relations of production when this

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<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 217.

<sup>297</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol 1, 899.

<sup>298</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 110.



enables the extraction of more surplus value.<sup>299</sup> They are extreme examples of underdevelopment. In many poorer countries, there is a mass turn or return to feudal subsistence agriculture, often after failed industrialisation attempts, with privatisation, or with neoliberal emphasis on controlling monetary policy at the expense of employment. In these ways, the national bourgeoisies achieve the opposite of their proclaimed goals: labour is made unfree, and instead of development we have uneven development, including deliberate underdevelopment.

The contradiction of development in opposite directions is explained by Laclau's model, according to which we should understand capitalist evolution in terms of attempts to forestall decreases in the average rate of profit.<sup>300</sup> Anticipating these arguments of Laclau's, Luxemburg emphasises that cheap labour from non-capitalist or "hybrid" sectors is essential to capital, and that "this endeavour leads to the most peculiar combinations between the modern wage system and primitive authority."<sup>301</sup> Cheap black labour is essential to capital accumulation during the colonial period and later by the national bourgeoisie, especially migrant labour, which increased in Africa after decolonisation<sup>302</sup> and in South Africa after apartheid (labourers travel to cities work for wages when demanded and otherwise do informal subsistence work at home in rural areas).<sup>303</sup> Both the national and foreign bourgeoisies profit from pre-capitalist relations being developed within the capitalist system. But since these are glaring examples of the opposite of the nationalist goals, these relations have to be justified. They are justified as part of the path towards complete freedom, and through emphasis of other freedoms: the political freedoms that have been won, and the freeing of labour from feudal relations where this is achieved.

The new governments often argue, Fanon notes, that "a small dose of dictatorship is needed" to get the people to cooperate as a nation, to overcome the divisions caused by

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<sup>299</sup> Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, 30, 32, 38. Laclau observes that capitalist expansion brought about the "refeudalisation of the peripheral areas" throughout the world, which Engels called the "second servitude". The modernity of one sector is the result and cause of the backwardness of others.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, 39. Falling average profit rates inspire firms to invest in production characterised by a low organic composition of capital: i.e. the production of primary products, and/or in industries where relatively little technology is used, and/or when labour is very cheap (as with slaves).

<sup>301</sup> Jeff Guy, "'No eyes, no interest, no frame of reference': Rosa Luxemburg, Southern African Historiography, and Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production" in Patrick Bond, Hormon Chitonge and Arndt Hopfmann, *The Accumulation of Capital in Southern Africa*, 35-6. Luxemburg notes that migrant workers in De Beers' mines invested their wages in non-capitalist production in rural areas.

<sup>302</sup> Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 40, 167. In 1972 Woddis noted that the most common worker in Africa was the migrant living such a hybrid existence.

<sup>303</sup> Dale Mckinley, *South Africa's Corporatised Liberation*, 78.

colonisation.<sup>304</sup> (We will see [similar simultaneous movements](#) towards and away from democracy in Chapter 3.) Underdevelopment (which leads to consolidation of nationalist sentiments)<sup>305</sup> is justified by national liberation ideology as a means to an end: underdevelopment to achieve development, control to achieve freedom. If we can get these lazy workers to work harder (for less pay), for example, the entire nation will benefit from the production of new wealth.<sup>306</sup> If the national bourgeoisie is seen as extreme progress, underdevelopment may be noticed less. A different kind of justification for uneven and often backward development comes from postcolonial theorists, who see uneven development in one geographical place as inevitable, God-ordained or the legacy of colonialism (unrelated to contemporary policy); they fetishize and celebrate it, e.g. as part of the national (or diasporic) culture.<sup>307</sup> An example of this is the genre of magical realism, which San Juan argues is the cultural reflection of the “unsynchronised and asymmetrical formation” of uneven development, fetishizing and reifying the effects of capitalist uneven development “as permanent, ever-recurring, and ineluctable qualities”.<sup>308</sup> Mengistu explained to Dawit Wolde Giorgis, head of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission of Ethiopia, that the massive famine of the 1970s (amidst largescale government spending on the unnecessary: luxuries, the army, and the war) as something that had always happened and always would happen, unrelated to his policies, and “the way nature kept the balance”, the result of Ethiopians “interfering” with nature (by letting the population grow).<sup>309</sup>

Fanon argues that the dominated country (led by the national bourgeoisie and nationalist parties) continues to develop only in accordance with the requirements of the dominator after formal decolonisation.<sup>310</sup> We have seen that this is true: African development has been stagnant since the beginning of colonisation,<sup>311</sup> with the exception of the World War 2-induced economic boom soon before decolonisation.<sup>312</sup> Many early postcolonial leaders, like Nkrumah, insisted that governments would have to control the economies in order to achieve

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<sup>304</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 118.

<sup>305</sup> Tom Nairn and Paul James (editors), *Global Matrix: Nationalism, Globalism and State-Terrorism* (London: Pluto, 2005).

<sup>306</sup> This, for instance, was Nyerere’s explanation for his ujamaa villages and their failure. Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 210.

<sup>307</sup> Epifanio San Juan, “Postcolonialism and the Problematic of Uneven Development”, 232.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

<sup>309</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 272.

<sup>310</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 98-100, 166, 216-7.

<sup>311</sup> Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 192-3.

<sup>312</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 122 production soared as economies grew at 4-6% per annum during the 1945-1960 period.

rapid modernisation, industrialisation and development. However, this was seldom more than rhetoric (and justification of dictatorship): “Whatever formula they chose, most socialist-minded governments placed high value on the role of the private sector and on foreign investment.”<sup>313</sup> With some brief and partial exceptions (Nyerere, Sékou Touré), the national liberation leaders thus saw the national and foreign bourgeoisies as the key for modernisation and development. In the long term, there was no postcolonial African country that committed to independence from international capitalism, the system which plundered Africa’s resources and only allowed it to develop when development would lead to greater profits. (This would be true independence, a daring endeavour which Fanon recommends.)

Fanon points out that a decolonised country must choose between continuing colonial economic structures (which were created to exploit Africa) or to sever ties with imperial interests. For Fanon, the former is easier and the latter very challenging but the only way to realise the country’s potential (including the use of its resources) and “to humanise this world which has been forced down to animal level by imperial powers”.<sup>314</sup> But Fanon argues that the national liberation movements take the former option (presenting it as the latter through the identification of colonialism with imperialism, which implies that imperialism ends with colonialism). Under national bourgeoisies, the neo-colonies preserve their colonial economic structures. The newly independent country is forced to continue to use colonial “economic channels” as Fanon puts it.<sup>315</sup> This involves focusing production according to the demands of the First World countries, and on goods that will not help to enrich Africans. Fanon mentions that “we go on sending out raw materials; we go on being Europe's small farmers, who specialise in unfinished products.”<sup>316</sup>

Patrick Bond’s work shows that Fanon’s predictions are still coming true. Bond sees the inheritance of “simply illogical” colonial legacies (particularly colonial borders, which we have seen are cause and effect of nationalism) as central to Africa’s current economic problems.<sup>317</sup> “Many [neo-colonial regimes] had adopted economic strategies that benefitted a few urban elites at the expense of peasants, especially women producers, workers and even local manufacturers.” As Bond argues, these include emphasis on production of luxury goods

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<sup>313</sup> Ibid., 124-6.

<sup>314</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 100.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>317</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 41. This is also explored in Chapter 3, and in Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 131: Sylvanus Olympio, first president of Togo, noted that it was easier and faster to communicate with and travel to France than Nigeria or Ghana.

(produced at “close to world standards”) for the new and old elites rather than basic goods for that can meet the needs of the people; they also include export-led growth strategies, which were imposed by money-lenders and Northern governments (especially resulting from the debt crises that increased from the mid-1970s), and a continuation of Africa’s colonial function as tool for the developed world.<sup>318</sup> Intermediate capital goods (especially machines that make other machines) remain underdeveloped. Affordable housing and public transport are extremely underdeveloped (and ineffective, dangerous and expensive). Simple appliances and clothing are increasingly imported, and social services and “the social wage” remain extremely low. Furthermore, the national bourgeoisie accumulates some wealth for itself by buying and selling foreign goods, demanding that all business “pass through its hands”.<sup>319</sup>

A study of trade figures of fourteen francophone states in 1964 showed that the amount spent on importing alcoholic drinks was six times higher than that spent on importing fertiliser. Half as much was spent on perfume and cosmetic imports as on machine tools. Almost as much went on importing petrol for privately owned cars as on the purchase of tractors; and five times as much on importing cars as on agricultural equipment.<sup>320</sup>

## Debt

Decolonisation usually leads to policies and strategies that increase individual and national debt (and therefore dependence) when, as Fanon notes, Europe should really be repaying Africa.<sup>321</sup> The production of luxuries and the extreme government spending lead to massive debt. Fanon argues that bourgeoisies in underdeveloped countries specifically have an obsession with luxury goods, and that this makes them slaves of the mother countries, who provide these luxuries or the means for their creation.<sup>322</sup> The production of luxury goods makes Africa depend on foreign technology and capital, whereas poverty-reducing strategies such as the production of housing and basic food would require less input from foreign institutions. The neo-colony takes on increased debt in order to “develop”.<sup>323</sup> Large government spending does not benefit the people, because the money is spent on the unnecessary and on endeavours that do not create large-scale employment. For instance,

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 152.

<sup>320</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 145.

<sup>321</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 102-3.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid., 155, 181.

<sup>323</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 122 at the time of decolonisation, public debt was very low in most African countries.

decolonisation comes with luxury goods, high government salaries, and vast military and police expenditure (the effects of which we will see in the following chapter). While Ghana under Nkrumah's leadership did spend money on useful, genuinely modernising infrastructure, at least initially, "some schemes were started simply for reasons of prestige."<sup>324</sup> Most of these state-operated enterprises ran at massive losses, so that the government's external debt reached £184 million in 1963 and £349 million in 1964.<sup>325</sup> Nkrumah continued to make lavish, loan-funded expenditures as long as he could, often on personal luxuries such as his 7500-ton luxury boat. Government spending is not used as much as it should on increasing employment and modernising and expanding the economy.

Massive government debt and high taxation are associated (by bourgeois ideology) with aristocracy, feudalism, monarchy and dictatorship.<sup>326</sup> But debt is rampant after national liberation. The massive debts incurred by state and bourgeoisie must be repaid by the people. "The only part of the so-called national wealth that actually enters into the collective possession of a modern nation is – the national debt."<sup>327</sup> Marx argues that massive debt-funded expenditure makes countries appear more successful than they really are; they have to increase taxes to cover the debts, but this enables increased debt. Money is loaned by foreign (and some local) institutions to the state and repaid by citizens; "the public debt becomes one of the most powerful levers of primitive accumulation."<sup>328</sup> Debt harms the people particularly when it is used to finance the unproductive (such as luxuries and wars). An exception is Tanzania, where Nyerere notably prevented the emergence of a national bourgeoisie, alert to its dangers, and used loans to drastically improve education, health care and social services.<sup>329</sup> But production did not increase as much as he had hoped, and massive loans and aid (from the World Bank and IMF) came with conditions that kept Tanzania in debt and dependent on foreign sponsors.<sup>330</sup> See Chapter 2 for [more on debt culture](#).

### Fresh Fields?

Let's look at more of the ways that the liberated countries develop on colonial and imperial channels. Many African countries had massive potential wealth with decolonisation, but the

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<sup>324</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>326</sup> Gareth Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty?*, 122, 139-43, 182-4, 194.

<sup>327</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol 1, 919.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid., 920-1.

<sup>329</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 210-2.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

nationalist parties ensure that major resources remain in imperial hands, or that resources are not developed at all. This is problematic throughout Africa when abundant resources like oil and diamonds are not used to benefit the people, and when the people are not able to develop or use their potential to improve their conditions. Let us look at two examples of national diamond wealth harming the people of the nation, that show national bourgeoisies closing existing fields rather than opening fresh ones. When the Marange diamond fields were discovered in Zimbabwe in 2006 De Beers, which held the rights for diamond prospecting in the Marange area, tried to prevent their development in order to prevent new diamonds (an estimated £800 billion worth) from flooding the market (Crawford-Browne describes this as De Beers' "fundamental strategy"). De Beers' licence was soon taken over by African Consolidated Resources, whose mining rights were subsequently revoked and allocated to the police and the army. This gave a small amount of control to the national bourgeoisie (including Robert Mugabe and cronies)<sup>331</sup> but most control to Chinese and Hong Kong companies (who brought with them large forces from the Chinese army to "protect" the mines) and their ally Lev Leviev's companies,<sup>332</sup> "far more ruthless players" which are coming to challenge De Beers' domination of the diamond cartel.<sup>333</sup> The Chinese army was brought in, officially to construct a military airstrip and protect the mines, and even to help "supervise" mineworkers. This was really an example of "extra-economic force" and "primitive accumulation" and the Zimbabwean and Chinese militaries used forced labour: miners were mauled by dogs, beaten, raped, killed (at least 200) in efforts to force them to work and later to evict them.<sup>334</sup>

Southern Africa has massive diamond supplies: the scarcity of diamonds is mythical.<sup>335</sup> "In the one hundred and fifty years since they were discovered at Kimberly, diamonds have brought minimal economic benefits, or job creation opportunities, to indigenous populations in South Africa, Namibia or Botswana."<sup>336</sup> This is because diamonds are quickly taken out of these countries, and the profits they generate do not return. Potentially the world's largest source of diamonds exists on the Western coasts of South Africa and Namibia, but the liberation government has not challenged De Beers' control of these deposits, "an ideal

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<sup>331</sup> Ibid., 518 "For Mugabe and his clique, it was a highly lucrative venture, making them richer than they had ever been and ensuring their fortunes for years to come."

<sup>332</sup> Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 117-23.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid., x.

<sup>334</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 518.

<sup>335</sup> Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 106.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

operation for De Beers to transfer wealth out of Africa to Europe or America.”<sup>337</sup> These examples show that Fanon was correct in how the national bourgeoisie actually blocks fresh fields and helps to exploit the nation.

### National Bourgeoisie and International Imperialism

It is for these reasons that Fanon sees the national bourgeoisie as an intermediary class, one which essentially continues imperialism. The national bourgeoisie develops in an era of globalisation. Its task is to internationalise the economy; it assists the foreign bourgeoisie by managing its enterprise, developing the economy in ways that help imperialism, enabling the free flow of capital, separating the people from the means of production. When thirteen of France’s African territories declared independence in 1960, thus, “the changes that occurred were largely ceremonial. In place of a French-controlled administration, the new states were now run by elite groups long accustomed to collaborating with the French and well attuned to French systems of management and culture.” Meredith emphasises that these new leaders were mostly uninterested in transforming society, but demanded personal wealth, even though they were already financially and socially, but not racially or ethnically, “separated by a wide gulf ... from the mass of the population”.<sup>338</sup>

The creation of a national bourgeoisie is part of an illusion that natives come to own the wealth and industry. But actually the opposite happens: with decolonisation, while the people are separated from the means of production and forced to participate in the central economy, a lot of the big business becomes owned by foreigners. In South Africa many of the large companies were further incorporated into the international bourgeoisie after 1994, for instance moving their headquarters overseas and becoming partially or totally foreign-controlled. An example is Barclays Bank buying ABSA. With the encouragement of Trade Minister Alec Erwin and Finance Minister Trevor Manuel, South Africa’s largest companies were permitted to “flee their financial home and set up in London.”<sup>339</sup> Anglo American, De Beers and Old Mutual, who had been “the prime beneficiaries of apartheid”, were allowed “to transfer their domiciles from South Africa to London” shortly after 1994:

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<sup>337</sup> Ibid.

<sup>338</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 68.

<sup>339</sup> John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 219.

Before long, all four of South Africa's main banking groups also became foreign-owned. Even the Reserve Bank, which in apartheid days subordinated banking prudence to a political agenda, is foreign-controlled. This makes a mockery of the much touted but oft-flouted principle of independence. The independence of the Reserve Bank is a myth. Its policies are controlled by powerful banking lobbies headquartered in London, who were the real beneficiaries of South Africa's apartheid era and who, in different guise, continue to "pull the strings".<sup>340</sup>

When Pretoria gave permission to the largest firms to move their headquarters to London, this involved "massive capital flight": it was not only headquarters that were moved.<sup>341</sup> The foreign capital Africa comes to rely on for development is made from wealth taken from Africa. Africa is allowed to access capital only under West-imposed conditions. Africa is underdeveloped, and therefore dependent on foreign capital, because the West has developed by underdeveloping Africa. The main period of African colonisation was precisely the roughly seven-decade-long time that African development slowed relative to the rest of the world.<sup>342</sup> As more wealth consistently flows from the continent, the African people become more dependent on foreign bourgeoisies. Postcolonial countries are to choose between the modicum of developmental success (which mainly means the success of the national bourgeoisie at the expense of the people) which is granted in exchange for submission, or a complete break with the system of international capitalism, which Fanon notes will lead to "catastrophic reactions"<sup>343</sup> caused by the international ruling class, including economic stagnation, with the vengeful removal and destruction of capital by the imperial class, as we saw earlier in this chapter. Increasingly, development becomes possible only with foreign assistance. It was the oil-exporting African countries which did relatively well economically after decolonisation; this was largely because they attracted foreign investment, whereas investors tended to leave other industries (especially during the 1980s), moving their capital to Asia and Latin America.<sup>344</sup> The success of oil-exporters, however, has been temporary. Africa is slowly coming to replace the Middle East as the main exporter of oil. This is ominous, and has resulted in US and UK destabilisation strategies that have already devastated many countries, including "Libya, Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia, the Congo and Zimbabwe", with more to come with expected increases in international competition for

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<sup>340</sup> Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 11-12.

<sup>341</sup> Patrick Bond, *Talk Left, Walk Right*, 151.

<sup>342</sup> Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 192-204.

<sup>343</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 149

<sup>344</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 229.



Africa's resources in the near future.<sup>345</sup>

### **Modernisation?**

Although the national bourgeoisies claim to modernise the country, Fanon observes the practice of colonial and imperial powers and national bourgeoisies deliberately causing underdevelopment. The national bourgeoisie sees tribal leaders as competitors, even though both keep certain areas undeveloped, maintaining “unchanging, everlasting feudalism” in the rural areas.<sup>346</sup> Colonialist power supports those leaders who will keep the rural areas underdeveloped.<sup>347</sup> This includes religious leaders, whom the peasants “follow blindly”.<sup>348</sup>

The national bourgeoisie aims to replace the bourgeoisie of the mother country.<sup>349</sup> But the national bourgeoisies take over the intermediary manager role, previously played by the colonial class where needed. This “underdeveloped middle class” will not succeed in replacing the imperial bourgeoisie because it lacks substantial power. The national middle class is limited to “business, agriculture, and the liberal professions. Neither financiers nor industrial magnates are to be found within this national middle class.”<sup>350</sup> This is a relation of “material heteronomy”: the national bourgeoisie’s actions are influenced by those who monopolise economic power; “in a capitalist economy there are only two providers of money: the employer and the financier.”<sup>351</sup> According to Frédéric Lordon, money is the primary tool in the capitalist economy for getting others to do our will and depend on us.<sup>352</sup> Even the richest and most powerful of the national bourgeoisie, even those who exercise their own imperialism, are strongly influenced by the Western bourgeoisie (as we have seen with Mobutu, Mugabe and Obiang, for instance). The national bourgeoisie gets its strength mainly from agreements from the former colonial power, according to Fanon.<sup>353</sup> Those national bourgeoisies who cooperate with the foreign bourgeoisies become the most successful, directly through bribery and also because they are given opportunities for international trade to “pass through their hands”, earning rewards for assisting foreign bourgeoisies and allowed

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<sup>345</sup> Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on The Diamonds*, 143.

<sup>346</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 110.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid.

<sup>351</sup> Frédéric Lordon, *Willing Slaves of Capital*, 13.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>353</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 176.

to become mini-capitalists in their own right. Fanon describes that “the national middle class discovers its historic mission: that of intermediary” because it insists that all international trade from big foreign companies “pass through its hands”. It becomes “the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism”; it is the “Western bourgeoisie’s business agent”.<sup>354</sup> And “the party's mission is to deliver to the people the instructions which issue from the summit.”<sup>355</sup>

The national bourgeoisie is lauded by nationalist parties as a means of modernisation. When the national bourgeoisie is linked to the state, both are given this role (common in the early period of decolonisation when private sectors were small or non-existent, hence nationalist leaders and Western development economists tended to see strong government control of the economy as the key to modernisation).<sup>356</sup> When they separate or when the state’s role is reduced (because of budget cuts, privatisation or demands from the Bretton Woods institutions), the bourgeoisie is given an increased share of this role. But modernisation only happens to the degree that it improves imperialism, and when it is permitted by foreign bourgeoisies. A wave of industrialisation spread throughout Africa during the Second World War in response to increased demand for martial equipment.<sup>357</sup> But the economic boom stopped shortly after decolonisation. Africa was still very undeveloped at this time, with the exception of some coastal and mining enterprises, such as Katanga and the Zambian Copperbelt.<sup>358</sup> Attempts at industrialisation by postcolonial leaders generally failed, as we have seen with Nkrumah, because of internal failures but also influence from outside. Modernisation happens only in particular sectors of the economy, particularly with luxury goods and martial equipment. Although there was some economic growth during the 1960s (albeit slower than other underdeveloped countries in Latin America and East Asia), industrialisation slowed during the 1970s, and many African countries experienced deindustrialisation from the 1980s.<sup>359</sup> In fact, most countries have experienced negative economic growth per capita during the latter half of the twentieth century (15 countries during the 1970s), and many of these experienced total negative economic growth.<sup>360</sup> This is

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<sup>354</sup> Ibid., 152-3.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>356</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 124.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid., 20,

<sup>358</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid., 226, 229.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid., 232.

the result of neoliberal policies such as austerity,<sup>361</sup> the liberation of capital, foreign currency crises, and the slowdown of economic growth in the developed world from the 1970s (which meant there was less demands for goods, including Africa's exports).<sup>362</sup> The IMF found that southern Africa had 13.7% negative per capita growth in 1980-2000; according to this report, the countries that achieved strong growth rates during this period, such as Mauritius and Botswana, were relatively closed to financial flows.<sup>363</sup> Financial flows allow wealth to flow from the country.

Loans and aid from the developed world can help with modernisation (as they did temporarily in Tanzania), but they tend to be imperialist tools, with strings attached, strings which actually prevent development, besides when development will help aid-givers extract greater profits. Even countries with lots of capital, like South Africa, borrow large amounts of foreign currency and request foreign aid. We have discussed the relationship between loans and luxury goods (which appear more "modern" and Western than necessities). Large amounts of money are borrowed by the national bourgeoisie and politicians and repaid by the people. Loans make the national bourgeoisie (and the people) appear wealthier than they really are. The World Bank provided half of Africa's agricultural aid (US\$2.5 billion between 1973 and 1980), but it admitted that one third of its agricultural projects in West Africa and more than half in East Africa were failures; massive influxes of money into African agriculture corresponded with a decline in food production in twenty five countries.<sup>364</sup> Loans and aid have decreased in absolute terms in the recent past (in 1995 Mandela criticised the USA's three-year, US\$600 million aid package as "peanuts").<sup>365</sup> But they tend to come with increasing conditions which cause underdevelopment and give foreigners greater control of the country (such as privatisation). Even though foreign aid decreases, GDP has decreased at a faster rate than aid in most sub-Saharan Africa (besides South Africa), which is one of the reasons that aid providers have increasing influence in recipient countries' political and economic conditions.<sup>366</sup> Small amounts of aid are very influential in national budgets, determining which areas of development are financed.<sup>367</sup> David Sogge, known for his

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<sup>361</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 23.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-7.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, 93-4.

<sup>364</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 231.

<sup>365</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 80-2.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.* In these countries, while aid decreased, aid-GDP ratios increased from 6% in 1975-84 to 13% in the early nineties. This is partly because aid-providers often use aid to impose policies that will reduce GDP: aid tends to be "tightly bound up with the broader neo-liberal agenda of shrinking the state."

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

insightful criticism of foreign aid, argues that loans and aid are usually provided as investments: donors expect it to give them advantages, mainly including “access to markets, commercial rivalry and acquisition of local primary products.”<sup>368</sup> In other words, “aid” is actually provided as a means to aid donors, and loan-providers expect to be repaid more than they loan.

Fanon argues that the national liberation parties get their main and “most faithful” support from the relatively privileged of the colonised class, particularly city-dwellers and workers. He argues that these are people who are essential to the colonial economy, and who benefit personally from it. Fanon calls this group “the ‘bourgeois’ fraction of the colonised people”, including not only the national bourgeoisie but all of bourgeois mentality.<sup>369</sup> He argues that like the national bourgeoisie, this “comparatively well-to-do class” obsesses over the modern, and disparages the traditional.<sup>370</sup> This puts them into ideological conflict with large sections of the population: who, in many countries, live in feudal and subsistence conditions, whose cultural reflection is the traditional. The peasants (correctly, as we have seen) fear that modernisation will come from the towns to dislocate their society and “take the bread out of their mouths”.<sup>371</sup> In other words, they fear their livelihood will be eroded by capital accumulation. There a conflict between traditional chiefs, marabouts, traditional healers, and oracles, on the one hand; and on the other hand, industrialists, doctors and lawyers. The nationalist parties take advantage of this conflict, redefining “modern” and “traditional”. Fanon argues that “modern” is equated with “Western”, so that modernisation means imitating the West. “Modern” can then lose its connection with economic development, a higher standard of living for all, political autonomy etc., and become attached to the cultural: the wearing of particular clothing, speaking in a particular way, etc. Then, Fanon shows, “modern” also loses its potentiality: it is dissociated from the discovery of new, non-Western forms of development.<sup>372</sup> Similarly, “traditional” can mean retrogressive and stagnant, or it can be romanticised and treated as the inherently good, that which colonisation seeks to destroy. The latter view is strongly criticised by Fanon (as well as Marx, Stuart Hall and Edward Said). This view, espoused by postcolonial theorists such as Leela Gandhi and Ella Shohat, is that people can challenge economic, political and cultural oppression by asserting,

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<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

<sup>369</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 109.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid., 310-6.

“for their very survival, a lost and even irretrievable past.”<sup>373</sup> (We will see more on the ideological romanticisation of precolonial culture, and the peculiar dynamic between modernisation and traditionalism, in the following chapters.)

Modern and traditional therefore have a complex and contradictory dynamic; sometimes they are opposed, while at other times they can mean the same thing, and their meanings differ according to the speaker and his position and motives. Contradictorily, while the national bourgeoisies are lauded by their parties as a modernising force, these parties try to emphasise their conformation to the traditional (Frelimo is arguably an exception here).<sup>374</sup> (But Fanon notes that they only conform to specific traditions: they also criticise traditionalism, e.g. when they criticise traditional chiefs and peasants.) Typically, when there is development in opposite directions, the modern sector is foreign-dominated and technology-intensive, whereas the “traditional sector” is ruled by local ruling classes, some of whom are part of the national bourgeoisie.<sup>375</sup> The Traditional Courts Bill and Traditional Leadership Bill are South African attempts to “restore people’s dignity” and pre-colonial “tradition” in the areas that were formerly known as Bantustans. These bills aim to give power over the land of 17 million people to traditional leaders (part of the national bourgeoisie, and not democratically elected), including the right to make deals with and allocate mining rights to mining companies.<sup>376</sup> They do not give power to the people so much as concentrate power in the hands of traditional leaders who cooperate with national and foreign bourgeoisies. In this example, both development and the traditional harm the people.

This contradiction is also noticeable in the rhetoric of leaders, like Nyerere, who see the traditional and precolonial (such as “African socialism”) as the key to modernising their

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<sup>373</sup> Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 168-71.

<sup>374</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 254.

<sup>375</sup> Epifanio San Juan, “Postcolonialism and the Problematic of Uneven Development”, 232. It may appear strange to claim that the traditional leaders are part of the national bourgeoisie, when we have been contrasting them with the national bourgeoisie. Yet as we have been seeing, the traditional leaders have the same managerial role, and are formed in the same way. In most countries, nearly all of the traditional chiefs were appointed by colonial powers: Marcellino dos Santos, “A Bourgeoisie?” in Aquino de Bragança and Immanuel Wallerstein (editors), *The African Liberation Reader: Documents of the National Liberation Movements*, Volume 1: *The Anatomy of Colonialism* (London: Zed Press, 1982), 72. As we have been seeing, the more powerful traditional chiefs usually are granted control over some means of production (e.g. when they remove the peasants from the land to sell it to mining companies). Though their attitudes towards colonialism and national liberation may differ, the traditional chiefs have similar roles to the national bourgeoisie.

<sup>376</sup> Lester Kiewit, “Contentious traditional leadership Bill passed”, Mail & Guardian, 11/02/2019, <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-01-11-00-contentious-traditional-leadership-bill-passed>.

countries (Nyerere also saw democracy as an African tradition).<sup>377</sup> Often, the adoption of customs that are perceived as white or Western is portrayed as modernisation/development (anything from clothing to television, often involving debt and consumerism). “That white Englishman” Thabo Mbeki embodied a kind of modernisation with his “African renaissance”, expensive English clothes, quoting of English poets, smoking pipes, and consuming large amounts of Johnny Walker Blue Label whisky.<sup>378</sup> Mobutu banned men from wearing European suits, changed names of country, cities, streets etc. from “Western” to “traditional” names in African languages (in fact, a common practice throughout Africa: while Mobutu’s government arrested some people who retained Christian names, individuals who retained Christian names suffered even more severe persecution in nearby countries such as Sudan and Chad),<sup>379</sup> outlawed the use of European names, and even changed his own name, in the name of tradition. Yet his actions which might be said to have opposed tradition include the manufacture of some of his “traditional” clothing by Parisian designers, the owning of a fleet of Mercedes, his close friendships with USA presidents and CIA leaders and his assisting with imperialism. Bond argues that the structural adjustment of the Bretton Woods institutions from the 1980s brought new wave of Eurocentric conception of modernisation to Africa.<sup>380</sup> Typically this involves the celebration of a modern sector which is surrounded by the traditional/non-modernised (underdeveloped).<sup>381</sup> Modernisation often means opening the economy and allowing businesses to bring in job-killing technology that does not benefit the people, as with post-1994 SA.<sup>382</sup>

The national bourgeoisie is a manager, “those strange employees, materially on the side of labour but symbolically on the side of capital”.<sup>383</sup> As a manager figure,<sup>384</sup> the native bourgeoisie is a bourgeoisie “in spirit only” because it lacks money (compared to foreign bourgeoisies), “something essential to a bourgeoisie.”<sup>385</sup> It “remains ... a bourgeoisie of the

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<sup>377</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 124.

<sup>378</sup> Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 7: this renaissance, Crawford-Browne aptly describes, referred not to Leonardo da Vinci but rather Niccolò Machiavelli.

<sup>379</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 283.

<sup>380</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 272.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 55.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-1.

<sup>383</sup> Frédéric Lordon, *Willing Slaves of Capital*, 8.

<sup>384</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 152.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

civil service.”<sup>386</sup> With the country’s capital controlled by far more powerful imperial interests, there is little the national bourgeoisie can do to help the people. Tellingly, it was the USA and later colonial European governments who pushed for decolonisation, something demanded by their bourgeoisies at the time it happened.<sup>387</sup> The national bourgeoisie enables these imperial bourgeoisies to have their way with the independent country. The national bourgeoisie is forced into this role because it has little wealth of its own. Usually, however, the national bourgeoisie’s interests align with those of the foreign bourgeoisie. “The bourgeois caste draws its strength after independence chiefly from agreements reached with the former colonial power.”<sup>388</sup> Both benefit from the national bourgeoisie’s achievements: mollification of the people (e.g. through the overcoming of extra-economic force and the illusion that the people have gained political power and economic opportunities), discipline of workers, separation of the people from the means of production. When the national bourgeoisie’s interests do not align with imperialism, imperial bourgeoisies can simply pay it off, or remove it. The national bourgeoisie is used to open markets, provide cheap resources, manage imperial enterprises, allow foreigners to own the country’s wealth, and maintain colonial economic practices, such as the emphasis on particular sectors (especially luxuries and armaments) and (often as a result) the borrowing of money and reliance on capital from foreigners. But even when the national bourgeoisie can help the people, it does not, preventing actual development, looting the country’s resources and monopolising its wealth. The national bourgeoisie actually makes the country more dependent, not independent. It gains any power it can by identification with imperial bourgeoisies, and the people identify with it (so the people identify with the foreign bourgeoisies, in part by transitivity). Strong ideologies of national, racial and ethnic identity give the national bourgeoisie revolutionary appeal, and we turn to these in the following chapters.

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<sup>386</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>387</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 21.

<sup>388</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 176.

## **Chapter 2: Racist and Consumerist Ideologies in Postcolonial Societies**

One of the foremost themes in *The Wretched of the Earth* is the contradiction between bourgeois rights and increased oppression.<sup>389</sup> This is the opening theme of Jean-Paul Sartre's "Preface": the inconsistency between the rights of man to freedom and autonomy, and increased exploitation and slavery. National liberation, Fanon argues, aspires to make Africa like Europe, but "this Europe where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everywhere they find them".<sup>390</sup> The writers and poets, writes Sartre, protesting against colonialism, said "You are making us into monstrosities; your humanism claims we are at one with the rest of humanity but your racist methods set us apart."<sup>391</sup> For Fanon and his probable greatest influence Sartre,<sup>392</sup> a principle way that the colonial class tried to obscure this contradiction was the manufacture of a "native elite", which evolved into the national bourgeoisies discussed in the previous chapter. This was part of an attempt to make the "natives" love the colonial class, "something in the way mothers are loved".<sup>393</sup>

In this chapter we will see that the way decolonisation and national liberation have "overcome" racism is racist and brings more racism. We will expand on Fanon's work to see how new patterns in consumption and advertising are linked to new forms of racism. In the first part of this chapter, we will explore how identities morph in response to the exigencies of late capitalism. Consumerism becomes joined to identities, somewhat throughout the capitalist period but particularly during postmodernity. Individuals are made into passive consumers who demand immediate gratification. This is a particular kind of gratification which is achieved (in an alienated way) through luxury goods. In the second part, we will trace the history of racism, and see that racism as an ideology is unique to capitalist modernity. This shows that racialism is a reification, an example of human lives being completely dominated by the peculiar human creations of race and racism. As with nationalism and faith in the bourgeoisie, racism is an ideology that began with European modernity (starting in Spain and Portugal, consolidated by England and other European colonial powers initially in the Americas) as justification for "primitive accumulation". Some

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<sup>389</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 311-2.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid.

<sup>391</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, "Preface" in Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>392</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom*, 14.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid., 7.



aspects of racism were later adopted by national liberation movements and ideology. These arguments will come together in the third and fourth parts, in which we will see that the postcolonial “overcoming” of racism (the attack on overt racism) is really racist and connected to the false needs of advanced capitalism, and part of a new, postmodern racism. Where modern racism encourages collective actions and engages individuals as producers, postmodern racism hails (and “seduces”) its subjects as consumers (and consumption is a thoroughly individual activity: it also sets individuals at cross purposes”).<sup>394</sup> National liberation criticises racism from within racist frameworks, really contributing to its evolution into new forms. In this third part we will see how ubiquitous antiracist discourse is linked to a misrecognition of the self: self-identification on racial bases. Fanon’s ideas from *Black Skin, White Masks*, developed further in *The Wretched of the Earth*, will bring these arguments together in the fourth section. There we will see how postcolonial society is dominated by an overwhelming, neurotic need for whiteness, a need that makes individuals depend on and desire their own domination.

### **False Needs and Consumerism in Late Capitalism**

We have seen some of the ways that capitalism changes in the developed world in the nineteenth century and underdeveloped world in the twentieth. Gino Germani summarises these changes conveniently.<sup>395</sup> He describes this development as a move from “traditional” to “advanced” society. “Traditional” society is characterised by democracy with limited participation, the foundations of a rational state and bureaucracy, individual liberty and a liberal state (with political rights reserved for the bourgeoisie), and “capitalist asceticism”, which is characterised by an ethic of production. The majority of citizens have a “traditional” mentality and are not integrated “into the new forms of society”. Nineteenth-century Europe and twentieth century Africa moved from “traditional” to “advanced” society. This is characterised by democracy with full participation, the majority of citizens integrated into the society, and an ethic of consumption. In Western Europe, Germani argues, there was a smooth transition between these two stages. But in the underdeveloped world, the transition occurred with jolts and aberrations. Aspects of traditional and advanced society clashed in the underdeveloped world during this transition. For instance, consumption increased before

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<sup>394</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and Its Discontents*, 39.

<sup>395</sup> Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, 148-9.

production could keep up. Importantly, Germani argues<sup>396</sup> that the ethic of consumption corresponds to the extension of bourgeois rights to the majority, and the incorporation of non-capitalist sectors into the capitalist economy. In other words, the decolonial changes we saw in the previous chapter coincide with the ethic of consumption that increases as capitalism develops.

Consumerism is very old, even as old as capitalism itself.<sup>397</sup> For instance Baruch Spinoza, writing in the mid-seventeenth century, discerned consumerist ideology of the type we will discuss. He argued that individuals could not imagine joy that did not involve money.<sup>398</sup> However, we will see that late capitalism has vastly strengthened consumerist identity and enabled new forms of mobilising people as consumers, now eliminating worker-/producer-identity (which was previously used to mobilise people as consumers but more as producers).<sup>399</sup> Early forms of consumerism were mainly practiced by the wealthy, to whom luxury goods were advertised because they were the only people who could afford luxuries.<sup>400</sup> John Kenneth Galbraith, for instance, shows that increased production in the last century has led to the need for firms to advertise more aggressively: “Mass production, post-World War II, saw the rising power of major corporations and a focus on mass production, mass consumption and (ideally) mass employment. This stage sees the rise of advertising as a way to promote mass consumption and often sees significant economic planning taking place within firms.”<sup>401</sup> These changes came to Africa especially with decolonisation, with the aberrations and jolts we have mentioned.

The ideology of consumption becomes strong in capitalism and stronger in late capitalism for various reasons. Firstly, firms try to sell different kinds of goods. According to a Marxist standpoint, capitalism inherently leads to overproduction. Ernest Mandel argues that there is “the inevitability of cyclical fluctuations under capitalism, that is the inevitability of periodic crises of overproduction, or ‘recessions’ as they are called today with less provocative

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<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

<sup>397</sup> Frank Trentmann argues in *The Empire of Things: How We Became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First* (London: Penguin, 2016) that consumerism emerged in England in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. He notes that historians of other countries, such as China, also see the rise of consumerism with early modernity. Early forms of consumerist ideology were found among the rich, but consumerist ideology strengthens, and takes hold of the minds of the poor, with the rise of the bourgeoisie and capitalism.

<sup>398</sup> Frédéric Lordon, *Willing Slaves of Capital*, 13.

<sup>399</sup> In Ibid., 24, Lordon argues that the “first regime of mobilisation” relied on scarcity to coerce individuals to work. The second, the “Fordist regime of mobilisation”, evolved into the neoliberal regime, based on managerial techniques and expanded access to consumption.

<sup>400</sup> Dana Thomas, *Deluxe: How Luxury Lost Its Luster* (New York: Penguin, 2007).

<sup>401</sup> John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

connotations.”<sup>402</sup> Similarly, Luxemburg argues that the accumulation of capital leads to regular crises which lead to attempts to grow markets; for Luxemburg, this is the result of the “fundamental antagonism between the capacity to consume and the capacity to produce in a capitalist society.”<sup>403</sup> These crises sparked both colonisation and decolonisation. A characteristic of capitalism is that workers earn considerably less than the value of the goods they produce, so they cannot purchase all of the goods they produce. Jean-Baptiste Say argued that this meant “the old colonial system [would] fall to the ground” within the 19<sup>th</sup> century because colonised people and countries were being forced to buy goods they did not want or need, and could not afford.<sup>404</sup> According to Luxemburg, this means that capital accumulation can only survive if firms locate non-capitalist markets for their goods. “Only the continuous and progressive disintegration of non-capitalist organisations makes accumulation of capital possible.” When this process comes to an end within a country (i.e., there are no longer any non-capitalist organisations), the firms seek non-capitalist organisations outside the country, and imperialism begins.<sup>405</sup> The first major crisis of capitalist overaccumulation occurs in Europe in 1846-50, ultimately leading to the scramble for Africa.<sup>406</sup>

Firms try to create new markets both at home and abroad. As profit rates fall and technology improves, firms increasingly try to create markets for luxury goods. With constantly-improving technology, production is always improving, and labour and technology are becoming more productive. It is then simple for firms to meet the basic needs of all, and they try to persuade individuals to purchase things they do not need. Once people have satisfied their basic needs (although often before) they can be persuaded to purchase goods they do not need. The replacement of ideologies of production with ideologies of consumption occurs as technology becomes more productive and makes manual labour increasingly obsolete. The armaments industry, an industry that produces unproductive goods which do not satisfy basic needs, has become one of the biggest industries in many “successful” and “peaceful” countries: Germany, Britain, France, even Sweden. Tellingly, while Tony Blair tried to justify the sale of armaments to warzones as something that would help increase employment

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<sup>402</sup> Ernest Mandel, “Introduction” in Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol 1, 72.

<sup>403</sup> Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968), 347.

<sup>404</sup> Gareth Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty?*, 142-3, Say thought the solution would be to give independence and national sovereignty to the colonies, including choice over what they bought. As we are seeing, the system of global capitalism, including colonialism, continuously modifies itself according to these difficulties, perhaps becoming increasingly unstable.

<sup>405</sup> Rosa Luxemburg, “Excerpts from *The Accumulation of Capital*”, 16.

<sup>406</sup> David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, 42-3.

in the UK, this is not the case because the armaments industry is actually capital intensive.<sup>407</sup> In fact, Andrew Feinstein argues that British armament companies in particular lobbied for decolonisation, and seized decolonisation as an opportunity to sell weapons to Third World countries. They were among the first to congratulate the leaders of newly independent countries who wanted (and were made to want) weapons to “enhance their status and security”.<sup>408</sup> These are among the reasons that the nationalist parties, as Fanon notes,<sup>409</sup> develop the army and police at the expense of great poverty: part of the emphasis on luxury goods we explored in the previous chapter.

In order for firms to sell luxury goods, people have to be persuaded to buy these goods. One of the functions of false needs is to persuade individuals to buy products they do not need, including luxuries. Marcuse conceptualises “false needs” as needs that are used to oppress people. False needs are needs that are “superimposed” upon people in order to perpetuate domination. The satisfaction of these needs leads to temporary and false happiness which supports repression. “The result then is euphoria in unhappiness.”<sup>410</sup> For Marcuse, totalitarianism is no longer a specific form of government or party rule, but a system of production and distribution, an “economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests.”<sup>411</sup> The need to consume is a means of making the ruling class’s interests become individual interests:

It is necessary to achieve a libidinal cathexis of the merchandise the individual has to buy (or sell), the services he has to use (or perform), the fun he has to enjoy, the status symbols he has to carry – necessary, because the existence of the society depends on their uninterrupted production and consumption.<sup>412</sup>

A need can be true in one circumstance and false in another. We will see in the next chapter that the needs for freedom and democratic suffrage have been made into false needs: used to oppress people, satisfied in warped ways that bring alienated fulfilment along with reduced freedom and political power.

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<sup>407</sup> Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 154. Similarly, it is capital-intensive investment that has grown in Africa after decolonisation, yet this was inaccurately flaunted as something that would increase employment. Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 166-7.

<sup>408</sup> Andrew Feinstein, *The Shadow World: Inside the Global Arms Trade* (Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2013), 10.

<sup>409</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 172.

<sup>410</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 5.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*, 3

<sup>412</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory*, translated by Jeremy Shapiro (London: MayFlyBooks, 2009), 191.

Historically, liberation movements have been attached to demands to consume. East Germans were commonly disillusioned by the relatively small variety of goods they could purchase compared to West Germans. Cigarette companies hijacked feminist movements, making their “torches of freedom” symbols of female independence, liberation and power.<sup>413</sup> One of the ways false needs work in advertising is that new desires are attached to real needs. Consumers are persuaded that they can satisfy their deepest instincts through products they don’t actually need. Some of the diverse ways our instincts are hijacked include the following. There exists some natural human competitiveness,<sup>414</sup> but competitiveness is also created by a society that creates artificial scarcity,<sup>415</sup> neurotically crowds individuals together,<sup>416</sup> while simultaneously separating people from each other,<sup>417</sup> and requires individuals to compete with each other. The natural and artificial competitiveness is mobilised: individuals are socialised to want to buy things, especially products we see others buying or that may make us feel accepted by or superior to others.<sup>418</sup> Individuals identify with the products they own and want to own more expensive products than, and thus feel superior to, their neighbours.<sup>419</sup> Marcuse argues that contemporary society especially mobilises aggression and the death instinct, and that this can be seen in the sale and use of fast cars: repetitive and competitive behaviour which is normalised even though driving is really potentially very dangerous, both to the self and others.<sup>420</sup> Manipulation of the libido works e.g. through the use of sexual imagery to gain people’s attention, by satisfying the libido via the inclusion of sexual content in essentially non-sexual products, or by persuading people that purchasing a product will lead to sexual satisfaction. A blatant example of libido being manipulated for the sale of newspapers can be seen by the “page 3 models” of many tabloids. Two kinds of commodity fetishism come together as individuals are made to cathect goods.

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<sup>413</sup> Amanda Amos & Margaretha Haglund, “From Social Taboo to ‘Torch of Freedom’: the Marketing of Cigarettes to Women” (*Tobacco Control* 9.1, 2000) describes in detail the connections between cigarette advertising and many, international movements for women’s independence, liberation, and suffrage. Sigmund Freud’s nephew Edward Bernays invented the term “public relations”. According to Pilger (“Flying the Flag, Faking the News”), Bernays was the inventor of propaganda (which he called “public relations”). “The American tobacco industry hired Bernays to convince women they should smoke in public. By associating smoking with women’s liberation, he made cigarettes ‘torches of freedom’.”

<sup>414</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, 87-9.

<sup>415</sup> Marcuse, *Eros and Civilisation: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 129-34.

<sup>416</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Negations*, 195.

<sup>417</sup> Karl Marx, “On the Jewish Question” in Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, 46-64: liberal rights as protection against perceived threats from others, threats which, when real, result from the structure of this society more than inherent human qualities.

<sup>418</sup> Frédéric Lordon, *Willing Slaves of Capital*, 23.

<sup>419</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Negations*, 191.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*, 196-8.

“Most of the prevailing needs to relax, to have fun, to behave and consume in accordance with the advertisements, to love and hate what others love and hate, belong to this category of false needs.”<sup>421</sup> One way that individuals are made into consumers and false needs are created has to do with the separation of labour and leisure, which is one of the ways we are made to not notice what we spend and to need to spend more. The separation of labour and leisure is not unique to contemporary societies, but it is especially strong today. The entire capitalist society works to enforce this division, a division which has the function of making people increase their consumption and their work. Lordon sees in this a splitting of the individual’s personality, into wage-earner during work time and consumer during leisure time.<sup>422</sup> The figure of the consumer rose out of the figure of the wage-earner, and contemporary ideology aims to make workers identify with consumers. For instance, longer working hours and less protection of employees are represented as keeping stores open longer and lowering prices. Lordon sees the formation of the European Union as the paradigm of legislation that made workers less protected but appealed to them as consumers.<sup>423</sup>

Leisure time is saturated with the image of the commodity, and this is one of the reasons Lordon argues that the spending of money has become inseparable from leisure and pleasure. Lordon traces this observation to Spinoza: individuals “can imagine hardly any species of joy without the accompanying idea of money as its cause.”<sup>424</sup> It is the culture industry that occupies us during leisure time.<sup>425</sup> People spend ever-increasing amounts of their leisure time surrounded by advertisements: television, internet, radio, etc. When people are surrounded by advertising, leisure time becomes consumption time. Constantly seeing the many different things we can (and must) buy makes the idea of money occupy our minds more than anything else.<sup>426</sup>

Labour, unpleasant, tiring and unfulfilling work, makes individuals desire rest and leisure (which now equals consumption). When the majority of people spend the majority of their

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<sup>421</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 5.

<sup>422</sup> Frédéric Lordon, *Willing Slaves of Capital*, 23.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>425</sup> For an analysis of the culture industry, see Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, edited by JM Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991), 98-106. Expanding on his earlier writings with Max Horkheimer, Adorno conceptualises culture not as something created by the people (as the term “mass culture” implies), but as something that is produced as if in a factory and imposed on people. His central arguments include that “the culture industry intentionally integrates its consumers from above”, engaging them as consumers and as objects, while making them experience a false subjectivity.

<sup>426</sup> Frédéric Lordon, *Willing Slaves of Capital*, 22.

lives engaged in and preparing for alienating labour, they greatly need and desire leisure time. This is recuperation time, to prepare people for work. During leisure time we spend the money we earn, creating a desire for more money, which is earned by working (the advent of credit has magnified this effect, enabling greatly increasing individual debt and reliance on employment).<sup>427</sup> We are surrounded by the need to work when we are at work and during leisure time. The need to satisfy instincts leads to a build-up of tension that can be constantly released, in a corrupted way, through desublimation,<sup>428</sup> usually requiring money and creating a desire for money. Desublimation increases the desire for desublimation. Leisure time is demanded because it is time during which instincts are constantly gratified. The separation of labour and leisure thus supports the production of false needs.

These are examples of desires being fulfilled with little or no action from the subject: “replacing mediated with immediate gratification”.<sup>429</sup> Marcuse emphasises that this is universal throughout “advanced industrial society”: that desires are satisfied without labour or effort by the subject. This makes individuals passive, destroying self-determination:

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<sup>427</sup> Ibid., 22-3.

<sup>428</sup> According to Freud, “sublimation is a process that concerns object-libido and consists in the instinct's directing itself towards an aim other than, and remote from, sexual satisfaction.” Cited in Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-Analysis, 1973), 203. According to Freud's theory, in order to build civilisation, humans have to renounce some of their instincts: civilisation demands work and time, which we may want to spend on other things. If civilisation demands too much from us, this can lead to neurosis. One way that humans get around this problem is to sublimate their instincts to the ends of civilisation: to find ways to achieve (in an alienated way) their personal goals in their impersonal work. This is sublimation, whose classic example is the phallic symbol. Laplanche and Pontalis note in *ibid.*, 349, 431 that the word “sublimation” brings to mind both the sublime (“works that are grand or uplifting”) and the process of sublimation in chemistry, which is “the procedure whereby a body is caused to pass directly from a solid to a gaseous state.” It is a process of individual desires being repressed, so their energy may be diverted towards socially-valued ends.

Sublimation is often (but not necessarily) associated with sexual repression. The society that Marcuse observes has far more sexual freedom than Freud's society. As human history moves from modernity to postmodernity, control to permissiveness, as people transform from workers into consumers, Marcuse analyses moves from “mediated gratification to immediate gratification”. In Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 74, he writes “sublimation occurs in a society where the individual's needs can't be met and must be repressed.

Desublimation occurs in a society where desires are constantly being fulfilled. Previously, civilisation must be built through sexual renunciation; now, it can be built through sexual fulfilment.”

With desublimation, that which is “high” (the ends of civilisation) is “lowered”. For instance, when artistic and architectural achievements are marketed, they are tied to individual desires, e.g. made sexual or represented as making the individual superior to his neighbour. Individual desires no longer challenge the goals of civilisation, but have been incorporated into those goals; the pleasure principle and reality principle come together.

For more on sublimation, see Sigmund Freud, *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, translated by Joan Riviere (London: The Hogarth Press & The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1973). For more on desublimation, see Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 59-86.

<sup>429</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 72.

“satisfaction in a way which generates submission and weakens the rationality of protest.”<sup>430</sup> When our instincts are partially satisfied by external objects, but not fully satisfied, this makes us frustrated, and leads to escalation and repetition of the actions that partially satisfy us.<sup>431</sup> Technology does some of the labour for individuals; for instance, the effort of converting written symbols into images and actions that is part of reading is absent from television. When this satisfaction requires the spending of money, it is generally separated from labour by being part of leisure time. The austere division of time into labour and leisure enforces individuals’ identities as alienated consumer and worker. Leisure and labour are made into each other’s opposites. During labour time, individuals are engaged in alienated labour, which makes them passive, submitting to an apparatus by performing machine-like work that does not fulfil their own needs. This happens too in leisure time, the time in which individuals are supposed to recover from and prepare for work. Recovery and preparation are attached to desublimation. The activities that take up leisure time and labour are both activities of passivity. Time that is not spent on alienated labour could be time for activities that satisfy our true needs, but it instead individuals spend this time engaged in activities that reinforce repression.

Marx argues that labour is “the universal condition for the metabolic interaction between man and Nature, the everlasting Nature-imposed condition of human experience”.<sup>432</sup> This view can be contrasted with the alienating work and leisure time of modern societies, as described above. During leisure time, people have become increasingly passive. The watching of advertisements, such as movies and television, is not interaction with the world: it is the one-way action of the world on us (this can be opposed to reading, which requires effort and imagination). Both labour and leisure now involve action being done to the individual, not the individual acting on the external world. Desublimation and related modern ideologies of consumption require a high level of technological advancement.<sup>433</sup> Many things that satisfy our instincts and were scarce are now abundant. This is true on various levels, mainly the result of technology; for instance, high-calorie and high-sodium foods, which were once scarce, are usually more accessible than healthier alternatives. Sexuality permeates previously non-sexual commodities through advertising. Relatedly, physical hygiene and beauty culture,

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<sup>430</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>431</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Negations*, 198, 202 Marcuse argues that such repetition captivates audiences and destroys mental autonomy.

<sup>432</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol 1, 290.

<sup>433</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 74.



the reduction of dirty physical work, and the availability of cheap, attractive and sexual clothing, permit individuals to be increasingly sexual at work and daily life.<sup>434</sup> Aggressive urges are satisfied by external objects (cars, computers, etc.): the action one must perform to harm the other (or self) is separated completely from the action that harms the other (or self), which is performed by a machine.<sup>435</sup> (For instance, the action of crashing a car is separated from the action of killing a person: the car does the killing.)

This idea is central to Adorno's theory of the culture industry, as well as to Marcuse's theory of the liberating potential of art. Adorno argues that products of the culture industry are distinct from art because art works have potential to challenge reality, whereas entertainment reinforces reality by offering us an escape from understanding reality. The entertainment of the culture industry contains fragments that have been placed together in order to gain particular emotional responses from consumers. Entertainment, he writes, is not bad in itself, but in its "diversionary function" by which "the listener is converted, along his line of least resistance, into the acquiescent purchaser."<sup>436</sup>

The strict separation of labour and leisure is misleading because both occupations, I have shown, contribute to the same result (alienation). Their separation influences people to desire the activities and results of labour during leisure, and vice versa. During both labour and leisure, the individual is passive. Both are alienating and have the effect of making individuals desire money, desire goods, and work harder: via alienation, stupefaction, and the prevention of unalienated labour.<sup>437</sup>

### **The Origins of Racism**

Let us take a detour and explore the origins of racism, so that we will be able to use Fanon's arguments to connect false needs, desublimation and modern working conditions to racism and its new forms. Because it is so strong today, it is easy to believe that racism is universal, that it has existed as long as different-looking people have interacted with each other.<sup>438</sup> But

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<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

<sup>435</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Negations*, 199.

<sup>436</sup> Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry*, 32-3.

<sup>437</sup> See Ibid., 187-97 for an interesting exploration of leisure time and its relation to work.

<sup>438</sup> Helen Scott, "Was There a Time Before Race? Capitalist Modernity and the Origins of Racism" in Crystal Bartolovich and Neil Lazarus, *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*, 168. This assumption is an example of "presentism": to "project contemporary assumptions back into periods before their inception."

Robin Blackburn and Helen Scott show comprehensively that racism arises historically with capitalist modernity; Frank Snowden similarly shows that racism is a modern phenomenon. He argues that dark skin colour did not face systematic discrimination anywhere in the ancient world. Categories of good and bad (civilised and barbarous, Christian and heathen, etc.) were not based on heredity before modernity.<sup>439</sup> George Fredrickson, searching for racism in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, has to admit that it only existed in a “prototypical form” at this time.<sup>440</sup> Fredrickson argues that premodern “racism” was mainly “racial antisemitism”; “the colour-coded, white-over-black variety – did not have significant medieval roots and was mainly a product of the modern period”.<sup>441</sup>

Racism should thus be stood as part of the intellectual trend that brought about other ideas we have been discussing, including nationalism, democracy, civil rights, and faith in bourgeoisies. Fredrickson argues that the “gradual consolidation” of Western European countries into nation-states was a precursor to racism, raising the importance of linguistic and cultural difference, bringing different people together, and conflict between feudal lords and the emerging bourgeoisie: drives towards homogeneity at the time that urbanisation and commercialisation were bringing different people together.<sup>442</sup> Similarly, we will see that the decolonial consolidation of colonial national boundaries influences contemporary racism. But first, let us have a definition of racism. This is difficult, and none of the books referenced in this thesis has an adequate definition. We will start by discussing Fredrickson’s definition and adding to it. Fredrickson argues that there are two components to racism: difference and power.<sup>443</sup> Let us briefly consider each component.

Firstly the concept of race, racial difference, or racialism, is that humanity can be divided into discrete groups, races, such that the members of each group share a collection of fixed, hereditary characteristics which distinguishes them from other groups. (I contend that these are psychological groups.)<sup>444</sup> These characteristics are usually seen as both biological and cultural, and include physical appearance, behaviour, and ability. We will see that class is also a factor in determining someone's race. It is the older and more overt forms of racism

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<sup>439</sup> Frank Snowden, *Before the Colour Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press,) 1983.

<sup>440</sup> George Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), 6.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>444</sup> Freud agrees: *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, 82, 101, Freud argues that both races and nations are psychological groups.

that emphasise the biological (especially since eugenics lost its major global popularity and influence, at the time of the Second World War);<sup>445</sup> recent forms of racism emphasise culture. But the concept of race inherently implies biological difference: race is something that is inherited and cannot be changed (arguably unlike nationality or religion).<sup>446</sup>

If races do exist, it would be difficult to argue that differences among races are essential and discrete. Anthony Appiah and Naomi Zack,<sup>447</sup> for instance, see this as evidence that races do not exist. On the other hand, Philip Kitcher argues that essence and discreteness cannot be criteria for race. He sees no essential and discrete differences between lions and tigers, for instance, but they are still clearly different, and distinguishing between them is worthwhile.<sup>448</sup> When people are divided into races, this usually corresponds to phenotypes, not genotypes. For instance, people in northeastern Asia share more genes with Europeans than with southeastern Asians, yet are more readily seen as part of the same race as southeastern Asians than Europeans. This is because even when racialism pretends to divide people according to genes, it really divides people according to appearance. Racism, especially in its overt forms, is arbitrary and clumsy (and the result of the changing cultural and economic status of a “race”). (European) Jews and the Irish have historically been considered non-white, but now are generally seen as white; in apartheid South Africa, the Japanese were considered white and Chinese non-white. Another reason is that racism is mostly unconscious in overt and especially covert regimes (regimes that pretend to not be racist). Racialism begins with the assertion that humanity can be divided into two or more different groups on a biological and cultural basis. There have been different ways that humanity can be divided into groups, and these are completely arbitrary on close analysis. At the simplest racial view there are two races: white and black. Another simple view sees three races: Caucasoid, Mongoloid and Negroid. However, on views where “black” and “white” correspond to oppressor and oppressed, e.g. according to versions of the Black Consciousness Movement or Négritude,<sup>449</sup>

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<sup>445</sup> George Fredrickson, *Racism*, 2.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8 argues that race has become “coded as culture”; race reifies and essentialises other differences, such as the cultural, so that fluid and variable characteristics are made fixed and natural.

<sup>447</sup> Naomi Zack, *Philosophy of Science and Race*, New York: Routledge, 2002. Zack and Appiah point out that if there are groups of people whose members all or mostly share biology, behaviour and culture not found in other people, enough to be close to essential and discrete, these would be groups not traditionally considered races. They give the examples of the Amish in the USA and Protestants in Ireland. This means that the word “race” is used to refer to things that cannot be races, and not to things that actually do come close to the definition of race. The concept of race is thus illogical, according to Zack and Appiah.

<sup>448</sup> Philip Kitcher, “Does ‘Race’ Have a Future?” (*Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 35(4), 2007), 293–317.

<sup>449</sup> In *Black Skin, White Masks*, 101, Fanon quotes Sartre who sees Négritude as promoting solidarity among all oppressed people. Thus Négritude equates blackness with being oppressed. On Fanon’s view, this view

Mongoloid and Negroid would be considered together. On the other hand, many conceptions, especially recent ones, divide humanity into countless different, merging ethnic groups. There are many different conceptions, which generally agree: the darker, the more inferior. But other than this, they disagree (some see Jewishness as evil, other dominant conceptions do not, for instance) and a close analysis finds that they group people on an arbitrary basis. This means that we are discussing something which is not, and probably cannot, be defined precisely. I will generally stick with the simplest definition and use “black” to refer to the people, or characteristics, which are deemed undesirable or inferior, and “white” to refer to their antithesis. On conceptions which include more than two races, everyone who does not fall into one of these two categories can either be classified as part of a spectrum between the two, or more commonly (or simultaneously) as black (e.g. on the “one-drop rule”). Therefore, I use “black” to refer to everyone and everything not considered white, and “blackness” and “colour” synonymously.

The second component of Fredrickson’s definition of racism is power. Scott and Wollman forcefully argue that without nationalism there would be no nations, and that without racism there would be no races.<sup>450</sup> Whether or not races exist, and whether we consciously believe in racialism or not, people behave as if they exist. People unconsciously (usually consciously too) believe that races and racial difference exist. But for racialism to be racism, there has to exist a racial hierarchy: certain races are perceived to be better than others, and this corresponds more or less to power relations in the material world. Even if logically incoherent, racism is institutionalised and ideologically accepted by all people; all people are and make themselves racial subjects. Racism occurs when humanity is divided into races (groups with unique identity based on genotypes and phenotypes) and one group (or more) is systematically oppressed on a racial basis. Racial conflict and oppression are racism if they are embedded throughout society: non-institutionalised racial hatred is not racism, but individual conflict. We shall see that racist ideas are in fact shared by all people, including those oppressed on a racial basis. Further complicating this definition, I must insist that

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oversimplifies things. Fanon notes that power is more complex than this: for instance because imperialism and racism harm white people too, and in some ways benefit some black people. Also, as we will see later, on Fanon’s view the equation of blackness with oppression is covertly racist because it separates race from its overt explicitly biological justifications, and because it adds meaning to the concept of race. Finally, for Fanon the struggle to liberate humanity has and must be been fought by both black and white, both African and European, etc. See also Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 106 and Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 30-5.

<sup>450</sup> Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 65.

racism is mostly ideological: this I will explain later, e.g. that it is unconscious and supports existing (racial and other) power relations.

To show the absence of racism in the premodern period, Helen Scott reads the works of premodern European explorers in Africa.<sup>451</sup> She finds that these explorers did not associate identity with skin colour, rather seeing skin-colour as one of many trivial features. When they were disdainful towards African people, this was usually because of practices they regarded as unchristian (premarital sex, polygamy, nudity, illiteracy, lack of an identifiable legal system, etc.). On the other hand, they were respectful towards most African chiefs, whom they treated as equals. This shows that they respected class distinctions. They regarded many Africans as civilised, and the majority of Europeans as uncivilised. European Christian writers of this period regarded all people as human and God's creations, regardless of skin colour.<sup>452</sup> Scott and Blackburn also show that from the time the plantation project was started in the Americas until well into the seventeenth century, the majority of slaves were white. White slaves were commonly used in Europe at this time, and most of the early settlers in the Americas were white slaves kidnapped or purchased in Europe.<sup>453</sup> White and black slaves were treated similarly, and European laws generally allowed merchants to take any non-Christians as slaves. This included the Catholic Irish, as well as many poor, criminal, orphans, beggars, etc., all of whom were regarded by Christians as "savage" and subhuman.

Unlike religion and class, race was not an identity and was not linked to inherited traits at this time. Ideas that would later form the basis of racism existed in premodern times, but racism did not exist.<sup>454</sup> These were anti-black (and other, e.g. anti-Jewish) ideas and practices which were contingent to a strict class and religious hierarchy (and much less widespread than twenty-first-century ideology would have us believe). These seeds became the basis of the modern, racist hierarchy, which persists today – part of the premodern hierarchy which became part of its denunciation. "Paradoxical as it may seem, the rejection of hierarchy as the governing principle of social and political organisation, and its replacement by the aspiration

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<sup>451</sup> Helen Scott, "Was There a Time Before Race?", 167-81.

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid.*, 175-181.

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>454</sup> George Fredrickson, *Racism*, 54.

for equality *in this world* as well as in the eyes of God, had to occur before racism could come to full flower.”<sup>455</sup>

Africans began to be transported to the Americas, mainly as indentured workers, from around 1620.<sup>456</sup> Well into the seventeenth century, the majority of workers on the plantations were white indentured workers and slaves. As the plantations grew, massive amounts of labour were demanded. The Spanish attempted to enslave indigenous populations in the Americas, but they were difficult to capture and unused to agricultural work. African slaves had better natural resistance to the diseases of the Americas (than Europeans) and were used to agricultural labour and often to slavery. The Spanish and Portuguese were the first to regularly use African slaves (and later, the first to confine slavery to Africans).<sup>457</sup> Africans were less likely to revolt because they struggled to communicate with each other (the colonial powers deliberately put together slaves of different languages), had no nearby allies, and were less able to hide (identifiable by complexion). In contrast, white slaves would often form alliances with the enemies of their masters (e.g. Irish slaves with the French colonisers, against the English, Huguenots with the Dutch and English against the French), and could often hide in nearby white communities.<sup>458</sup>

As capitalism and the bourgeoisie rose, Europe set off on a process of industrialisation. This meant that more labour was demanded in Europe at the time that planters were seeking massive amounts of labour for the Americas. With more jobs available in Europe, desperately poor Europeans had increased chance of finding work and therefore less need to seek indenture in the Americas. The shortage of European labour going to the Americas led to an increase in slaves from Africa.<sup>459</sup> Famines and wars in Europe in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries increased the shortage of European labour.<sup>460</sup> The labour conditions in the plantations were very harsh (which means that wage labourers were substantially more expensive than slaves after the 1670s, although they were cheaper than

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<sup>455</sup> Ibid., 46-7, original emphasis. Thoroughly aware of the history of racism and modernity, Fanon makes the same argument: Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 26 argues that religion supported the old class hierarchy, but was insufficient to support racism. The new racist hierarchy would have to be supported by science, humanism and equality, and other bourgeois philosophies, which “made European man” by making non-whites subhuman. This was a slight alteration of classes, of who specifically was dominator and dominated. It was not the ending of domination, but the beginning of new forms of domination.

<sup>456</sup> Helen Scott, “Was There a Time Before Race?”, 171.

<sup>457</sup> Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern 1492-1800* (London and New York: Verso, 1997), 312.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid., 316.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid., 355.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid., 318.

slaves before this).<sup>461</sup> Indentured workers would typically leave the plantations as soon as their indenture was complete, unless they were offered high wages. The turnover of workers was expensive for planters, who would have to regularly train new workers in skilled tasks. Teaching skills to slaves, on the other hand, was a better investment because slaves were not usually going to leave. Christianity was spreading throughout Europe, and once the last pagan Slavs of Eastern Europe were converted to Christianity, there were essentially no non-Christian people in Europe available to be taken as slaves.<sup>462</sup> There were few institutions in the Americas that could regulate wage-labour (and there was less slavery in the areas where these institutions existed).<sup>463</sup> The large successful plantations used slave labour, and those that used mostly wage-labour generally did not become large. For instance, there was little slavery in New England and Pennsylvania, and slaves there were treated like servants; in these areas, there was relative equality in wealth among the many small-scale, competitive landowners (and “poor whites” were better-off). In contrast, slavery was vastly the major form of labour in Virginia, South Carolina and the West Indies, and these were areas of massive inequality among landowners: the first to use slavery became the richest and came to control large amounts of land.<sup>464</sup>

Blackburn points out the contradiction of a move from slave-like conditions (including slavery) to wage-labour in Europe at the same time as a move from wage-labour to slavery in the Americas. While European economies were becoming capitalist, American economies (which were largely and even fully capitalist) moved towards a generally “pre-capitalist” mode of production.<sup>465</sup> The economies of the Americas were of course parts of larger European economies, and their “pre-capitalist” modes of production part of the by now global capitalist system and capital accumulation. Conditions in the plantations facilitated a “pre-capitalist” mode of production, which was part of the capitalist economy. Blackburn also links the rise of consumerism in Europe to the demand for more products from, and thus harsher conditions in, the plantations.<sup>466</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Ibid., 319, 353-5.

<sup>462</sup> George Fredrickson, *Racism*, 31.

<sup>463</sup> Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, 353 (the Spanish government did try to develop such a regulatory framework in the sixteenth century, before African slaves were widely used)

<sup>464</sup> Ibid., 359.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid., 342-4 describes this as a “hybrid economy”; slaves worked as slaves during the harvest season and as wage labourers during the quieter seasons when they were needed less in the plantations. Blackburn sees the innovation and commodity exchange of the plantations as features of capitalism, and the slaves being tied to the means of production and growing large amounts of their own food as features of feudalism.

<sup>466</sup> Ibid., 351.

The circumstances described above explain some of the reasons that plantation owners gradually came to use increasing numbers of Africans, increasing numbers of slaves, and increasing numbers of African slaves. Since slaves were cheaper than wage-labourers, and available in large numbers, plantation owners began employing fewer white labourers; the availability of slaves also put downward pressure on wages, causing wage-labourers to leave the plantations “in droves”.<sup>467</sup> Non-slaveholding whites also moved away from the plantations because they felt eclipsed by rich slaveholders.<sup>468</sup> Soon, the majority and then only workers in the plantations were African slaves.

As we have been seeing, this was happening at a time of major intellectual and ideological changes in Europe, corresponding to the decline of feudalism and the rise of capitalism. Western Europe was fundamentally capitalist by the late seventeenth century, featuring “free” wage-labour, the separation of labour from the land and means of production, and the commodification of labour and land.<sup>469</sup> Consumerism was one of these ideological changes, as well as radical conceptions of humanity and human rights, most of which at least appeared to strongly oppose slavery. Nationalism arises at this point, as we have seen, and while the nation was previously identified with the sovereign, it now comes to be identified with the people.<sup>470</sup> By the mid-seventeenth century, nationalism was making it problematic to take European slaves. For instance, monarchs like Louis XIV were reminded “You do not rule over slaves, you rule a free and fiery nation, as jealous of its liberty as of its loyalty.”<sup>471</sup> New conceptions of the rights of man, as seen in Thomas Paine’s 1791 book *Rights of Man* and the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, became popular, arguing that all people had natural and inalienable rights (e.g. to life and liberty). The idea of possessive individualism also became dominant: that each person has the ownership of his own body. Government came to be conceptualised as an institution that must protect the natural rights of citizens, and be founded on the consent of citizens. These conceptions generally began to form the ruling ideas with the political upheavals in seventeenth-century England (including the bourgeois revolution of the civil wars and Commonwealth period 1640-1660, and the Glorious Revolution of 1688), and were consolidated with other bourgeois revolutions

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<sup>467</sup> Ibid., 358.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid., 360.

<sup>469</sup> Helen Scott, “Was There a Time Before Race?”, 172.

<sup>470</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 77-8.

<sup>471</sup> Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, 317-8.



including in America (1776) and France (1789), and later the American civil war (1865).<sup>472</sup> In England, the ideologies of “English liberties” initially opposed all kinds of slavery.<sup>473</sup>

As these new ideas took hold on the populace under the new ruling class, the bourgeoisie, it became difficult for plantation owners to take European slaves without sparking protest in Europe.<sup>474</sup> Cruel treatment of European slaves and wage-labourers in the plantations sparked protest in Europe. Plantation owners and colonial governments wanted to take slaves but could not take humans as slaves, now that the bourgeoisie was the ruling class and its idea of freedom for all humans a ruling idea. They resolved this contradiction by making Africans subhuman through propaganda campaigns. Fanon and Blackburn note the role of the media in spreading racist stereotypes, both using the example of Bre’er Rabbit. As Fanon puts it, they laid “down the principle that the native is not one of our fellow men”.<sup>475</sup> “There is nothing more consistent than a racist humanism since the European has only been able to become a man through creating slaves and monsters.”<sup>476</sup>

When there existed tension at this time between whites and non-whites, we have seen, this was not racism but fear and dislike of the other, the different, or the non-Christian. Plantation owners and colonial governments took advantage of this, turning it into the seeds of racism. One of the primary methods was to create associations between qualities already universally perceived as inferior (non-Christian, uncivilised, etc.), and blackness. “The laws thoroughly confused race and religion, in such a way that those of a darker complexion were excluded from the category of Christian.”<sup>477</sup> They also deliberately created divisions between white and black people, for instance making them compete with each other. For example, in their “free time”, slaves were generally permitted to produce goods to meet their own needs and to sell in markets. (Once the tradition of Sunday as a “free day” was established, it was “zealously defended” by slaves. While some plantation owners tried to end it, most saw advantages to it, for instance because it meant slaves could often cultivate most of their own food). This led to tension with “poor white farmers” who resented the competition, as well as with colonial officials and some planters who saw these markets as a potential for sedition

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<sup>472</sup> Helen Scott, “Was There a Time Before Race?”, 169 Possessive individualism “was consolidated by the bourgeois revolutions of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.”

<sup>473</sup> Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, 316, 358.

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

<sup>475</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 15.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*, 26. Fanon sees modern humanism as intrinsically racist, and argues that it should be replaced with a new humanism, with new conceptions of what it means to be human.

<sup>477</sup> Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, 359.

among slaves.<sup>478</sup> In many parts of the Americas, particularly the Caribbean, African slaves came to form the bulk of the population.<sup>479</sup> They came to sell more than the “poor white farmers” in many food markets<sup>480</sup> and paranoia developed among white settlers about possible slave rebellion. Most white settlers carried weapons (pistols or swords) and kept aggressive dogs (the fila brasileiro, currently banned in many countries as one of the most aggressive dogs, was developed in Brazil to track slaves at this point). Slaveholders were easily “panicked by real or invented slave conspiracies”, and used incredibly harsh (inhumane) punishments on slaves who disobeyed them or tried to escape.

Plantation owners and colonial officials exploited this paranoia, using it to confine slavery to blacks and separate black from human. They prevented African slaves from converting to Christianity because this would mean teaching them a European language, enabling them to communicate with each other and thus conspire with each other.<sup>481</sup> Any existing racial or proto-racial sentiment came to be exploited by planters and colonial officials. Eventually this came to form a dominant hatred of Africans and exclusion of Africans from the category of humanity, meaning that the rights of man would not apply to Africans. Slaves came to be defined as property, not as people. “African slavery in the Caribbean brought out the crippling racial qualification of the popular European attachment or aspiration to personal freedom.”<sup>482</sup> Laws which had allowed non-Christians to be taken as slaves were changed to allow non-whites to be taken as slaves. The USA was founded on racism; its Declaration of Independence, for instance, describes “merciless Indian savages”. From 1670-1750, legal, property and civil rights were removed from blacks. Scott describes that a 1670 law declared all non-Christians imported into the USA would be slaves, but in 1682 a new law declared that “Negroes ... Mulattoes or Indians” would be slaves even if they became Christian, echoing a 1667 announcement that “Baptisme doth not alter the condition of the person as his bondage or freedom”.<sup>483</sup> Blackness and whiteness became the fundamental indicators of identity.<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>478</sup> Ibid., 347, 360.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid., 332, 345.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid., 347.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid., 346. The Gentleman Planters of Barbados declared in 1680 that there was “no greater security than the diversity of our negroes’ languages.”

<sup>482</sup> Ibid., 322.

<sup>483</sup> Helen Scott, “Was There a Time Before Race?”, 174.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid., 173.

At this time, hostility toward Jews and Judaism in Europe changed from hatred of a religion to hatred of an ethnicity. This began in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century when the expulsion of Jews (1492) and Muslims (1502) from Spain and Portugal led to mass conversions; monarchs realised that many of these *conversos* and *Moriscos* were converting to Christianity to avoid deportation. Jewish “New Christians” possibly numbered as many as 500 000 in sixteenth-century Spain, most of whom were believing Catholics and many of whom intermarried with Christians.<sup>485</sup> The monarchies, starting with “the First Grand Inquisitor” Tomás de Torquemada, started to rather expel those they saw as having Muslim or Jewish ethnicity (as opposed to religion), an event that anticipated racism and birthed the notion of purity of blood.<sup>486</sup> Certificates of pure blood came to be required for various organisations, including secular ones. This was the beginning of religious identity merging with racial identity: something which was only complete more than a century later. The epitome of hatred of a people changing from hatred of a religion to hatred of a race is perhaps seen in the writing of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who interpreted old non-racist religions in racist ways. For instance, Chamberlain interpreted Aristotle’s distinction of Greek versus Barbarian, and the Roman othering of Judaism, as attempts of the true Aryan race to defend itself against enemies. Chamberlain, whose work was one of the foundations of Nazism, also argued that Jesus was Aryan.<sup>487</sup>

Outright, overt racism is related to primitive accumulation (plantocracy, apartheid, colonisation: non-whites may be used as slaves). Unlike Europe at the time, production in the Americas was based around pre-capitalist modes of production, which we have seen were more conducive to surplus value at the time than wage-labour would have been. But this happened at a time that the dominant ideas were challenging such forms of production. There was a contradiction between the new ideologies and old modes of production in the Americas; both had to change to smooth over this contradiction, and racism was one result. Soon European colonisation would lead to similar contradictions in Africa, and racism would help to smooth over these contradictions too. In the Americas (and subsequently the rest of the world), the law was used to make whites and blacks different and unequal. All men had the right to freedom, but savages wanted more freedom than their fair share, and thus had to be controlled. Racial segregation was introduced into law. The right to vote was removed from blacks in the areas where all men had been allowed to vote. Racial intermarriage was

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<sup>485</sup> George Frederickson, *Racism*, 31-35.

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>487</sup> *Ibid.*, 89, 159-63.

forbidden. (At this time, the right to vote was also rescinded from women in many parts of the Americas.)

Thus in various ways, new modern conceptions of freedom correlated to racism and slavery. Extreme forms of underdevelopment and exploitation are found in underdeveloped areas (where precapitalist modes of production are more common, extracting more surplus value) and racist ideology makes them more acceptable/less objectionable. Racism makes it more acceptable for wars and slavery to affect blacks. (For instance, Spencer and Wollman point out how quickly Western countries intervened to end the conflict in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s, as opposed to how slowly they intervened in the DRC or Rwanda.)<sup>488</sup> Overtly racist regimes have experienced high rates of economic growth through older, often pre-capitalist modes of production. The plantations of the Americas produced massive crops in a short time from slave labour. During the 1960s and 1970s, apartheid South Africa had massive economic growth, second only to Japan.<sup>489</sup> While African economic growth slowed during the colonial period, Western economic growth increased as a direct result: uneven economic development benefitted Europe at the expense of Africa.

We should also add to Scott and Blackburn's arguments that while many "overtly racist regimes" do use religious justification, actually race, racism, science and capitalism go together.<sup>490</sup> For Fanon, "the Scripture" does not contain sufficient justification for racism; but the ruling ideas were turning anyway from Scripture to science and biology at the time racism developed.<sup>491</sup> On the other hand, religion and class are the explicit and fundamental identities in feudal societies. In feudal Europe, the dominant Christianity taught that all people are descended from Adam and Eve, implying that all humans are of one species and spiritually equal. Early Christians saw Africans as their spiritual equals.<sup>492</sup> Charles Darwin argued that all people have a common ancestor,<sup>493</sup> but many who based their work on Darwin's ideas,

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<sup>488</sup> Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 140.

<sup>489</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 332-3. In the previous chapter we saw that this economic boom resulted in the capitalist class lobbying for updated forms of capitalism, which included less government intervention in the economy, the development of a national bourgeoisie, and hastened capital accumulation. We saw that this boom resulted from less advanced modes of production, until economic conditions made more advanced forms of capitalism more profitable.

<sup>490</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays*, translated by Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove, 1964), 32.

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>492</sup> George Fredrickson, *Racism*, 17, 52; in the mid-seventeenth century, there developed a view among only a minority that Adam and Eve were the first Jews; later there developed the view that Adam and Eve were the first whites. As we have seen, this view became prominent at the time that racism started to develop.

<sup>493</sup> Robert Bernasconi and Tommy Lee Lott (editors), *The Idea of Race* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000), 68.

such as Social Darwinism, saw evolution as proving racial difference; in 1883 Francis Galton proposed eugenics as “a new religion”, and campaigned for the American government to enforce eugenicist policies.<sup>494</sup>

## **New Forms of Racism: Racial Identity and Discourse**

### Covert Racism

We just saw that modern racism developed out of the destruction of the feudal social hierarchy, and out of the creation of an apparently more equal society. This pattern is repeated in the twentieth century (as Africa moves with jolts and aberrations from “traditional” to “advanced” society), as a new racism develops from and relies on the destruction of the old racist hierarchy, overt racism. Just as bourgeois power and rights brought new, racist oppression, national liberation and national bourgeoisie power bring new forms of racist oppression. Fanonian themes of repetition and mimicry are important here. The new forms of racism, Fanon argues, are “democratic and humane”. In other words, they are part of the dominant bourgeois ideology that emphasises democracy and humanity, but democracy and humanity that really do not apply to “inferior” races.<sup>495</sup>

The twentieth century period is a symbol of the climax and subsequent defeat of racism.<sup>496</sup> The defeat of racism is symbolised by the fall of Hitler and Nazism in 1945, decolonisation of European colonies, various black empowerment and black identity movements like Négritude and Pan-Africanism, desegregation in the USA, the victory of the Civil Rights Movement, and the fall of apartheid. The downfall of the USSR was also presented as a defeat of racism, since the USSR was much more overtly racist at this time than its “non-racist” opponents, the USA and its allies, who criticised the Soviet regime as racist. (The Soviet government officially allocated each citizen an ethnic or national category, divided its territories on ethnic grounds, and encouraged racial conflict for resources.)<sup>497</sup>

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<sup>494</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>495</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 37.

<sup>496</sup> George Fredrickson, *Racism*, 1, 97-138.

<sup>497</sup> Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 174.

Fredrickson rightly calls these twentieth century regimes “overtly racist regimes”.<sup>498</sup> Overtly racist regimes are usually based on biological racism and/or cultural essentialism, and are fully and explicitly supported by the state and the law.<sup>499</sup> We can call the newer racism, which we will consider now, covert racism. Covert racism rejects overt racism: it is racist in its antiracism. It takes a part of racism for the whole: it defines racism as overt racism. By defining racism as overt, it hides unconscious, unnoticed racism and makes new forms of racism appear antiracist. Through this reduction of racism to overt racism, covert racism reduces contemporary racism to the attitudes of a few individuals.<sup>500</sup> The late twentieth century, including national liberation, corresponds to “freedom” being achieved for people of colour, but this freedom comes with the exercise of power over black people, by analysing, understanding and individualising them. In the rest of this chapter, I will show that while the most explicit, state-supported forms of racism have been abolished, stronger, unconscious forms have been proliferated. Race and ethnicity are fundamental identities now, often trumping nationality, religion, class, gender. Racism in overtly racist regimes is explicitly supported by the state; racism in covertly racist regimes is practiced to a greater extent by individuals (although both forms are embedded in political and legal institutions, education, science, etc.). But covert racism is not explicitly supported by these institutions: they support racism in their attempts to challenge it. This change corresponds to the Althusserian move from the repressive state apparatus to the ideological state apparatus. Many regimes are currently evolving from overt to covert racisms. For example, this evolution is currently happening for instance in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Especially in Europe and North America, it is considered “politically incorrect” to describe the Israel-Palestine situation as “apartheid” because Israel is recognised as democratic (with a free press and independent judiciary) and because of the absence of some of the markers of overt racism, such as “whites only” signs. Yet there are still clear signs of overt racism, such as many citizenship, language and property laws in the “Jewish State” of Israel which make Christian and Muslim Israelis second-class citizens, including the prohibition of marriage between Jews and gentiles.<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>498</sup> George Fredrickson, *Racism*, 1, 141 argues that overtly racist regimes were “permanently discredited” with the Holocaust and decolonisation.

<sup>499</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>500</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 39. Very interestingly, Epifanio San Juan associates covert racism with neoliberalism, arguing that it is now especially “neoliberal apologists” who “reduce racism to a case of individual mental illness or syndrome.” Epifanio San Juan, “Fanon: An Intervention into Cultural Studies” in Anthony Alessandrini, *Frantz Fanon*, 150.

<sup>501</sup> Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 184-5, 190.

Challenging overt racism is one of the fundamental aims of national liberation.<sup>502</sup> At the time of African decolonisation, the widespread view of national liberation was that decolonisation and modernisation, including economic development and nation-building, would happen and would lead to the destruction of racial, ethnic and religious identities and loyalties.<sup>503</sup>

Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Ahmed Sékou Touré, well-known proponents of this view, expected this to happen within only a few years.<sup>504</sup> But the opposite happened: ethnic and racial identities and rivalries actually erupted with decolonisation, even when modernisation occurred.<sup>505</sup> Covert racism is prevalent now as the result of overt racism. It carries on the same project, of dividing people according to race, but its form is different, particularly more subtle. Covert racism relies on individuals basing their identities on race, and also solidifies racial identification.

Sartre describes a dialectical<sup>506</sup> progression of racism. The thesis is the assertion that white is superior. The antithesis is the assertion that black is also good/human/cultured: Négritude is an example of this antithesis.<sup>507</sup> The synthesis is “the realisation of the human in a society without races.”<sup>508</sup> The position of overt racism is at the thesis of this progression; the assertion of the humanity of people of colour, is at the antithesis. But the progression tends to stop here, according to Fanon: the “colonised intellectuals” become stuck in trying to prove the humanity (usually represented by the whiteness) of blackness that they forget the goal of a non-racial society. Instead of using bourgeois ideologies like nationalism and racialism when they are useful and discarding them when they are not useful, the colonised intellectuals become stuck with these ideologies.<sup>509</sup> The assertion and acceptance of black humanity becomes part of the new, covert racism. Similarly, Fanon suggests that black identity is a racist construction: the black man has his identity in relation to the white man.

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<sup>502</sup> For instance, in “Contested Memories”, Ndumisa Dladla notes that the battle against overt racism “dominates public, judicial and academic discourse” in post-apartheid South Africa.

<sup>503</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 134.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid.

<sup>505</sup> Ibid.

<sup>506</sup> As with nationalism, Pan-Africanism, socialism etc., Fanon was sceptical of dialectical thinking but also argued that we should learn from it and adapt it. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 7.

<sup>507</sup> Ibid., 102; Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 38. Fanon argues that such antithetical philosophies, including Négritude, should be self-destructive, means to the synthesis which is a society without race in this case.

<sup>508</sup> Quoted in Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 101-2.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid., 180. See also Nigel Gibson, *Fanonian Practices in South Africa: From Steve Biko to Abahlali baseMjondolo* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2011), 112. Gibson argues that Sartre “makes light of Hegel’s insight that all negation tends to see itself as absolute and lends momentum to the dialectical process.” The examples in this chapter show black and national consciousness and identity seeing themselves as absolute (and that Fanon recognised this).

Black identity means conforming to a white idealisation of blackness.<sup>510</sup> For Fanon, national liberation gains the problems associated with colonisation because of its extreme rejection of certain aspects of colonisation without going beyond the colonial (ideological, intellectual, economic) framework. Existing now, the assertion of blackness as human, equal, beautiful symbolises the defeat of overt racism, but carries the implication that all racism is overt, and affirms racial stereotypes and difference.

In fact, much like overt racism, the assertion of black humanity begins historically as a European idea; it can only be a step towards overcoming racism because it is based on racial premises. Négritude, “an intellectual precursor to nationalism”, was formulated by Léopold Senghor (as well as Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas and others) in Paris.<sup>511</sup> Just as we saw with African nationalism (in the previous chapter), the major movements of “black consciousness which assert the unique contributions, values and characteristics of black people and black civilisation” originate in Europe and USA.<sup>512</sup> They are intended to combat and overcome racism, but cannot achieve this because they accept and affirm that races exist, thereby strengthening the premises of racism. (Tellingly, probably unknown to Senghor and companions, the first use of “Négritude” was by US Declaration of Independence signer Benjamin Rush, who defined “Négritude” as a kind of leprosy that could only be cured by becoming white.)<sup>513</sup>

Races are social constructs. The “differences” among races are human creations.<sup>514</sup> Some of these were invented, or temporary cultural differences that were universalised (often through ideology). In other words, differences were created, and then naturalised, or reified. Certain races were made poorer, made into workers or slaves; then slavery, poverty, corruption, and inferiority came to be presented as part of their racial characteristics. This continues today; in South Africa, for instance, income and wealth inequality both in and among races increased after apartheid. In fact, in many ways racial and class exploitation increase with national liberation. As long as these differences continue, and people are made different from each

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<sup>510</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 73; see also Ziauddin Sardar’s “Forward to the 2008 edition”, xiii-xiv. Fanon did argue that black identity had its uses, particularly in challenging overt racism, as Lewis Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, 39-40 points out. However, Fanon sees black identity as problematic especially when it tries to become absolute and when it is articulated as a white idealisation of blackness. He notes that as black identity it is racist identity, and that is why it can only be effective if it is self-destructive.

<sup>511</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 60.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid.

<sup>513</sup> Vernelia Randall, “An Early History – African American Mental Health”. Institute on Race, Health Care and the Law, University of Dayton School of Law. <https://academic.udayton.edu/health/01status/mental01.htm>

<sup>514</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 123-37.



other on racial grounds, it is easier to think different races do exist. One reason for this is that the political fight against racism tends to present racism as distinct from other forms of oppression, and is therefore unconcerned with the restoration of “land, freedom, justice, dignity and equality” to the oppressed.<sup>515</sup> Race is a human creation which controls individuals and appears universal.

As Fanon points out, covert racism occurs in “more subtle forms”: it uses “disguise”.<sup>516</sup> One of these disguises is the overcoming of overt racism. As part of the pretence that racism has been overcome, covert racism is prevalent in societies that are or claim to be multiracial. On the other hand, overt racism is linked to racial segregation and a clear hierarchy, usually supported by the state. In fact, from the later stages of colonialism and at the time that they were developing consumer society, the imperial powers began to try developing multiracial societies in Africa.<sup>517</sup> This involved giving some wealth and civil rights to black people and ending segregation. (In contrast, regimes that were colonial but not imperial, such as the Afrikaners in South Africa, tended to oppose integration, civil rights and wage labour for blacks.) This practice of making society slightly more integrated and racially equal, partly an attempt to quell opposition to colonialism, was used firstly and mainly by the British, who later became vocal critics of white minority rule in South Africa, Zimbabwe and surrounds.<sup>518</sup>

### Racism Everywhere

Racism is based on racialism: the overcoming of overt racism usually strengthens the foundations of racism, namely racialism. Because of the strength of racism, and its base in racialism, for Fanon all racial discourse has become fundamentally racist.<sup>519</sup> To recognise or identify racially is to be racist: racism has become part of racial recognition/identity.<sup>520</sup> In regimes that celebrate their overcoming of racism, including decolonised countries, there is

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<sup>515</sup> Ndumiso Dladla, “Contested Memory”.

<sup>516</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 35.

<sup>517</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 74, 81. Since we discussed nationalism in the previous culture, we should not miss the links between nationalism (and nation-building) and racism (although they go beyond our scope). The colonial project aimed to make individuals identify mostly on racial and ethnic grounds; postcolonial imperialism strengthens this identification as well as the related identification on national grounds.

<sup>518</sup> *Ibid.*, 117, 261.

<sup>519</sup> This is why for Fanon, black identity (at least as it is currently articulated) can no longer effectively challenge racism. Black identity has become incorporated into racism, in the cases where it wasn't part of racism and the white idealisation of blackness to begin with.

<sup>520</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 82-90.

overwhelming discourse on race. One can hardly look anywhere without being reminded of race. In fact, Google Books shows an unnoticeable use of “racism” before 1930, a slow increase from 1930-1960, and subsequently an exponential increase for the rest of the twentieth century, the main period of national liberation and covert racism. It is not easy to avoid noticing the markers of race, such as skin colour, if we already acknowledge race: acknowledging race makes us acknowledge race, and so on. Thinking about race a little thus leads to thinking about it more. This is unclear to us especially when racism is unconscious (something I will argue shortly). Alleged attempts to make society non-racial or challenge racism, celebrations of the defeats of overt racism, or analysing racism usually rely on discourse that reminds individuals that race exists. In the South African example, this is seen in the celebration of diversity and of the end of apartheid, and heritage studies (which teach that identity is linked to ancestry and ethnicity) especially as taught to children in schools. Most of this discourse goes further to remind individuals that personality, behaviour and ability are linked to ethnicity and physical features such as skin colour; that there are racial groups and that they are different from each other, that personality and abilities are linked to race, that certain races behave in certain ways.<sup>521</sup> Neil Lazarus shows an example of how racialism has permeated other discourses: in the 1960s and 1970s, the vocabulary used by scholars to describe the exploitation of African countries changed steadily from the use of Marxist ideas (such as class struggle) to one of “dependency theory” which, he argues, ignores classes and defines the struggle in terms of white and black, European and African etc.<sup>522</sup>

Jokes, advertising, the media constantly insist that different races behave in different ways. In these ways, racist stereotypes proliferate after overt racism has been abolished. According to Freud’s theory of jokes, a joke communicates an idea which would face resistance if

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<sup>521</sup> Celebration of diversity and the “rainbow nation” has the same racial foundation as ethnic violence. “One needs, after all, only to drive a few miles to refill the empty tank of nationalism with racist fuel.” For instance, while the protected, powerful consumers “rejoice in the variety of guests and pride themselves on their open minds and open doors”, those who cannot choose whom they will meet and for how long try to protect themselves from the strangers, who may compromise their freedom and power. Modern racism was hostile to difference; now, “the racists recognise difference and want difference.” Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and its Discontents*, 29-31.

<sup>522</sup> Neil Lazarus, “The Fetish of the West in Postcolonial Theory” in Crystal Bartolovich and Neil Lazarus, *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*, 51. Lazarus uses the examples of Kwame Nkrumah’s 1965 book *Neo-Colonialism: the Last Stage of Imperialism*, Walter Rodney’s 1972 study *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, and Chinweizu Ibekwe’s 1975 *The West and the Rest of Us: White Predators, Black Slavers, and the African Elite* to demonstrate the transition in vocabulary, and its ideological effect

expressed in another form. The form of the joke allows the idea to bypass this resistance.<sup>523</sup> Freud sees the joke as a way to communicate aggressive (or libidinal or anxious) content (including to and from the unconscious) in a socially-acceptable form. Cinema and television are replete with this technique, which Fanon observes in the comparably undeveloped media of his time: promoting discourses, teaching disciplines and advancing knowledge unconsciously through apparently apolitical entertainment.<sup>524</sup> For Fanon, this is how young children are made to identify with whiteness and hate blackness, even when they are not exposed to people of other races. In the media<sup>525</sup> they consume people, particularly children, are made to identify with the heroes, who tend to have European features (even when they are black) and to despise the villains, who have Negroid or Asian features. (The rise of, demand for and celebration of black heroes in the media, including some with black features like Viola Davis, would not have surprised Fanon had he seen it today: it also enforces racial stereotypes and racism, and individualises and understands. Parading as attempts to make blacks equal to whites, of portraying equality and non-racialism, this is really a case of making blacks different and therefore worse.) The media enforces racist stereotypes and racialism, makes race seem important, and makes individuals identify by race. Such racial identification can be seen even in the more literary movies and TV series.<sup>526</sup> Television and popular culture reify races: characters behave according to racial stereotypes, speaking and behaving in ways considered unique to their races, but exaggerating these racial characteristics and consolidating racial difference. Cultural differences are continually reified and made racial. To use some of Fanon's examples that remain prevalent today, Arabs are presented as unhygienic and violent, blacks as unintelligent, backward and sexually predatory.<sup>527</sup> The attack on overt racism can be found in some of the most racist media. For instance, Sacha Baron Cohen's films all create humour through racial stereotyping, and combine racial stereotyping with the attack on overt racism: for instance, the explicitly racist characters, who openly think blacks are stupid and Jews greedy, are usually presented as unintelligent. In this way, the critique of overt racism is used to strengthen racial

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<sup>523</sup> Richard Wollheim, *Freud* (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1980), 101.

<sup>524</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, xvi, 113-5, 134-6.

<sup>525</sup> Fanon emphasises comic books, but technology, television and cinema have drastically increased the consumption of such media. Jack Shaheen shows that Hollywood movies of the last century have strongly based their racist stereotypes on the comic books Fanon discusses. Jack Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (New York: Olive Branch Press, 2012).

<sup>526</sup> For instance in *Breaking Bad*, one of the more literary TV series: as Hank taken into hospital (Season 3, Episode 8) the doctors are informed first that the new patient is male and Caucasian, and secondarily of his age, injuries (four nearly fatal gunshot wounds), blood pressure, policeman job etc.

<sup>527</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 42-3.

stereotyping. This is also part of a covert racial mentality; overt racism has to be hated, along with its representatives like Hitler. The fact that popular jokes can be based on these stereotypes means that they are believed (unconsciously, as I will show later) by all people, to varying degrees. The fact that “races” correspond to appearance, not genes (even when they pretend to be based on genes), is evidence that racism is unconscious, that it is not based on concepts and not thought through by individuals, but based on manipulation of emotions and images. Grouping and judging people according to genes would have to be conscious; to do so requires the understanding of biological concepts. On the other hand, grouping and judging people according to physical appearance can be unconscious and ideological: it involves images and structures imposed on individuals (and provoking conscious and unconscious reactions).

Racist discourse permeates culture.<sup>528</sup> The ubiquitous racial discourse does not only enforce perceptions that races exist and exist in a hierarchy; it makes individuals identify themselves by race.<sup>529</sup> There is a massive increase in racial and ethnic identities after colonisation.<sup>530</sup> Individuals are interpellated as racial subjects. Négritude makes individuals identify by race through the assertion that one must be proud of one’s blackness. For “statistical purposes”, individuals have to identify themselves by race in schools, workplaces, government surveys, etc. In many ways it benefits people to identify themselves by race, e.g. to benefit from affirmative action, or to prove one’s position on the racial hierarchy. Nation-building and the project of decolonisation interpellate individuals as racial subjects: my race/ethnicity is now part of the nation. I must contribute to the nation on racial grounds; my race now has the vote and is part of the nation.

In a passage reminiscent of his contemporary Foucault, Fanon argues<sup>531</sup> that overt, “vulgar, primitive, over-simple racism” emphasises white identity: it explores, individualises and studies those representing power, whiteness and white people in this case. On the other hand, he argues that the new, covert racism studies, individualises (and in this way exercises power over) those at the bottom of the racial power relation: oppressed cultures. Power is exercised

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<sup>528</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>529</sup> Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 177-82. In the previous chapter I mentioned Michael Billig’s theory of banal nationalism, that nationalist identity is enforced from every level of society, throughout its structures, throughout the most ordinary parts of living. Based on Fanon, Lewis Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, 38-9 makes this argument about racism: that contemporary racism is “mundane”, that racism occurs throughout everyday, unnoticed, habitual activities.

<sup>530</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 122-37.

<sup>531</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 31-44.

over the celebrated cultures through such discourse, which says “I know them”, which aims to understand, reify (through trying to describe, define and essentialise changing and complex cultures) and define the oppressed cultures.<sup>532</sup> The oppressed race, culture and people tend to affirm racism (even in their attempts to deracialise society) by engaging in such orientalist discourse, thanking well-meaning Western racists for exploring their culture. These cultures both try to show how they differ from the West and imitate Western cultures.<sup>533</sup> Attempts to liberate the self from racism therefore often strengthen racism, especially when these attempts involve participation in orientalist discourse.<sup>534</sup>

In covertly racist regimes, racism is not supported by a central authority.<sup>535</sup> The state and ruling class claim to strongly oppose overt racism (and often do). Society still has a racist structure, but now racism is located within the psyches of individuals. Fanon shows that individuals believe in a racial hierarchy, and that racism has become unconscious, and ideological. In covert racism, there is a popular conscious recognition and assertion of people of colour as human and deserving of rights; however, there remains an unconscious recognition of the blackness as evil and savage.<sup>536</sup> Racism has become a “form of existing”: it has become so rigorous and systematic that “the daily affirmation of a superiority” is now “superfluous”.<sup>537</sup> Based on this, San Juan argues that the lack of need for a central authority to affirm racism shows how normalised racism has become in individuals’ psyches.<sup>538</sup>

Citing Etienne Balibar and Mogoboe Ramose, Dladla calls the new forms of racism (which he sees especially prevalent in post-1994 South Africa) “anti-racialism”, a “racism without

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<sup>532</sup> Ibid., 34-5.

<sup>533</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>534</sup> This is one of Fanon’s problems with Négritude and African socialism. It is also a problem with Jack Shaheen’s book *Reel Bad Arabs*: although he is usually aware of the new forms of racism, Shaheen occasionally identifies overt racism with racism itself. This can be seen by how he compares contemporary American treatment of Arabs to Nazi depictions of Jews (implying that Nazism is the epitome of racism rather than an example of one form of racism), and also his praise of movies that “humanise Arabs and Muslims”. The movies he praises, including *Syriana*, *Hideous Kinky*, and *Kingdom of Heaven* may portray Arabs as less violent and more human and complex (compared to the movies Shaheen criticises), yet they humanise Arabs as Arabs and in comparison to whites, not as people. For Shaheen that is enough, but I contend that it is not: to humanise Arabs as Arabs is still to assert that they are racially different, to support old and new stereotypes, and to compare Arabs to a white, Western ideal. To quote Sartre, it is a humanism that claims they are human and simultaneously sets them apart from humanness. The Arabs and Muslims humanised in these movies are made whiter. (*Syriana* is about an Arab prince who is represented as unique in his desire to implement American-style democracy: see Chapter 3 for more problems with this.) On a Fanonian analysis, the goal should not be to make an effort “to humanise Arabs and Muslims” so much as to challenge all processes that lead to the dehumanisation of anyone.

<sup>535</sup> George Fredrickson, *Racism*, 4.

<sup>536</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 154.

<sup>537</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 32, 37.

<sup>538</sup> Epifanio San Juan, “Fanon: An Intervention into Cultural Studies”, 150.

“races”, a racism that remains even though previous racial categories have dissolved.<sup>539</sup> The Fanonian “disguises” of covert racism include nationality, identity and culture.<sup>540</sup> Where overt racism claims that Africans have no culture, covert racism is focused around the “singular and specific recognition” of oppressed cultures.”<sup>541</sup> Like Fanon,<sup>542</sup> Martin Baker and Paul Gilroy,<sup>543</sup> for instance, argue that “race is now being defined almost exclusively through the ideas of culture and identity”. They see the new racism as reifying cultural differences, portraying them as natural and even biological. Similarly, Spencer and Wollman argue that postmodern concepts like diaspora and hybridity are used as disguises for new forms of racism, for example because they imply the existence of hereditary ethnic/racial/national essences, approaching a eugenicist view, often miss some actual hybridities, and tend to represent lighter-skinned hybrids as superior to their darker counterparts.<sup>544</sup>

### The Need for Racial Identity

We turn to race when we need identity, something that happens when working-class identities dissolve, or when alienated labour does not give a feeling that our identities are alienated and incomplete. Turning to race is a form of group psychology: with ethnicity/heritage/skin-colour (or even culture or language) as one of the defining features of the group. Globalisation makes leads to people seeking local identities.<sup>545</sup> Steve Biko criticised the “white left” for discussing class, saying that it was more important to end racial oppression than class oppression, and that trade unions were part of the “liberal establishment” which black nationalism sought to challenge.<sup>546</sup> Mandela similarly insisted that racial freedom had to come first. However, we have seen how identities are eroded (e.g. through globalisation and alienating labour) and replaced, particularly in late capitalism, by new identities including national, racial and consumer identities.

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<sup>539</sup> Ndumiso Dladla, “Contested Memory: Retrieving the Africanist (Liberatory) Conception of Non-Racialism” in *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* Vole 64, Issue 4, 2017.

<sup>540</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 35.

<sup>541</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-2.

<sup>543</sup> Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 99-119.

<sup>544</sup> *Ibid.*, 163-8.

<sup>545</sup> Tom Nairn and Paul James, *Global Matrix*; Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 58, 157-9, 172.

<sup>546</sup> Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 25.

Historically, class struggle has effectively challenged the restoration and consolidation of class power; in the neoliberal era, the destruction of class identity and subsequent softening of class struggle has correlated with the consolidation of class power.<sup>547</sup> Racial, national and ethnic identity took over from working-class identity, as we have seen. Working-class identity is continually being destroyed, and the subsequent void is filled with national, racial and ethnic identity, especially with decolonisation.<sup>548</sup> (The lack of identity is partly the result of meaningless and alienating work, and the destruction of working-class identity also results from attacks on and manipulation of working-class organisations and the strength of bourgeois identities like nationalism and racism.) At face value, colonial and apartheid regimes are about race rather than class, and opposition to them thus rallies on racial grounds, frequently misunderstanding how racism is an ideology born out of and supporting the creation and maintenance of classes. Our history of racism shows that race is fundamentally a justification for and cover of class in “classless” society, even if it has taken other roles too. Harvey sees the proliferation of religious groups and beliefs as a response to neoliberalism, whose effects make people need and seek institutions that may help fabricate social solidarity and collective action.<sup>549</sup> As workerism breaks down, as people experience unemployment, poverty, desperation, lack of agency, they turn to religious and racial groups and cults. “Everything from gangs and criminal cartels, narco-trafficking networks, mini-mafias and favela bosses, through community, grassroots and nongovernmental organizations, to secular cults and religious sects proliferate.”<sup>550</sup> The available groups are mostly those that express national and racial identity, including anti-colonial groups. This is one of the ways that neoliberalism has led to the racialisation and ethnicisation particularly of lower classes throughout the world.<sup>551</sup>

In our climate of class differentiation, there is also proliferating racial differentiation; in the recent past, racialism, racism and nationalism have increasingly been articulated in terms of ethnicity.<sup>552</sup> The concept of ethnicity only emerged in the twentieth century.<sup>553</sup> Ethnicity

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<sup>547</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 202.

<sup>548</sup> In 1969 George Silundika of Zapu interestingly noted how especially in the industrialised countries of southern Africa, colonial powers used a tactic of privileging white workers in order to create racial divisions among workers. He noted that this was preventing all the oppressed from cooperating in anti-imperial struggles. George Silundika, “Workers Solidarity and Racism” in Aquino de Bragança and Immanuel Wallerstein, *The African Liberation Reader*, vol 1, 83, 101.

<sup>549</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 171.

<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>552</sup> Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 65; George Fredrickson, *Racism*, 141-3.

<sup>553</sup> David McCrone, *Sociology of Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998), 22.

divides humanity into more, smaller groups, with shared characteristics such as culture, ancestry, language. Race is something that is imposed by others (especially when it is widely believed that races exist), usually in a homogenising way (e.g. to group all ethnic groups from Africa into one race); ethnicity is also imposed by others, but has a much stronger aspect of self-identification and agency, and is about individuals asserting their cultural and hereditary uniqueness.<sup>554</sup> (Cornell and Hartmann point out that the differences between ethnic groups are smaller than the differences between racial groups, that intermarriage among ethnic groups means that many individuals have some ability to choose ethnicities, and that we can assert our ethnicity by participating in cultural events.)<sup>555</sup> For instance, Keenan Malik argues that the concept of ethnicity emerges historically as overt racism falls;<sup>556</sup> ethnicity is thus linked to covert racism, but race is more overt. (According to Malik, overt racism was scientifically disproved and became politically unacceptable with the fall of Nazism, but the concept of ethnicity is a form of racism that gets around these problems.)

Colonial rulers set Africa up for the new forms of racism from the beginning, even if unintentionally: the overtly racist regimes put together African people of various ethnicities and separated those of one ethnicity (e.g. through the arbitrary drawing of boundaries between countries). “Europe did not bring to Africa a tropical version of the late-nineteenth-century European nation-state. Instead it created a multicultural and multiethnic state.”<sup>557</sup> Even though some opposition to colonial rule attempted to unite all colonised/oppressed people against the white colonisers, this union of rival ethnic groups was temporary, or marred by increased xenophobia, or on the inside by ethnic conflict, as various small groups competed for the role of national bourgeoisie/political ruling party (take for instance the formation of the Lumumba- and Mobutu-led governments in the DRC, where the temporary union of conflicting tribes was characterised by accelerating hostility to immigrants; or the ANC-IFP conflict in South Africa, which increased after the demise of the Black Consciousness Movement, a movement that tried to unite all non-white people). According to

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<sup>554</sup> Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann, *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World* (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge, 1998), 27-30.

<sup>555</sup> *Ibid.*, 42-3.

<sup>556</sup> Keenan Malik, *The Meaning of Race: Race, History and Culture in Western Society* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996). George Fredrickson, *Racism*, 142 makes this argument too.

<sup>557</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 287.



Mamdani, most African states failed at detribalisation, and this meant that democratisation and deracialisation could not happen successfully.<sup>558</sup>

### **The Desire<sup>559</sup> to Be White**

We just saw some of the ways that racism has changed and strengthened with the demise of overt racism. We have seen that it has become more ideological, embedded throughout society, and requiring little (if any) support from central authorities. One of Fanon's central arguments is that most attempts at deracialisation and black identity are really racism-affirming, unsuccessful attempts to imitate the "superior" race and culture.<sup>560</sup> We will now explore the desire to be white, a very strong desire which is linked to the breakdown of worker identity (and rise of consumer identity), and other forms of ideology. This will clarify some of the main functions of contemporary racism.

Trying to become capitalists in their own right, the national bourgeoisie ends up mostly taking on managerial roles. We explained the national bourgeoisie's behaviour as attempts to be like the capitalist class: consumption of luxuries, spending lots of money, militarisation, ruthlessness towards workers, underdevelopment of the country, cruel practices of primitive accumulation. We saw in the previous chapter that opposition to the national bourgeoisie's capital accumulation is often decried as racist or colonial, even when it is people of colour who protest.<sup>561</sup> This has partly to do with what I called the Eurocentric conception of modernisation. The nationalist leaders unreservedly model their ideal postcolonial society on affluent (imperial) Western society.

Largely due to his Hegelian influence,<sup>562</sup> Fanon argues that whenever there is a power relation and feeling of inferiority among those towards the bottom of a hierarchy, they experience an overwhelming need to replace or at least be like those at the top. In the

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<sup>558</sup> Ibid., 288.

<sup>559</sup> Fanon calls it a "wish", a "desire" and a "dream", so I will use this language too; but I should point out that, as I show in this chapter, and as all of the citations I use from Fanon show, this is not a desire. It is an overwhelming, all-consuming, inescapable need which controls lives completely and affects all people. This is seen most clearly in the literary examples of the second and third chapters of *Black Skin, White Masks*.

<sup>560</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 38.

<sup>561</sup> Patrick Bond, *Talk Left, Walk Right*, 214, shows some examples.

<sup>562</sup> Stefan Bird-Pollan, *Hegel, Freud and Fanon: The Dialectic of Emancipation* (London and New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 103, 151, 156-7. Bird-Pollan also observes Oedipal themes in the Fanonian model of decolonisation. In the previous chapter we saw this demand to replace the coloniser as dominator in the national bourgeoisie.

previous chapter, we saw that the national bourgeoisie attempts to emulate the imperial class. “The essential wish of the Congolese elite is to be Belgians.”<sup>563</sup> Explaining the desire of the colonised to emulate the coloniser, Fanon writes “He is in fact ready at a moment's notice to exchange the role of the quarry for that of the hunter. The native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor”.<sup>564</sup> The desire to be white overlaps with the desire of the colonised to be like the coloniser. The desire of people of colour to be white is emphasised in *Black Skin, White Masks; The Wretched of the Earth*, building on these arguments, applies these ideas to the desire of the colonised to be like the coloniser.

The desire of the national bourgeoisie to be like the colonial class is parallel to the need of people of colour to become whiter. These needs have the same structure; the former is a general political need, the latter also general but something we can study on an individual level. These are both desires to emulate those in positions of power, those perceived as better, those who have things we desire, those we want to resemble.

The look that the native turns on the settler's town is a look of lust, a look of envy; it expresses his dreams of possession – all manner of possession: to sit at the settler's table, to sleep in the settler's bed, with his wife if possible. The colonised man is an envious man. And this the settler knows very well; when their glances meet he ascertains bitterly, always on the defensive, “They want to take our place.” It is true, for there is no native who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in the settler's place.<sup>565</sup>

This is a key citation from *The Wretched of the Earth*, one of the many places in Fanon's writing where group psychology meets individual psychology, and where they explain each other. Let's see this meeting in corresponding structures of ideology and neurosis.

### The Desire to be White has a Neurotic Structure

For Fanon, if we can't seize positions of power from our dominators, we try to be like those who symbolise power<sup>566</sup> (which includes colonisers, white people, and imperialists, and can also be extended to men, wealthy people, etc.: there are many such relationships). His arguments can be applied to all power relationships, particularly to the ruling class-ruled relationship, which is often represented as white-black and coloniser-colonised in racist and

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<sup>563</sup> Patrice Lumumba, cited in Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 89.

<sup>564</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 53.

<sup>565</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>566</sup> This is an example of sublimation, of object-libido being transformed into narcissistic libido. See Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, 37-9.

colonial societies. The desires of black to be white, colonised to be coloniser, ruled to be ruler, continually intersect. Since they apply to all societies where blackness is perceived as inferior, they apply to the entire modern world. As we explore the desire to be white, we will see that this is a form of the desire to emulate those who happen to rule, and those who happen to ideologically be seen as superior.

The desire to be white is replete with contradictions. It is unconscious<sup>567</sup> and ideological (of course, conscious desires to be white also exist, corresponding to conscious experience of inferiority).<sup>568</sup> It is pathological and self-destructive. We can see a Freudian “compromise formation” of neurotic symptoms here. The desire to be white (which includes the recognition of inferiority and feelings of jealousy and hatred) is repressed into the unconscious. The repressed desire to be white is expressed in sublimated form in celebrations of the defeat of overt racism (e.g. in celebrations when black people are successful, or in the analysis of oppressed cultures).<sup>569</sup> It is also expressed in the desires to work hard and to consume: these are part of the desire to be white, but usually not consciously understood as such. The feelings of jealousy, aggression and competitiveness are repressed and must find new paths for release, for instance in competition among people of colour (which often takes the form of xenophobia). Conspicuous consumption is a way to prove I am better than my neighbour, that is, I am whiter than my neighbour. Freud argues that possibly the only way we can repress a desire for something is to identify with it.<sup>570</sup> In repression, object libido is transformed into narcissistic libido.<sup>571</sup> If I cannot have power, I will identify with the powerful; if I cannot have whiteness, I will try to be as I perceive whiteness as much as I can.

According to Fanon, all people of colour identify as white.<sup>572</sup> Hold on! Haven't we just been seeing that people are made to identify themselves as part of their race, on racial and ethnic grounds? For Fanon, both are true: people of colour identify both as white, and as non-white, part of a race and/or ethnicity. The desire to be white is more unconscious, and black identity is more conscious. Explaining this, Fanon argues “the Negro lives an ambiguity that is

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<sup>567</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 74; on 68, 144, 147 Fanon also describes this desire as part of the collective unconscious of Europe, the Americas, and the rest of the world (which shares the “European” collective unconscious, penetrated by “white civilisation”).

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>569</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, 49 Freud makes a parallel argument about religion: with both religion and racism, the ego judging itself as falling short of its ideal leads to a sense of worthlessness and longing; this leads in turn to striving, also to group psychology and demand for illusions.

<sup>570</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>572</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 148.

extraordinarily neurotic.”<sup>573</sup> Across the racial line, according to Fanon, there is a splitting of the personality, into white and black. All people identify their undesirable traits (“the lower emotions, the baser inclinations, the dark side of the soul”) as black, projecting them onto the people who are identified as black, and their desirable traits (such as a middle-class lifestyle) as white.<sup>574</sup> This means that people, regardless of race, exhibit an unconscious hatred of blackness and love of whiteness.<sup>575</sup> According to Fanon, blackness is identified with original sin in the collective unconscious.<sup>576</sup> Society perceives colour as a negative thing which the person of colour is born with and has to overcome and get rid of. The need to escape one’s colour results in a psychotic inferiority complex.<sup>577</sup> (Psychosis includes a disavowal of reality, which in this case includes the misrecognition of the self, in the belief that racism has been defeated, the identification of blacks with whiteness, and the need to consume.) In a society that “proclaims the superiority of one race”, individuals thus experience a neurotic inferiority complex that results in overcompensation.<sup>578</sup>

Fanon notes that it benefits us to be like those in power, and that we recognise this consciously and unconsciously. We have to speak the language of the ruling class, dress a particular way, adopt certain customs, calendar etc. just in order to live, to find work.<sup>579</sup> He also notes that it often benefits us to affirm our blackness. For instance, in the previous chapter we saw how affirmative action is a way that racial and other inequalities can appear to be reduced, while underlying class inequalities increase. To this we can now add that affirmative action motivates individuals to identify on racial (and ethnic and gender) bases (it brings tangible benefits); but historically, affirmative action has increased racial identification and racial hostility, at least in societies that had pre-existing racial hatred.<sup>580</sup>

A Fanonian analysis thus shows that through misrecognition of the self, we participate in our own domination with reduced need for domination from outside (e.g. from the state); we saw that this occurs simultaneously in black pride and the desire to be white. As Lewis Gordon puts it, “racism is a form of lying about oneself and others that is nurtured and encouraged by

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<sup>573</sup> Ibid. As Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 43 points out, for Fanon racism makes all people behave neurotically.

<sup>574</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 147.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid.; it is “normal” for black people to be anti-black.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>577</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>579</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>580</sup> Samuel Myers, “If Not Affirmative Action, Then What?”, 188.

the very institutions of racist society”.<sup>581</sup> Fanon’s view here, of the misrecognition of both the self and of liberation, is parallel to Althusser’s conception of ideology. For Althusser, ideology has the structure of “interpellating individuals as subjects in the name of a Unique and Absolute Subject”.<sup>582</sup> Ideology interpellates individuals “in a double mirror-connexion such that it *subjects* the subjects to the Subject”.<sup>583</sup> The Absolute Subject is an ideal on which individuals try to model themselves, more than an ego-ideal. In Althusser’s example, the Absolute Subject of Christian ideology is God or Jesus. If we read this together with Fanon’s theory, we conclude that the ideal white man/coloniser has such a role in the minds of colonised and colonising subjects; something they submit to, identify with and model themselves on. The individual is interpellated as a subject as s/he is subjected to the demands of society, including consumerism in this case. This occurs in the awakening of ethnic identity. Individuals are interpellated as both black and white, reminded of our blackness and whiteness and influenced to try to be whiter. For Althusser, ideology is about misrecognising the self (more than misrecognising reality).<sup>584</sup> In the case of racism, individuals identify according to peculiar racial roles, the result of a society which uses race in various, sometimes contradictory ways to sustain the social order.

In the words of the philosopher who stands behind all of Althusser’s work – Baruch Spinoza – men and women “fight for their slavery as if they were fighting for their liberation”.<sup>585</sup> Let’s see this in the desire to consume, which for Fanon is a major part of the desire for whiteness.

### The Desire to be White as Desire to Consume

Fanon argues that imperialism uses both colonisation and decolonisation to open new markets, and that it exploits racial identities to do so. During the Cold War, reluctant to invest in Africa because of the high risk, and realising that the Soviet regime would not be destroyed for some time, Western companies first tried to open new markets in the USSR. They advertised their products using the strategy of reminding USSR citizens of their

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<sup>581</sup> Lewis Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, 38.

<sup>582</sup> Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy*, 168.

<sup>583</sup> *Ibid.*, original emphasis.

<sup>584</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Ideology*, 141-2.

<sup>585</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

European identity, that they “belong to Europe.”<sup>586</sup> Subsequently, they used a similar technique in Africa, equating consumption with freedom.

Olaudah Equiano is reputed as a pioneer of the fight against slavery and (overt) racism. Equiano’s birthplace is contested by historians; in his autobiography he claims to be from a West African village, but Vincent Carretta for instance finds strong evidence that he was born in South Carolina.<sup>587</sup> Regardless of birthplace, Equiano experienced himself as simultaneously Englishman and African. “In every sense of the word, Equiano was the first *modern* African. He was proud of his culture and conscious of his roots, yet he was steeped in other people’s way of life and religion”.<sup>588</sup> This citation shows the contradiction of Equiano’s identity, and the Europeanness of his ideas. It is unremarkable that he equates freedom with consumption. Equiano proposes in his influential autobiography that ending slavery and (overt) racism would be a step towards generating an increased demand in Africa for European products, and that this will benefit both Africans and Europeans.<sup>589</sup>

Equiano embodies the contradictions discussed in this thesis, especially that of simultaneous black and white identity. What does it mean to want to be white? Equiano wanted to be a consumer, not a slave. For Fanon, this is quite arbitrary. It means that all individuals want to have qualities they perceive as desirable, which they think will make them better (than others). Individuals want qualities that are associated with whiteness, in a world where the good and desirable is seen as white, and the bad and evil as black. Morality and intelligence are associated with whiteness, as well as affluence, superiority, beauty.<sup>590</sup> “One is white as one is rich, as one is beautiful, as one is intelligent.”<sup>591</sup> It means to want to be as whiteness is portrayed and perceived: to be and appear rich, to work hard, and above all, to consume. Whiteness “is based on myths of progress, civilization, liberalism, education, enlightenment, refinement”; blackness is the opposite of these.<sup>592</sup> Here consumerism and racism come together. For Fanon, through their inferiority complex (which is manipulated in advertising), black people consume in order to appear white.

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<sup>586</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 105-6.

<sup>587</sup> Joy Hendrickson and Hoda Zaki, “Modern African Ideologies” in Michael Freeden, Lyman Tower Sargent and Marc Stears (editors), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 711-2.

<sup>588</sup> Cited in *Ibid.*, original emphasis.

<sup>589</sup> *Ibid.* suggests that Equiano identified as “African, Englishman, Igbo, Abolitionist, Christian, capitalist, and citizen of the Diaspora.”

<sup>590</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 149.

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>592</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

One of the ideas Fanon uses to explain this is “Adlerian overcompensation”.<sup>593</sup> Compensation is when individuals try to cover up weaknesses or frustrations in one area of life through the drive towards excellence in another area. Overcompensation here is characterised by the extreme need to more than make up for the perceived lack of whiteness. The desire to be white can never be truly fulfilled; a black person can never become white but always become whiter. It is impossible to be white because of the “epidermalisation” of racial inferiority:<sup>594</sup> individuals continually overdo attempts to whiten themselves, but they cannot escape from their racial identities. Let us explore the connections between the desire to be white and consumerism. Conspicuous consumption is one of the ways this insatiable desire can be immediately, though incompletely, gratified. In a society of ever-heightening consumer dreams that most people have no hope of fulfilling, one’s whiteness and consumerism can always be increased, but never satiated: “the finishing line moves forward together with the runner”.<sup>595</sup>

Black people fetishize things that were previously forbidden to them.<sup>596</sup> This includes the right to vote (a false need, which we will explore in the following chapter, imposed on individuals and part of their domination). It was common for black South Africans to say and feel that their dignity had been restored with the right to vote after apartheid.<sup>597</sup> The right to vote is thus associated with humanness, and therefore whiteness. Other fetishized things include bourgeois rights (equality, liberty, the right to hold public office, to have previously-denied jobs, to live in particular areas) and also to consume and to look rich. Technology, fashion, and symbols of status, power and aggression are particularly used to assert whiteness. Most of this can be achieved, the consumers are told, through consumption – even dignity.<sup>598</sup>

The Lordonian splitting of the personality into worker and consumer takes the form here of the Fanonian splitting of the personality into black and white. One works to escape one’s blackness, and consumes to prove one’s whiteness. Advertising, propaganda, ideology, all make use of and strengthen the desire to be white. Consumption has the role of neurotically satisfying the desire to be white and superior. Thus it is analogous to religion, on a Freudian

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<sup>593</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>594</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>595</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and Its Discontents*, 40.

<sup>596</sup> Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 42.

<sup>597</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 353.

<sup>598</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and Its Discontents*, 40.

account: both religion and consumption make us feel that our desires are fulfilled, even when they do not truly fulfil them.<sup>599</sup>

Partly because they led to a need for women to work in “male” industries, the World Wars led to the acceptance of women doing many traditionally male things, including work outside the home, playing sports and smoking.<sup>600</sup> Tobacco companies used the feminist movement to sell cigarettes, marketing them as symbols of female independence; in 1928 the president of the American Tobacco Company called the marketing of cigarettes to women “opening a gold mine right in our front yard.”<sup>601</sup> After they hijacked the feminist movement in the developed world, cigarette companies turned to the underdeveloped world. In addition to being symbols of female liberation, “torches of freedom” became symbols of black liberation. For instance, adverts would show people of various races intermingling, all wearing expensive European clothing and having European features, smoking cigarettes together. White men would be handing cigarettes to black women. Non-smoking women in the background would be wearing traditional African clothing, be overweight, and look oppressed, e.g. engaged in menial labour.<sup>602</sup> This is an example of black liberation being represented as black people consuming, and becoming white while still clearly black, whiter than their companions. The examples used by Amos and Haglund show liberated women presented as more masculine and liberated black people as more white: when cigarettes are involved, at least, female and black liberation are equated with masculinising and whitening.

In the second chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon analyses *I Am a Martinican Woman* by Lucette Ceranus.<sup>603</sup> In this 1948 autobiography, Ceranus describes her attempt to escape from her blackness by marrying a white man. Fanon shows that the qualities of whiteness that Ceranus desires are qualities of money. This is also true of Jean Veneuse, the semi-autobiographical character of the René Maran novel<sup>604</sup> that Fanon analyses in the following

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<sup>599</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*.

<sup>600</sup> This was the case in the USA and Western Europe with both World Wars, partly because newer forms of capitalism demanded new consumer markets (which they found in women) and needed more people (women) to work for wages. The use of men as soldiers strengthened the need for women to work in traditionally male industries, and led to campaigns to make this socially acceptable. The prevailing ideology adapted with the economy. With the Second World War, however, Nazism maintained that women should not work in factories; this weakened the Nazi war effort because men who could have been soldiers had to work, and many women were prevented from working or becoming soldiers.

<sup>601</sup> Amanda Amos & Margaretha Haglund, “From Social Taboo to ‘Torch of Freedom’: the Marketing of Cigarettes to Women”.

<sup>602</sup> Ibid.

<sup>603</sup> This novel, *Je suis Martiniquaise*, was published under the pseudonym Mayotte Capécia.

<sup>604</sup> This novel is the 1947 *Un Homme pareil aux autres*.



chapter. The things they crave are inherently bourgeois, not inherently white: the mansions of Didier, acceptance into “high society”, identification and equality with white people (which is symbolised by the desire for a white spouse),<sup>605</sup> admiration and acceptance from others, to be seen as generous, hard-working, wealthy, fashionable consumers. These qualities are associated with whiteness because we live in a racist society where they generally correspond to whiteness. Ceranus also associates hard work with whiteness and laziness with blackness. She feels whiter when she charges high prices to her customers, when she works “better” than other laundresses, and when customers are “proud to have their laundry done by Mayotte”. This is why she works very hard. Fanon sees this labour as the primary step she makes in her endeavour to whiten herself.<sup>606</sup> Ceranus makes the point herself, Fanon writes: “One is white beyond a certain financial level.”<sup>607</sup> Fanon also emphasises that Veneuse (as well as Maran) desires to be white not because he wants to be white, but because he desires to climb the hierarchy of colours that he observes: he wants to be white because he wants to feel superior to others, and he recognises whiteness as superior.

These are some of the ways that false needs are created among all people, especially those of darker pigmentation: they have to consume conspicuously, and consume luxuries, to prove their whiteness. This is how racism and consumerism come together after the end of overt racism. Let us briefly consider some of the other effects of new forms of racism.

### Other Effects

I will highlight a few more of the many effects the desire to be white has on individuals. The first and arguably main effect we have seen is to instil false needs in individuals, including to make individuals consume and identify as consumers. The desire to be white is fulfilled partially and in an alienated way when we consume, particularly when we consume conspicuously, when our whiteness is recognised by others. To consume is temporary wish-fulfilment: it fulfils the wish to be white, but only for a moment, an illusory gratification where our desires to be better cause us to misrecognise ourselves. Individuals strive towards an unreachable goal, to unblacken themselves – yet no amount of consumption will completely erase the blackness.

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<sup>605</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 51-2.

<sup>606</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>607</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

Racism diverts, uses (e.g. through sublimation) and subdues social unrest, especially through consumption. Fanon sees the national bourgeoisie as enslaved by its desire for the luxuries of the mother country.<sup>608</sup> We saw how he applies this to individual desire too. Now that capitalism has made luxuries widely available, they can be used to mollify the people, symbolising access to previously-forbidden goods, enabling the people to identify with the ruling class (we use the same products, we feel like the ruling class members when we use luxuries), distracted by technology, and satisfied with consumption rather than revolution.<sup>609</sup> Individuals are made to participate in their own domination through the constant gratification of late capitalism. As Harvey puts it, “a democracy of consumption” is used to forestall social unrest.<sup>610</sup> The desire to end one’s domination is sublimated into the desire to prove one’s whiteness. Harvey also describes neoliberalism as creating and using “narcissistic consumerism”.<sup>611</sup> Decolonisation involves an “opening” of the country, which brings in (often racist) foreign culture, media, and influence. Such “opening” is related to globalisation and capital accumulation, which in turn enforce racial identity: Stuart Hall argues that individuals seek local (including ethnic, racial, and religious) identity in response to globalisation.<sup>612</sup> Anti-racist racism and obsession with race tends to lead to a misrecognition of class and other forms of oppression. We have seen examples of how racism was born from class ideology: even though it now functions in other ways too, this remains one of its primary functions.

Individuals are similarly made to depend on firms, banks, and international capitalism as a whole through debt culture. Neoliberalism and the rise of credit have contributed to major developments in consumerism and debt culture, normalising debt and making individuals rely more on employers and employment.<sup>613</sup> This effect is compounded by the proliferation of national debt (frequently to by luxuries and fund wars) and financial institutions, job insecurities and consumer culture.<sup>614</sup> In the previous chapter we saw some of the effects of large debt of the country and the normalisation of national debt (especially through the government’s expenditure on luxuries at the expense of the people). This is emulated on the

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<sup>608</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 181. On page 72 of this thesis we saw the massive personal expenditure of luxuries by nationalist leaders, and how they present this as “modernisation”. This is both cause and result of a culture of consumption, luxury, and whiteness.

<sup>609</sup> *Ibid.*, 140. See also Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, 7-8 for examples of such identification of ruled with ruling class.

<sup>610</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 125.

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>612</sup> Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 170.

<sup>613</sup> Frédéric Lordon, *Willing Slaves of Capital*, 23.

<sup>614</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 62, 147, 170-2.

individual level: debt becomes part of national culture. Large debts are taken by countries, celebrated by the heroes of national liberation, and normalised in these ways. Debt, we have seen, can make individuals and countries temporarily appear more successful (and thus in this case superior and whiter) than they really are. By owing more and enslaving myself more, I can appear whiter.

“When the black man comes into contact with the white world he goes through an experience of sensitization. His ego collapses. His self-esteem evaporates. He ceases to be a self-motivated person. The entire purpose of his behaviour is to emulate the white man, to become like him, and thus hope to be accepted as a man.”<sup>615</sup> We saw how individuals spend large amounts of money in order to be thus accepted; this is more possible when debt is possible. Hence debt culture and therefore dependence on employment<sup>616</sup> support and are supported by the desire to be white. With decolonisation, Africans are made more into proletariats/consumers, and thus subjected increasingly to the division of labour and leisure. Racism in early capitalism is more focused on making people of colour work as slaves; racism in late capitalism is more focused on making people of colour purchase goods. But the two are closely related. For instance, through asserting racial difference the new forms of racism are still used to make war, slavery, child labour and poverty in Africa acceptable and natural, part of Africa rather than part of its relations with the rest of the world. Additionally, all consumers are made part of and dependent on the most violent forms of capital accumulation, complicit without realising it. For instance technological devices like cars, televisions, computers and phones almost always contain parts that were mined and created with slave labour in the most wretched parts of the world. This is a way that the need to consume makes everyone complicit with slavery and war.

Racism is used to confuse people about themselves and their needs, and to separate them from each other even while it instils false senses of togetherness (including multiracialism). Because they are made to compete with each other (partly through racist ideology) people of colour in particular are aggressive and competitive towards each other, each wanting to assert his superiority.<sup>617</sup> The desire to be white causes competition among people of colour. This

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<sup>615</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, xiii.

<sup>616</sup> Frédéric Lordon, *Willing Slaves of Capital*, 22-3.

<sup>617</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 164.

Zygmunt Bauman's arguments help to explain why the poor tend to be more competitive with each other and, relatedly, are more likely to have explicitly racist views (across the racial spectrum, including both the hatred of blackness and the hatred of particular ethnicities and nationalities: it is usually the “poor whites” who are

competition takes the form of people trying to prove they are whiter/superior to others. Such competition can escalate into war, and such war is normalised through racism and its material conditions, which depict people of colour as inherently aggressive, and make them aggressive (we will see this in the Rwandan example in the following chapter).

We saw that citizens racially and nationalistically identify with the national bourgeoisie, and we will see shortly that the national bourgeoisie is corrupted from the start; thus this racial identification identifies Africans as inherently corrupt. Racism is used to make blackness (appear) backward, undemocratic and corrupt, and thus to justify imperial interference in Africa. In the next chapter we will see some examples of how the West deliberately causes these problems in Africa, and subsequently defines them as problems caused by Africans.

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most overtly racist and poor blacks who tend to express xenophobic sentiments). “The less people control and can control their lives and their life-founding identities, the more they will perceive others as slimy, and the more frantically they will try to disentangle, detach themselves from the strangers they experience as an enveloping, suffocating, sucking-in, formless subjects.” The wealthy tourist/patron/client/consumer experiences the Stranger as a source of potential pleasure, someone she can learn from. But this is because she has the power to set the rules and decide when the encounter begins and ends, and can then return to the security of “burglar-proof homes in leafy suburbs, fortified offices in the heavily policed business centres, and cars bespattered with security gadgets.” Poorer people feel compromised by the Stranger because they do not have this power over the Stranger. “The sliminess of strangers, let us repeat, is the reflection of their own powerlessness.” While the protected consumers rave about diversity and the rainbow nation, the vulnerable try to protect themselves in the rainbow nation. “The benign patriotism of the first rebounds as the racism of the second.” Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and Its Discontents*, 28-9.

## **Chapter 3: Reification in the Politics of National Liberation**

In this chapter, we will look at examples of reification in the politics of national liberation, and see that these are explained by and give insight into Fanon's work. This will show problems in the conceptions of politics (particularly democracy and socialism) common to African national liberation movements of decolonisation. Reification, "the structural process whereby the commodity form permeates life in capitalist society",<sup>618</sup> is a problem found throughout the worldviews and ideologies that surround national liberation, and we saw this theme in our analyses of the national bourgeoisie and racism, albeit without always calling it reification. Nevertheless, in Chapter 1 we saw that the national bourgeoisie is presented as a thing independent of other things, and we corrected this view by seeing the substantial extent to which the national bourgeoisie is strongly influenced, even created and controlled, by foreign powers, particularly the USA and the European imperial powers. In Chapter 2, we saw that the concept of race is reifying: that race is a human construct that appears more natural and real than it is (and even if there is a meaningful way to divide humanity into races, for various reasons, conceptions of races do not correspond to actual races). Reification is similarly found at work in the concept of ethnicity, in the two kinds of fetishism of commodities (the Marxist conception as well as the cathexis of commodities), and in the ideology that whiteness is superior and a universal aspiration.

I will begin this chapter with summaries of important theories of reification, focusing on the work of György Lukács and his reading of *Capital* in *History and Class Consciousness*. I will then discuss some appearances of reification in the politics of the national liberation movements, showing how these are observed and/or anticipated by Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Fanon's observations are very insightful: in this case, we will see that he observed the seeds of trends that fully came to fruition two decades after his death.<sup>619</sup> First, I will criticise the national liberation movements' conception of democracy, which separates the political from the economic, aspiring to political liberation and forgetting economic freedom. This is evident in Nkrumah's recommendation to the African people: "Seek ye first the

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<sup>618</sup> György Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, translated by Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 83-4.

<sup>619</sup> Woddis agrees with me about Fanon's insightfulness: Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 36-8.

political kingdom, and all else shall be added unto you.”<sup>620</sup> The problem with this idea can be seen by how both colonisation and decolonisation lead to wealth flowing out of the country, even though there is apparent political liberation in the latter case; *pace* Nkrumah, we will see historical examples of the political kingdom being gained with little or nothing in addition. Next, I will discuss the obsession with a specific form of corruption: state capture, which is presented as the only form of corruption; I will argue that the reduction of corruption to state capture makes the attack on corruption racist and anti-Africa. The ideology of *One man, one vote!* and the attack on state capture both make citizens feel that they are part of the political process when they are actually distanced from it (interestingly, these ideologies correspond to World Bank influence in Africa). After this, I will look at the problems with modelling African liberation on “successful” social democracies, showing that African countries try to mimic the social democracies but cannot: one kind of country benefits from imperialism; the other is exploited by it. This imitation suggests that there is one path countries can take, that already achieved by the West; this ideology contributes to the view of the West as better than Africa, rather than exploiter of Africa. Finally, I will look at loose uses of “socialism” and “Marxism” in rhetoric of and about national liberation, showing examples of how these terms are used with various, imprecise definitions (just as will have seen with democracy and corruption, as well as bourgeoisie and racism in the previous chapters). For instance, their conception of socialism is incomplete: usually cultural, pretending to be economic and thus implicitly, but also usually explicitly, denying the importance of the economic. This theme of imprecise definitions and policies, evident throughout this chapter, is characteristic of the national liberation parties, according to Fanon.<sup>621</sup> The conceptions we will criticise see democracy, the vote, politicians, countries, and citizens as acting on their own, independent from the rest of the world. All of these conceptions are part of a trend of commodifying everything, yet simultaneously trying to prevent the commodification of certain sacred things: the vote, the integrity of leaders, countries and their politics, African history and culture, human behaviour and responses to the external world. They are also all examples of taking the part for the whole.

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<sup>620</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 122.

<sup>621</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 59.

## Alienation and Fragmentation

Marx's powerful arguments about commodification in the first volume of *Capital* have been read and built upon to show how the commodity influences the way we conceptualise politics in capitalist society. I will briefly discuss three of these readings, by Lukács, Adorno and Althusser, before applying their conclusions to Fanon and national liberation.

For Lukács,<sup>622</sup> the problem with bourgeois consciousness is that it does not conceive of the social formation as a totality: rather, it analyses the various social operations, subjects and institutions as independent of each other, and as independent of humans.<sup>623</sup> He argues that this fragmentation of both society and our perception of it, results from the prevalence of the commodity in society.<sup>624</sup> For Lukács, ideological discourse is true to the way the world is, but only in a limited way because it misrecognises the connections among various parts of the totality of the world.<sup>625</sup> The dominance of the commodity form in economics, he argues, leads to the dominance of rational thinking in society (including law and politics): a form of thinking that is inherently hostile to totality.<sup>626</sup>

Adorno expands of Marx's arguments in *Capital* and Lukács' interpretations of them. He argues that late capitalist society ("exchange society") is organised around the production of exchange values; the production of exchange values is presented as an end in itself (although it is a means for creating and capturing surplus value).<sup>627</sup> For Adorno, the complete dominance of exchange value over use value leads to capitalist society being replete with false equivalencies and equalities. For example, all people are equal as citizens, voters, legal subjects etc., but really these equalities ideologically hide deeper inequalities. A common false equivalence is freedom of capital represented as freedom of people, when the two freedoms are often really opposites. False equalities make up the totalitarian system of ideology which, perfected in advanced capitalism, rules out all contradictions and conflicts. (Relatedly, as Harvey notes,<sup>628</sup> capitalist markets are represented as based on equal and fair exchange, but this really masks coercion, inequalities and lack of options. For instance, a worker may agree to exchange a quantity of labour for a wage, but he may have no other way

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<sup>622</sup> György Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*.

<sup>623</sup> *Ibid.*, 95-7.

<sup>624</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>625</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>626</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>627</sup> Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, translated by EB Ashton (London: Routledge, 1973), 189-92.

<sup>628</sup> David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, 31-2.

to make a living, he may think there is equal exchange when there is really not, and the boss may have more ability to make extra demands or violate the contract than the worker.)

A related argument, from Althusser<sup>629</sup> (influenced by similar arguments from both Hegel and Nietzsche),<sup>630</sup> is that ideology is the result of an increasingly complex society, which continually becomes more complex and difficult for the human mind to comprehend as a totality. We therefore need to simplify our representations of society in order to survive in it, and one of the ways we do this is to try to comprehend the whole in the form of isolated segments. For Althusser, this means that ideology will always exist in a complex society: humans need simplified “maps” in order to exist in such complexity. However, for many reasons and in various ways, capitalist society is experienced as more complex than it potentially could be experienced. Ideology is something that helps guide us in a complex society, but it also maintains and obscures domination and exploitation. For instance, the deepening division of labour means that knowledge workers must have very specialised knowledge, which can lead to telescopic thinking, preventing understanding of how the various segments work together; surplus alienating labour means that most individuals have little opportunity to try to understand society; many people cannot access education (and education is also an ideological tool to obscure domination).

## **Democracy**

From the outset, nationalism has been linked and often seen as equivalent to democracy; both nationalism and democracy aimed to give sovereignty to the people.<sup>631</sup> As attempts at bourgeois-democratic-national revolution, decolonisation is usually represented as movement towards democracy, towards a “sovereign people”. Fanon critiques the nationalism and democracy of national liberation.<sup>632</sup> He sees both as incomplete: nationalism without national sovereignty, democracy without rule by the people. For Fanon, the political demands of the nationalist parties are usually unclear, based on illusions and dreams, appearing more subversive than they really are.<sup>633</sup> Suffrage is one of the main demands.<sup>634</sup> Fanon experienced

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<sup>629</sup> Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, 235.

<sup>630</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Ideology*, 140, 151, 163, 203.

<sup>631</sup> Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 32.

<sup>632</sup> Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 27.

<sup>633</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 68-9. On 59, Fanon describes the politics of national liberation as characteristically vague. He accuses them of “proclaiming abstract principles” with no definite demands. This is



how the American conception of democracy entered as the French government withdrew from its colonies in the early 1960s. He criticised the nationalist parties' self-interest, conception of politics and mimicry of bourgeois values:

The entire action of these nationalist political parties during the colonial period is action of the electoral type: a string of philosophico-political dissertations on the themes of the rights of peoples to self-determination, the rights of man to freedom from hunger and human dignity, and the unceasing affirmation of the principle: "One man, one vote."<sup>635</sup>

This concept of democracy is a product of the Enlightenment, and it came to African liberation movements from Europe and the USA. Often, this is very blatant: Fanon observes that many anti-colonial movements are part of and/or identify with "branches of political parties which stem from the [colonising] mother country".<sup>636</sup> The American concept of democracy becomes strong as part of the world of advertising, propaganda, and ideology. It is replete with images and slogans that stand for concepts, yet lacks in concepts.<sup>637</sup> These include *One man, one vote!*, representative democracy, the two-party system, the pursuit of corruption, a constitution (drawn up by leaders deemed to represent the people), the separation of powers (especially into legislative, judiciary and executive), a parliamentary system of government, and protest demonstrations. Transparency,<sup>638</sup> accountability of politicians, limited terms for politicians and formal equal access to the law are also emphasised, and representable as or by images. Other such features often include a "vigorous press, a market economy, full churches, generous charities",<sup>639</sup> and proliferating NGOs and grassroots organisations which are depicted as taking over some of the traditional functions of government and representing oppositional politics and social transformation<sup>640</sup>. This conception separates economics and politics, and furthermore separates political freedoms from each other. This results in freedoms being achieved without freedom being achieved;

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partly a propaganda tactic to obscure the differences between the needs of the people and demands of capital; it certainly results in confusion about what they really want.

<sup>634</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>635</sup> Ibid. Fanon means both that the nationalist parties portray democratic elections as more important than they really are, and that they focus on getting themselves elected (resources that could actually help the people go towards securing the parties' electoral successes.)

<sup>636</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>637</sup> On a psychoanalytic analysis, this shows that this conception of democracy aims to appeal to the unconscious rather than the conscious.

<sup>638</sup> Transparency prevents state capture, but not corruption. It does not matter if there is transparency if the people do not understand what's happening: transparency is an illusion of the people understanding a politics they do not really understand.

<sup>639</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 333.

<sup>640</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 78.

the apparent freedoms are masks for new forms of unfreedom. Let us briefly observe the history of how democracy and dictatorship come together in African, and then criticise the American concept of democracy and its effects.

### Dictatorships and democracies

We saw that Fanon observed “the unceasing affirmation of the principle ‘One man, one vote’” in nationalist parties during the 1950s and 1960s. However it really strengthened from the 1980s, long after Fanon’s death. A critic may point out the strong lack of formal democracy in Africa in the decades after decolonisation. Many of the nationalist leaders unashamedly seized dictatorial power, and Africa was associated with “Big Men” dictators.<sup>641</sup> Many postcolonial African governments banned oppositional parties, and many officially multi-party states had extra-legal barriers to prevent true multi-party politics, as well as brazenly corrupt and rigged elections. The first two generations of African leaders generally remained in office till their deaths; by 1990, of 150 African heads of state, none had been voted out of office and only six had voluntarily relinquished power (including Senghor and Nyerere, both after more than two decades).<sup>642</sup>

Amidst the rise of dictatorship, we can observe a steady increase in democratic rhetoric throughout this period, and a trend of implementing features of the American conception of democracy. Most of those states now recognised as dictatorships, such as Kenya under Daniel arap Moi’s leadership, instigated and retained universal suffrage and other formal features of democracy while simultaneously implementing undemocratic policies.<sup>643</sup> The demand for democracy is part of the demand for national sovereignty, and decolonised countries achieved other apparent and real forms of national sovereignty, which were used to mollify the people and sometimes even to make some aspects of democracy seem less urgent. Citizens were distracted by such achievements, by old and new problems (such as ethnic rivalries), and hypnotised by the prestige of their saviour nationalist leaders. Most of these leaders, particularly in the early stages of national liberation, were accepted as anti-colonial heroes representing the interests of the nation, as equal to the nation and state.<sup>644</sup> Dictatorships were

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<sup>641</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 314.

<sup>642</sup> *Ibid.*, 306-8

<sup>643</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

also justified as means to achieving democracy.<sup>645</sup> For instance “the Great Plunderer”, USA-backed dictator Joseph Mobutu, claimed that his coup and dictatorship aimed to implement democracy and investment and stop corruption and inflation.<sup>646</sup>

At the time of decolonisation, most African leaders protested loudly against formal democracy; in fact, most claimed that multi-party politics would weaken national liberation.<sup>647</sup> Fanon notes that the Big Men claimed that dictatorship would help their countries to quickly achieve their nationalist goals (including democracy), that this would avoid bureaucratic problems, “that in underdeveloped countries a small dose of dictatorship is needed”, and that this was not really dictatorship because the ruling parties “embody the national will”.<sup>648</sup> Houphouët-Boigny represented the views of his first generation of nationalist leaders when he claimed “Democracy is a system of government for virtuous people. In young countries such as our own, we need a chief who is all-powerful for a specified period of time.”<sup>649</sup> The role of the Big Men dictators, and their relation to democracy, is interesting and helps us to understand the national liberation conception of democracy. Unfortunately there is not enough space to explore it here, but I will end this parenthesis by pointing out that the people have an *ambivalent* relationship with the liberation leader and that this helps to explain the peculiar combinations of dictatorship and democracy and their representations. Representative democracy is part of the American style which, like the ambivalence towards Big Men liberators, assumes that certain individuals have inherent leadership qualities and should have a certain degree of freedom and power to rule without democratic interference. Freud’s theories in *Totem and Taboo* and *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* are vital starting points to such an analysis of nationalist leaders, and the curious relationship between dictatorship and democracy.<sup>650</sup>

So no, dictatorships were not always popularly accepted, and there was generally movement towards American-style democracy, even when the situation might have appeared otherwise. The demand for democracy was evident in many of the early anti-colonial movements: for

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<sup>645</sup> Ibid., 312.

<sup>646</sup> Ibid., 240-2.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid., 306-31, 138 Frederick Chiluba of the Movement for Multi-party Democracy was a nationalist leader who wanted democracy at the time of Zambian independence in 1964; but he only managed to succeed Kenneth Kaunda (who opposed democracy) in 1991.

<sup>648</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 118.

<sup>649</sup> Quoted in Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 140.

<sup>650</sup> Nigel Gibson, *Fanonian Practices in South Africa*, 135 argues that for Fanon (demonstrating his Marxist influence), the people ruling themselves (true democracy) can help lead to the overcoming of alienating working conditions, and that non-alienating labour will help effect the people ruling themselves.

instance, Nkrumah demanded democracy (but soon after independence began making many changes to the constitution that departed from both complete and American-style democracy).<sup>651</sup> There were frequent political upheavals throughout Africa, each bringing some aspects of democracy and removing others. (For instance, Nigeria was seen as a beacon of democracy with independence in 1960, but six years later the “young majors” effected a coup, assassinated the leaders and instituted military rule; they instituted many dictatorial changes, many of which had democratic motives, such as the death penalty for embezzlement, bribery and corruption, which they saw as the main cause of Nigeria’s economic, political and social problems.)<sup>652</sup> Furthermore, Fanon argues that these parties are usually instruments largely erected by the bourgeoisies to “hold the people down”, and that this explains why most of the parties are not clearly democracies or dictatorship, but a peculiar evolving combination.<sup>653</sup> The dominant conception of democracy after decolonisation was the American representative one, where “democratic participation of the people is replaced by conceptions of guided democracy.”<sup>654</sup> When dictatorships did arise, they were usually erected by bourgeoisies (and aspiring bourgeoisies) and their supporters, “jump[ing] the parliamentary phase” as Fanon puts it,<sup>655</sup> and habitually erected by the USA and the USSR as means to gain strategic advantages during the Cold War.<sup>656</sup> Historically, while the USA claims to want to establish democracy throughout the world, it regularly overthrows democratically-elected governments: “it is only,” Harvey argues, “democratically elected governments of a certain sort that will be tolerated.”<sup>657</sup> Many African leaders realised they could benefit from becoming dictators (by getting some control of the country’s wealth). But the point is that Africa had dictatorships when imperial interests benefitted from

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<sup>651</sup> Ibid.

<sup>652</sup> Ibid., 162-3.

<sup>653</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 171-2.

<sup>654</sup> Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 172.

<sup>655</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 171-2.

<sup>656</sup> Not only the Cold War, and not only the USA and USSR, although they were the main powers. But various other imperial governments knowingly set up genocidal dictatorships in Africa decades after decolonisation. President Mitterand and General De Gaulle, for instance, supported Mitterand’s buddy Juvenal Habyarimana’s totalitarian regime and ethnic cleansing during the 1970s and beyond (and the French continued to support Hutu extremists in the 80s and 90s, right up till the end of the 1994 genocide, largely out of bitterness about the defeat by the British in Fashoda in 1898); with French staff, training, weapons and funds, Habyarimana’s army more than tripled in size in a year, leading to the fastest mass killing in recorded history (800 000 of the 1 100 000 Tutsi population were killed in 100 days) and the biggest genocide since the Holocaust (with continued direct support from France, Belgium, Switzerland, South Africa, Egypt and others). Most of the US\$100 million spent on armaments came from structural adjustment loans (part of World Bank “anti-poverty projects”), which did not prevent Rwanda from becoming the poorest country on earth. Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 388-9, 394-5, 413, 417. Similarly, the IMF calls its poverty-inducing structural adjustment programmes “poverty reduction” programmes: Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 204-5.

<sup>657</sup> David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, 9.

dictatorships, and “democracies” when this helped imperial interests: mainly as the Cold War drew to a close and as dictators who had supported foreign interests became less amenable to foreign influence. The forms decolonisation took, Fanon notes, were the result of the USA and USSR trying to use Africa during the Cold War.<sup>658</sup>

The demand for American-style democracy was like bamboo, growing mostly unseen roots for many years before suddenly blooming aboveground, only cultivated by the rise of dictatorships. Even in the twenty first century, the trend towards “democracy” suffers many hiccups. Under neoliberal policies, for instance, democracy (particularly in poor countries) is often represented as harmful to individual rights and to the constitution.<sup>659</sup> This makes obvious how only very specific aspects of democracy that are included in and have come to mean democracy. The call for democracy suddenly increased in Africa in the 1980s, the time of Gorbachev’s presidency (i.e. essentially the end of the Cold War; under Gorbachev’s presidency the USSR quickly reduced its influence in Africa, meaning that many countries were left with reduced support from both the USSR and USA)<sup>660</sup> and the time of the sudden increase of World Bank and IMF influence in Africa.<sup>661</sup> During the 1960s and 1970s, Western development economists recommended that African states be the main drivers of economic development; from the 1980s they said the states were preventing development and that markets should be the main drivers of development.<sup>662</sup> Western governments increased their demand for political reform in particular in Africa from the 1980s, making aid dependent on political reform.<sup>663</sup> In the 1980s the World Bank declared that economic reform could not help Africa: what was needed was political reform, by which it meant better governance and attacking corruption “from the highest to the lowest levels”.<sup>664</sup> Britain declared it would provide more aid to those countries “tending towards pluralism, public

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<sup>658</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 80-1. We will shortly see that imperialism still uses dictatorship in Africa, perhaps less since the end of the Cold War, and now largely to make Africa backward, corrupt and apparently in need of assistance from outside (from the powers that cause most of these problems).

<sup>659</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 66, 76, 82, 176.

<sup>660</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 312.

<sup>661</sup> *Ibid.*, 299: “Structural adjustment” began with Senegal in 1979; in the following decade, the World Bank and IMF made 243 loan agreements with 36 African governments in “structural adjustment” programs and “stabilisation agreements”.

Nigel Gibson, “Fanon and the Pitfalls of Cultural Studies” in Anthony Alessandrini, *Frantz Fanon*, 134 agrees with me that meeting-points of Fanon and Marx are especially important today, to challenge “the devastating economic and social policies of the World Bank and IMF.”

<sup>662</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>663</sup> *Ibid.*, 393.

<sup>664</sup> *Ibid.*, 304. The Bank said these objectives would be achieved through setting good political examples, strengthening accountability, encouraging public debate, and nurturing a free press.

accountability, respect for the law, human rights and market principles.”<sup>665</sup> Bond shows the relevance of Paul Volcker’s policies for ending inflation; beginning in 1979, these policies raised global interest rates and thus kicked off the Third World debt crisis: this led to the Baker and Brady plans of the 1980s and 1990s, under which Third World countries would make neoliberal changes in exchange for debt forgiveness.<sup>666</sup> Political parties formed during the 1980s and 1990s tended to base their campaigns on ending corruption and establishing democracy, e.g. the Rwanda Patriotic Front established in 1987 brought rival Hutus and Tutsis together in the fight against corruption and for democracy.<sup>667</sup> By the 1980s, Africa had experienced many dictatorships, which had not brought much democracy and which were now popularly linked to corruption. “Big Men” dictatorships thus strengthened the public desire for democracy. For instance, opposition to and discourse on Juvenal Habyarimana’s corruption grew in Rwanda in the 1980s as he became more dictatorial<sup>668</sup> (Rwanda under Kayibanda’s presidency had conformed more strongly to American-style democracy, e.g. with multiple political parties) until the French government forced Rwanda’s government to legalise political parties and form a coalition government of Hutu and Tutsi representatives. Both the move towards dictatorship and the end of one-party rule fuelled public demand for democracy.<sup>669</sup>

We have also just seen that the call for democracy comes at the same time as neoliberalism, which is actually hostile to democracy: often openly.<sup>670</sup> Neoliberal views usually see democracy (especially in poor countries) as potentially threatening individual rights and the constitution, and prefer central banks and other financial institutions to be as independent as possible (with any differences settled by international courts rather than democratic decision).<sup>671</sup> Decisions are imposed on the public. There is a tendency for large financial institutions to become immune to democratic decision during the neoliberal period (1970s-present).<sup>672</sup> Austerity is imposed on people in an inefficient attempt (for instance because austerity leads to unemployment and reduced spending, smaller GDP, less tax revenue and

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<sup>665</sup> Ibid., 313.

<sup>666</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 4; Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 299: the IMF and World Bank required African governments to “devalue currencies; remove subsidies; reduce tariff barriers; raise agricultural commodity prices; cut back bloated bureaucracies; sell or close state enterprises; deregulate prices; reduce budget deficits and public borrowing; and lift restrictions on foreign investment.”

<sup>667</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 393.

<sup>668</sup> Ibid., 392.

<sup>669</sup> Ibid., 396.

<sup>670</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 66.

<sup>671</sup> Ibid.

<sup>672</sup> Ibid., 195-206.

less money that can be repaid) to make them repay money that they (as individuals) often did not choose to borrow and did not use. South Africa is still repaying loans from apartheid.<sup>673</sup> Decolonisation claims to produce independence, but it usually has had the opposite effect. It is not democracy when parties are forced to make decisions by e.g. large firms, the Bretton Woods institutions, more powerful countries, e.g. the ANC economists believed they needed the IMF's approval in order to gain access to financial markets.<sup>674</sup> Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma's battle to get HIV medications to South Africans at affordable costs illustrates the extent to which large firms, backed by the power of the USA, can interfere in lowly countries such as South Africa (and Thailand and India).<sup>675</sup>

In previous chapters we saw, as Mogobe Ramose eloquently reminds us,<sup>676</sup> the contradiction between the national liberation movements simultaneously demanding democracy and imposing changes on the people. In fact, "democracy" is imposed on the people (who come to experience themselves as part of the process through voting, protest, and other ideology). Instead of letting the people control the future of the country, the liberation movements move away from their proclaimed philosophy of Ubuntu and towards "elite compromise". Using the example of South Africa and citing Sampie Terreblanche, Ramose notes that the ANC moved South Africa away from (in fact, "compromised") justice in its sidelining of justice in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, failure to address systemic exploitation, pardon of people and companies that benefitted from apartheid, allowance of people and companies to move their wealth overseas, allowance of people and companies to maintain many of their apartheid-caused advantages; furthermore, that the ANC discarded any power it had to hold anyone accountable for apartheid. Ramose argues that the way forward was decided in mostly secret meetings that "took place between the South African mineral-energy complex (MEC), transnational corporations, United States and British pressure groups and the African National Congress (ANC) 'leadership core'". This is certainly undemocratic.

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<sup>673</sup> In the South African case, examples include \$850 million borrowed from the IMF in 1993 for "drought relief (for a drought that had ended eighteen months before this) on condition that SA would make various neoliberal reforms; and R340 million borrowed from the World Bank in 1997, only half of which was used for the officially stated purpose of making small enterprises more internationally competitive, also in exchange for policy advice from the World Bank. See Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 68-70 for details of these loans. In other words, the government makes the "sovereign people" repay money that was not borrowed by the "sovereign people".

<sup>674</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>675</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 146-174.

<sup>676</sup> Mogobe Ramose, "Ubuntu: Affirming a Right and Seeking Remedies in South Africa" in Leonhard Praeg and Siphokazi Magadla (editors). *Ubuntu: Curating the Archive*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2014.

### The Right to Vote as Democracy

We have been stressing Fanon's observation of "the unceasing affirmation of the principle 'One man, one vote'" in national liberation.<sup>677</sup> The idea that all people should have an equal vote is the most emphasised characteristic of this conception of democracy. The voting process, however, is only a part of true democracy: rule by the *demos*, the people. With national liberation, a part of democracy is taken for the whole: rule by the people is not achieved; only symbols of rule by the people are achieved. The right to vote does not equal rule by the people, but it is almost universally accepted as meaning rule by the people. As Carl Schmitt argues, these democratic rights, to vote, to run for office, legal equality, freedom of speech, equality before the law, etc. "are instances of applied equality, not the essence of democratic equality. Otherwise, political democracy would be a mere fiction and would be based on the fact that state citizens are treated as if they were equal."<sup>678</sup> Schmitt's argument applies to national liberation: the rights achieved are not the content of democratic equality, but symbols of democratic equality. Democracy is supposed to involve all citizens having equal political influence and participation: all citizens actually participating in ruling and being ruled. The characteristics described above are meant to symbolise all citizens having equal political influence, but they do not mean all citizens have an equal say in government. The right to vote is a representation of democracy, but it does not equal rule by the people. This right is not even proportional to the amount of democracy unless other aspects of democracy are implemented, e.g. citizens should understand politics, there should be sufficient options to vote for, money should not correlate to political influence (there should be a certain degree of equality).

The primary reason that voting does not equal political say, is that differences in wealth (especially the massive differences seen today) lead to massive inequalities in political clout. This happens through corruption, which goes far beyond bribery and state capture to the general structure of our citizenship, as I will argue shortly. Money buys more political influence than voting. Major apparent differences among political parties (often related to ethnicity) mask that the successful parties really represent the same interests (of maintaining capitalism and the status quo, and the specific interests of their sponsors). A major part of corruption is that in the world of advertising it is the wealthier political parties that can

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<sup>677</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 59.

<sup>678</sup> Carl Schmitt, *Constitutional Theory*, translated and edited by Jeffrey Seitzer (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008), 259.



advertise themselves to consumers and thus get more votes, i.e. those with more support from the wealthy. The number of votes a party gets results from the funding it gets from sponsors, not from the extent to which it represents the people. Furthermore, there can only be democracy if the nation makes itself somewhat independent of foreign influence: but we have seen that foreign influence, if anything, increases with “democracy”, to the extent that “democracy” often means little more than increased foreign interference and globalisation.<sup>679</sup>

Even if they have the vote, it is incorrect to say that the people rule if they do not have sufficient choice or education in politics. The people cannot be said to rule if the majority of them have little understanding and are unaware of politicians’ decisions and actions; in fact, if the conditions of life, of labour and consumerism, education and politics, make it difficult to understand the social totality: even to understand our own interests.<sup>680</sup> These criteria are unnoticed because the vote and democracy are conceptualised as totally independent things in and of themselves.

After the introduction of the ANC’s Freedom Charter (1955) comes the following section:

**The People Shall Govern!**

Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws;

All people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country;

The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex;

All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government.

These are applications of equality, but the essence of equality is lacking. Actual equality, which includes not only the right to legal representation but also to a legal system where wealth is not an advantage, is not mentioned, besides the vague “No-one shall be imprisoned, deported or restricted without a fair trial.” The end of racist practices is emphasised. Civil rights are called for, but there is minimal mention of the many, complex, beneath the surface factors necessary to enforce civil rights for all (which include, importantly, a certain amount of equality). The emphasis is on making the people experience themselves as equal, an

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<sup>679</sup> A prime example of formal democracy not helping the people: Tony Blair and George Bush praised Obasanjo’s form and demand for democracy. Yet this “democracy” was directly linked to the “squandering” of US\$280 billion of oil (much of which was cheaply acquired by and through Western “aid-providers”). Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 547, 717.

<sup>680</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 180.

experience that may be supported with scientific or economic facts thrown at anyone who may disagree.<sup>681</sup>

Fanon argues that national liberation does not demand democracy as a complete thing, but parts of democracy, especially national franchise. The casting of ballots has become the ultimate symbol of democracy, shouting that there is free choice even when there is no real choice or when citizens are manipulated into voting against their interests (or even when firms, banks and other institutions are immune to democratic decisions).<sup>682</sup> It is telling that the main image on the Wikipedia page on democracy is of a woman's hand casting a ballot. Firstly, certain aspects of democracy (particularly the right to vote and corruption) are analysed on their own: they are reified. Secondly, they are emphasised while other aspects are downplayed: until these aspects come to mean democracy. When democracy is reduced to the symbol of the one-man-one-vote election every few years, this is operationalism. The concept of democracy is reduced to what is meant by the word "democracy": little more than the very simplified rule one man, one vote! Marcuse describes how contemporary society's obsession with science is ideological. Society is governed by positivist thinking. Any thinking that is not validated by objective/empirical facts is unserious, pseudoscientific, archaic.<sup>683</sup>

Democracy has come to mean a system in which every individual has the right to vote (the way that democracy is usually measured). The right to vote is made into a thing of its own, but we saw that really it is only democratic if it is combined with various other conditions.

The structure of the voting process and the exaggeration of the power and role of voting make individuals feel more active and in control. The ceremonies and headlines, publicised arrests of "corrupt" politicians, advertising and queueing, are not parts of democracy but activities that make the people feel knowledgeable, political and empowered. That is the function of the "democracy" that is achieved: not to empower the people democratically, but to interpellate them as political subjects; as Michaelis Ezana, Minister of the Interior in Kush, puts it, "the chronic irritation of ... incessant elections" helps "to goad them [the people] into false

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<sup>681</sup> Related to this point, Bauman argues that in our postmodern world, the "economically correct" has become universally accepted in public discourse, so that even absurdities that "make sense" economically do not require social, political, human, or other justification. Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and Its Discontents*, 45.

<sup>682</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 194-206. John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time*, 219 applies this to the South African case: in 1993 Mandela "dropped his pledge of nationalisation" and endorsed the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade which, in addition to "surrendering economic independence", taking on \$25 billion of apartheid debt, and enabling IMF and World Bank influence, also gave banks increased protection against South African law and democracy and effectively surrendered control of Reserve Bank policies to Western banking lobbies. See also Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 11-2.

<sup>683</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, 120.

heroics.”<sup>684</sup> Voting is made into a ceremony (usually a national holiday, people are given visible marks on their skin to show they have partaken in this ceremony, there is a lot of anticipating,<sup>685</sup> televisions and radios analyse the elections and discuss the country’s history relating to democracy). The voting process interpellates individuals as subjects, making them feel like political subjects. But this is in a society that makes individuals passive, that removes control from them: alienated labour, and lack of true economic power, for instance. The ideology of voting also makes individuals feel part of the nation and its politics. According to Foucault, this is a technique of modern forms of power: democracy is a feature of a system that operates by making all citizens experience themselves as included in politics.<sup>686</sup> Foucault explains that pre-modernity, the nation was the personified body of the monarch, the people were subjects of the monarch and the purpose of the law was to protect and avenge the monarch. But with modernity, all citizens must be made to feel part of society and part of the law, part of the sovereignty, citizens. Modernity merges the people with the sovereign; society is emphasised, and all citizens are made part of the social body.<sup>687</sup> This is what elections do. Voting is thus an ideological act: to cast a ballot is to be interpellated as a political subject. Fanon notes that all people want to be recognised as liberators, as part of the struggle; even those who were not really part.<sup>688</sup> The idea that “the people must be their own liberators” is common to national liberation movements; with national liberation, the people are ideologically made to feel part of the previous and ongoing struggle. For Fanon, this is a false sense of freedom and empowerment: decolonisation was more the result of imperialism than any action from the people. As Fanon puts it, decolonisation was imposed on the African people: the enslaved and colonised subject “was set free by his master. He did not fight for his freedom.”<sup>689</sup> When the people did have a hand in effecting their liberation, this was

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<sup>684</sup> Ezana is a character in John Updike, *The Coup* (New York: Knopf, 1978), 53.

<sup>685</sup> E.g. anticipation of election results, and also waiting to vote. South Africa’s 1994 elections lasted four days and Meredith notes that many South Africans, some in wheelchairs and on crutches, walked many miles to vote. Ethnic violence (from e.g. ANC, IFP, right-wing Afrikaner groups) abated during those four days. Mandela said “This is for all South Africans an unforgettable occasion. We are moving from an era of resistance, division, oppression, turmoil and conflict and starting a new era of hope, reconciliation and nation-building.” Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 353. As we saw in the previous chapter and as with the Civil Rights Movement, this was temporary, false peace and unity, where conflicting parties came together in a psychological group, only to disintegrate into the separate racial and ethnic groups they were beforehand. Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and Its Discontents*, 32-3.

<sup>686</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 77, 176-7.

<sup>687</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-8.

<sup>688</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 94.

<sup>689</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 171. This makes it a false liberation where the people erroneously experience themselves as their own liberators: for Fanon, true liberation occurs when the people are actually their own liberators. The contradiction between the false experience of being liberators and not actually being

usually only possible with lots of foreign assistance.<sup>690</sup> In order for the wretched of the earth to be continually interpellated as subjects, voting and nation-building are represented as part of the ongoing struggle for national liberation, which largely becomes a struggle within the self (I have to choose the right party and make the right decision) and within the current state of affairs (the nation has been created, now we must maintain it). (Freud brilliantly observed this about modern societies: in his story of the primal horde, all who form part of the newly-established “fraternal clan” must partake in the eating of the father’s body and its symbols, even those born after the coup.)<sup>691</sup>

### **Corruption (and the Ideological Use of State Capture)**

The attack on corruption flourishes with the politics of European modernity, expressed perhaps most noticeably in the French Revolution. This was when corruption came to be equated with human sin, and seen as the main cause of human suffering.<sup>692</sup> The best-known example of this time is Maximilien Robespierre, an embodiment of many of the contradictions of bourgeois democracy. Robespierre, a republican known as “the Incorruptible”, was praised as the first to bring democracy to France (with the 1793 Constitution) and simultaneously hated as a bloodthirsty tyrant/dictator (of the Reign of Terror). As monarchies toppled and the bourgeoisie rose to power, corruption came to be associated with the *ancien regime*: with monarchies and aristocracies, priesthood and all forms of autocracy. Corruption was associated with governments that restricted individual liberty and prevented the people from participating in political decision-making. Corruption was thus made into the opposite of rule by the people, the opposite of republicanism and democracy.<sup>693</sup>

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liberators means the people experience themselves as having agency while simultaneously attributing more agency to white Western saviours (the contradiction and neurosis of the previous chapter are evident here).

<sup>690</sup> Ibid., shows that this means decolonisation has a fundamentally racist structure, one in which whites are the liberators. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 79 comments that the USSR and Cuba assisted national liberation movements before the USA and UK had decided to oppose colonisation.

<sup>691</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 154-77. When tragic events are used for the construction of a new society, they are presented as if they happened personally to all members, including those born after the tragedies: apartheid, colonisation, the Holocaust, slavery, etc.

<sup>692</sup> Gareth Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty?*, 81.

<sup>693</sup> Ibid., 52, 54, 61, 111, 119, 124.

Corruption has historically been linked to original sin,<sup>694</sup> and in the previous chapter we saw that blackness is linked to original sin too.<sup>695</sup> This is one of the ways that corruption, blackness and Africanness are identified with each other. Since they are part of the same ideology, it is unsurprising that the attack on corruption corresponds historically with the call for democracy: in Africa, this increased especially from the 1980s. Corruption is strongly related to suffrage, part of the same conception of democracy, and to nationalism; they have the function of making citizens feel part of political decision-making. When the national bourgeoisie goes too far in exploiting the people, and is held to account, Fanon notes that its crimes are mostly represented as corruption and as crimes against the nation.<sup>696</sup> When the concept of democracy is swallowed up by the right to vote, citizens become politically-minded during the elections once every four years or so, and between these periods lose their political-mindedness: with the exception of the denunciation of corruption.<sup>697</sup> In his criticism of such democracy, Fanon links both the right to vote and the attack on corruption to national liberation and postcolonial politics. Fanon notes that after decolonisation there is a trend of discourse about corruption. “Rival parties” accuse “the party that takes over the reins from the colonialists” of betrayal of the revolution and of corruption.<sup>698</sup> (This comes at the point that Fanon criticises the national liberation parties of simply copying Europe, with no reservations.)<sup>699</sup>

Fanon also notes that Western institutions use accusations of corruption to justify interference in the underdeveloped world. For instance, he uses the example of the French government using accusations of corruption to justify French interference in and colonisation of Africa, claiming that Africa was corrupt and needed European leadership to overcome its corruption. In 1960, once France’s Western allies declared that they “would no longer fight to maintain French Algeria”, French government officials travelled Africa in search of corruption, using the evidence they found to advocate French colonialism “in front of the entire world.”<sup>700</sup> The liberation government is a child, whose parents condemn the corruption they cultivated in it and whose siblings exploit this and out of jealousy, condemn it too.

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<sup>694</sup> Ibid., 80-1, 91-2.

<sup>695</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 148.

<sup>696</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 145.

<sup>697</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 166.

<sup>698</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 119.

<sup>699</sup> Ibid., 108, 120, 178.

<sup>700</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom*, edited by Jean Khalfa and Robert JC Young, translated by Steven Corcoran (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 531.

For Foucault, modernity (particularly after the French revolutions of 1789 and 1848) was a period in which delinquency (including corruption) came to be defined and used by ruling powers. Delinquency was a method for the creation of an identifiable group of individuals to become popularly understood as opposed to the nation, criminal, of bad character, corruption of morals. Identifiable groups of corrupt delinquents were created in specific, identifiable places.<sup>701</sup> One of the ways ruling powers would use delinquency was to send delinquents to the colonies (not only penal colonies), often for the rest of their lives. Delinquency thus became associated with certain regions within Europe (prisons, areas associated with crime, areas where criminals would serve probation). But importantly, delinquency came to be associated with Europe's colonies. These would be areas for delinquents to be supervised and analysed. This was the time that crime came to be associated with a person's character.<sup>702</sup> This was one of the ways that the Third World came to be associated with corruption, and the identity of the First World as ethical ideal was consolidated. The (former) colonies are made and represented as unfree by ideology and imperial interests: they are made, and represented as, corrupt, warring, unstable, backwards, dictatorial, religiously fundamentalist. This is a way that the West makes itself appear better and appear a model.

The modern analysis of corruption focuses on the corrupted, making corruption his individual character. Actually when corruption is measurable, there is usually both corrupted and corruptor. If such analysis rather emphasised the corrupter, corruption would be associated with the West. For example, Mark Thatcher has been involved in more corrupt transactions than any other individual in history.<sup>703</sup> But since "corrupt" has come to mean "corrupted", not "corruptor", this ideology does not see Thatcher as one of the most corrupt individuals. In this way, the reduction of the whole concept of corruption to a part of corruption (to its operations) turns the attack on corruption into a racist and an ideological justification for imperial interference in Africa. The reduction of corruption to state capture is racist, depicting the Third World as inherently corrupt, violent, inferior, causing its own problems and deserving its abject conditions. The liberals can act surprised that a criminal like Jacob Zuma could ever become president, without batting an eyelid at the climate of corruption or the forces that corrupt him. To oppose corruption, it becomes sufficient to denounce and analyse Zuma and his personality; we will see an example of this shortly.

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<sup>701</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 67, 185, 196, 222.

<sup>702</sup> *Ibid.*, 232-40.

<sup>703</sup> Andrew Feinstein, *The Shadow World*, 55.

Corruption, from the Latin *corrumpere* (to mar, bribe, destroy), is unscrupulous behaviour by people taking advantage of positions of power. “Corruption” has a connotation of decay, of impurity, of moving away from a standard. Corruption includes bribery and embezzlement, but it has come to mean bribery and embezzlement, especially by politicians. Specifically, the type of corruption that is most attacked (most despised under the dominant bourgeois ideas) is known as “state capture”: a catchphrase coined by the World Bank, which is currently developing methods to measure corruption.<sup>704</sup> The concept of state capture is operational compared to the concept of corruption. “State capture” is an explicit and somewhat measurable phenomenon, one of various kinds of corruption. The commodification of almost everything combined with vast inequality is corruption, according to our definition above, but not state capture.<sup>705</sup> The desire to be white is also a form of corruption. Corruption is a subtle and complex phenomenon that lives throughout society in diverse forms. State capture involves explicit bribery or embezzlement, which are empirically measurable, and emphasise the individual politician, the corrupted individual in the transaction. When a particular politician makes an unsavoury deal with a particular interest, this is state capture (and corruption). This ideology reduces the concept of corruption to the operation of state capture, which is associated with the leaders of Third World countries (even though it is common in the First World, and between the two). It eliminates any other conceptions of corruption, which of course can be seen in every country. The operation of state capture also inherently focuses more on the individual, the nation, and the state than on the world, whereas corruption covers far more. State capture is about individual actions, not about systems. The emphasis on state capture misses relations between countries because it examines countries on their own, as independent things.

The denunciation of corruption is a central feature of the American conception of democracy; along with the vote and protest demonstrations, it is one of the primary ways that the people are made to feel part of the political process. Harvey describes the public’s “curious penchant to pursue ‘corruption’ as if it is easily distinguishable from the normal practices of influence-peddling and making money in the marketplace” as an American idea.<sup>706</sup> He points out the contradiction that in the capitalist system there is a trend towards the commodification of

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<sup>704</sup> Alexander Hamilton and Craig Hammer, “Can We Measure the Power of the Grabbing Hand? A Comparative Analysis of Different Indicators of Corruption”. 2017. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper Series. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/113281515516828746/pdf/WPS8299.pdf>

<sup>705</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 166.

<sup>706</sup> *Ibid.*

everything, including the conscience and honour of leaders, even though their conscience and honour are among the few things forbidden to be commodified (in the attack on corruption).<sup>707</sup> The attack on corrupt politicians implies that there are a few corrupt individuals in an inherently non-corrupt system. This idea is certainly rife throughout Africa where, as Fanon notes, the oppositional parties rely on a strategy of proving that leaders of the ruling party are corrupt,<sup>708</sup> e.g. used prominently in the DA's attacks on the ANC and in the Movement for Democratic Change's attacks on Mugabe.<sup>709</sup>

When the same processes occur in First-World countries, they are often not called corruption or state capture. Furthermore, corruption that goes beyond state capture is often not the result of individual choice but the result of e.g. false exchange and inequality among individuals. The analysis of corruption should go beyond the individual person and country. Fanon links the climate of corruption to vast increasing inequality, stagnation, and foreign interference. These forces motivate the people to become corrupt: corruption is often the only way to get hold of scarce resources or opportunities, and corruption thus completely permeates society.<sup>710</sup> As a direct result of foreign interference, corruption becomes "a way of life": "there is not a soul down to the simple policeman or the customs officer who does not join in the great procession of corruption".<sup>711</sup> Individuals are forced to engage in unethical behaviour – often, that is the only way to make a living in a country of scarcity and corruption.<sup>712</sup>

State capture happens frequently throughout the world, but it is particularly politicians of the underdeveloped world who are analysed and criticised for state capture. Discourse on state capture emphasises the recipients more than the donors, who are commonly businesses from the developed world. This reflects Foucault's observation that modern power is anonymous, that those on the bottom of power relations are analysed and individualised.<sup>713</sup> When there are explicit corruptors, they are harder to find. Thus to attack corruption, which has historically been associated with the love of money and luxury,<sup>714</sup> is to analyse the unethical deeds and personalities of evil men, rather than to analyse structures. When a politician is persecuted and prosecuted for corruption, and this is broadcast in the media, this is an

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<sup>707</sup> Ibid.

<sup>708</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 119.

<sup>709</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 71.

<sup>710</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 148.

<sup>711</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 172.

<sup>712</sup> Condorcet, Paine and others understood, two centuries ago, that such conditions forced people to engage in unethical and corrupt behaviour. Gareth Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty?*, 60.

<sup>713</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 216-8 (also 67, 118, 186-8).

<sup>714</sup> Gareth Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty?*, 129.



example of how language can be an instrument of control even when it transmits information (even that information which may be true), particularly by moving language from critical thought towards imagery.<sup>715</sup> The obsession with elections and with fighting corruption is strongly linked to modern society's obsession with science. One aspect of this positivism is how modern society and language limit concepts to particular referents when they might otherwise "go beyond" these referents. This is operational thinking, which inspires a "false concreteness", and makes the current society the only frame of reference for individuals.<sup>716</sup> Let us look at an excellent example of such discourse, a book which discusses Jacob Zuma's corruption without situating it historically, selectively mentions some of the bribers of Zuma (the individualised corrupters), and relegates the concept of corruption to the operations of measuring that which is seen empirically. This is a book that attributes South Africa's problems to Zuma's personality. It completely misrepresents and misunderstands South Africa, Zuma, state capture and its readers because it looks at them, and empirically true facts about them, in isolation.

Jacques Pauw's book *The President's Keepers: Those Keeping Zuma in Power and out of Prison* is awash with examples of how the attack on corruption can be ideological. This book is ideological in various ways. It is full of empirically true statements that have dubious implications and/or are unnecessarily emotive; it represents corruption-related-to-South-Africa-during-Zuma's-presidency as something only done by Zuma; it reduces corruption to Zuma's personality; it obscures relations between countries; it takes many things for granted (for instance it shows Pauw's strong faith in American democracy and neoliberalism). Take for instance the following passage, which brims with provocations, implications, distortions, and motives that go beyond the information that Pauw communicates, probably mostly unconsciously:

“[Arthur] Fraser's rise to the top of the intelligence hierarchy must be seen against the backdrop of what I regard as the primary objective of Zuma's presidency: to stay out of prison. In order to avoid spending his last days behind bars, he has to cling to power in order to prepare an exit strategy that will guarantee his freedom. This is closely followed by his greed to fill his and his family's pockets. Cronies are welcome to help themselves but their priority is to assist him to retain his freedom. Only after Zuma has looked after himself comes the small little problem of governing the

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<sup>715</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 103.

<sup>716</sup> See *Ibid.*, 106-120 for a discussion of this and examples.

Republic and its millions and millions of hungry, uneducated and jobless voters who are looking to him for salvation and deliverance.”<sup>717</sup>

While it is true that Zuma (and many of his “cronies”) had/have the objective of avoiding his imprisonment, this is not what is implied by the phrase “the primary objective of Zuma’s presidency: to stay out of prison”. Pauw uses the passive voice, avoiding having to name or discover the various institutions that in various ways supported and benefitted from Zuma’s presidency (and that benefit from having a corrupt South African leadership and from Zuma’s being a media hate figure, and that may want him to be arrested). This subjectless sentence implies that “Zuma’s presidency” and “Zuma” are the identical, that “Zuma” is the same as “everything which led to Zuma’s presidency”. But the fact of Zuma’s presidency goes far beyond the man himself: it is based in the history of the ANC, the reasons the ANC was groomed to take over political power, the particular individuals selected by imperial forces, and more. This passage therefore carries the implication that South Africa is not strongly influenced by the rest of the world, because its problems are primarily the result of Zuma’s will and personality. Indeed, throughout the book, Pauw barely mentions the powerful institutions behind corruption in the ANC, some instances of which we have seen in previous chapters. Of the American institutions, for instance, there is no mention of the Bretton Woods institutions, US Treasury, New York Banks, and various other institutions that all used bribery and coercion to support neoliberal policies under Zuma and similar leaders, and which strongly influenced Zuma’s presidency, at least via consent to his presidency and later to its termination, and would try harder to end it if it did not support them. There is minimal mention of American and British leaders; no Thatcher is mentioned. When Pauw mentions places and people associated with imperialism, he goes so far as to describe Zuma as acting on them. For instance, in a single paragraph Pauw mentions an event that Zuma “ordered” to be cancelled in London, and one he “ordered” to be cancelled in the United States.<sup>718</sup> In contrast, Pauw’s language does not hint that London and the USA might influence Zuma at all. Zuma is always the subject of the sentence, and London and USA are objects.

In the American conception of democracy, corruption is presented as the last bit of dictatorship still surviving in a democracy, as part of the old that has not yet been overcome by the new, as the last surviving dregs of the *ancien regime*. This ideology underlies Pauw’s writing. If the reasons for Zuma’s presidency, as Pauw suggests, are to prevent him from

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<sup>717</sup> Jacques Pauw, *The President’s Keepers: Those Keeping Zuma in Power and out of Prison* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2017), 20.

<sup>718</sup> *Ibid.*, 327.

being jailed and to enrich him and his “cronies”, this means that Zuma has a vast amount of power and that he is the main agent in South Africa. Pauw gives Zuma more agency than he really has, diminishing the role of other players in the economy. He portrays Zuma as hypnotist, as a dictator with godlike power: “voters who are looking to [Zuma] for salvation and deliverance” (as if Zuma alone has the ability to grant them those wishes). Salvation and deliverance are normally sought by people from God or religious leaders.

For Pauw<sup>719</sup> it is a given that “a constitutional democracy with freedom of speech, association and movement” is the same as the government representing citizens (he equates democracy with its symbols). In such a situation, for Pauw, the government is only against citizens when they commit crimes (i.e. when they harm the nation). However, he fears being harmed or killed for exposing Zuma and “cronies”; this implies that he thinks the South African constitutional democracy has, contradictorily, not managed to restrain “Jacob Zuma's keepers: the people who have brought our beautiful country to the brink of a mafia state”. This is an example of a contradiction we keep seeing: Pauw represents Zuma as a dictator (and a peasant) but in a modern nation-state, which Pauw sees as democratic.

“He has to cling to power” implies that it is Zuma’s actions that keep him as SA president, and that there are powerful forces that don’t want him to be president. But since Pauw would probably argue that Zuma was democratically elected, he is faced with the contradiction of how the majority of the South African population could vote for Zuma if it is also true that the South African population does not want him as president. Pauw’s solution follows: that the majority of South Africans are uneducated and manipulated by Zuma’s “brilliant strategizing”.<sup>720</sup> While the final sentence of the passage cited above says at face value that lack of education is a major problem in South Africa and that corruption is a cause of this problem (a statement with which most of us would agree), it implies that it is the uneducated and manipulated South Africans who vote for Zuma, and, as a corollary, that it is the educated and clear-sighted who denounce him: “the millions and millions of ... uneducated ... voters who are looking to him for salvation and deliverance.” (It also displays the underlying belief that elections are the determinant of political representation, and the word “voters” here, rather than “citizens” or “South Africans”, also exaggerates voting as a key part of the South African identity and the importance of voting in democracy.)

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<sup>719</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>720</sup> Ibid., 64. Hence Pauw understands that there is manipulation at work, behind the South African “democracy” and behind Zuma’s presidency. But then he falls short, portraying Zuma and his “cronies” as the only manipulating forces, denying through omission any foreign interference.

Let us briefly look at some of the other ways Pauw's book is ideological. He consistently universalises and legitimises bourgeois values (frequently neoliberal values), depicting them as the interests of all South Africans; for instance, he equates austerity with "growth and poverty alleviation", which "was not the priority for Zuma", nor for the Gupta family and their preferred Minister of Finance Des van Rooyen.<sup>721</sup> It is much easier to analyse the crimes of Zuma and his cronies because this reflects the reifying dominant mode of thinking: it is possible to locate them, to document them, to empirically measure their state capture. But when there are individuals who cause corruption, they are more difficult to analyse: power becomes increasingly anonymous, as we have noted. Those forces which punish corruption focus on bribe-receivers. For instance, Margaret Thatcher had no problem with British firms, politicians and other institutions (including her son) bribing politicians of the underdeveloped world: knowing of many of these deals,<sup>722</sup> she said they were "batting for Britain".<sup>723</sup>

It could be argued that many of these problems are not only Pauw's, but problems inseparable from journalistic writing. To make this argument is to say that journalistic writing is necessarily reifying: for instance that in order to be successful such writing has to be quickly produced, narrow in scope, focus on isolated parts of the social totality, and easy to read. These demands result in an untheoretical style of writing, one that necessarily interpellates the individuals they describe and their readers as subjects. There is some validity to this argument, but we should note that most of the other books of this style that I have used here (Crawford-Browne, Bond, Pilger, Mckinley, and often Meredith) are much less ideological than Pauw's. For instance, when they discuss state capture under Zuma, they contextualise it historically, and note the fact of both corrupted and corruptor. Pauw's book reads like a realist novel, a (journalistic) style which is notorious for distorting the truth.<sup>724</sup> The ideological realist tendencies of Pauw's writing style include the interpellation of individuals as subjects (such as Zuma, whose greed and desire to avoid jail are implied as the greatest influences in South Africa), and flowing, descriptive language which makes the reader part of the narrative. As Belsey would put it, the reader is both interpellated as a subject (for instance

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<sup>721</sup> Ibid., 17-18. Pauw mentions that "the country lost billions of rand within 24 hours". But Pauw does not mention which specific people in the country lost money from "the ascendancy of an ill-qualified Gupta stooge [van Rooyen] to the most sensitive cabinet position in South Africa." In this passage Pauw praises the austerity policies of Van Rooyen's predecessor Nhlamla Nene, "stern fiscal discipline and cutting government spending to allow for growth and poverty alleviation", neoliberal policies which were probably linked to the country losing large amounts of money to Western institutions.

<sup>722</sup> Andrew Feinstein, *The Shadow World*, 88-91.

<sup>723</sup> Quoted in Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 151.

<sup>724</sup> See Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2002) for Althusser-inspired arguments about how such language is ideological and specifically, interpellating.

because Pauw's lack of criticism of Western institutions that cause corruption, arguments and language imply that individuals have vast agency and immunity against external influence) and "interpolated" into the narrative, made part of the narrative.<sup>725</sup> Here is one of Pauw's many examples of such interpolating and interpellating language: "Towards the middle of 2017, South Africans woke up to the thousands upon thousands of leaked emails of the Gupta family and their associates ... You've read much about the emails and I'm not even going to attempt to regurgitate them."<sup>726</sup>

These realist tendencies encourage the reader to compare him/herself to Zuma. The reader sees everything, taking on a god-like omniscience. The book is written as a documentary, a series of scientific and empirical facts, which contain various ideological implications, exclusions, deceptions etc. Even though it is replete with false assumptions, even though it misrepresents society, people and Zuma, most of its arguments are correct and most of its conclusions are sound when evaluated on their own, after the implications are sieved out. Pauw's book is true on its own terms, which represent part of reality (implicitly taking that part for the whole); it is false when read against the social totality. The fact that it is empirically true makes it even more ideological. In addition, the easy reading makes it absorbable. This book aims to "reveal the true colours of Jacob Zuma" and his "keepers",<sup>727</sup> and often exposes them admirably. But the untruth of his work lies in how it separates "Zuma and cronies" from the rest of the world, including the deliberate interference in South African politics and economics by the developed world.

Thomas Paine and the Marquis de Condorcet noted in the eighteenth century that inequality led to corruption.<sup>728</sup> "This was why both Condorcet and Paine attached as much importance to universal education and redistributive taxation as they did to the provision of social security."<sup>729</sup> Imperialism has resulted in vast inequality among people and countries: underdeveloping Africa and moving its wealth to Europe and other countries. The fact of being able to influence others because of such inequality is corruption, and has made bribery possible, really inevitable. In Chapter 1, we saw examples of imperial powers deliberately supporting national liberation leaders they thought would be corrupt, in order to create a culture of corruption in the countries undergoing decolonisation. Foreign countries and

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<sup>725</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>726</sup> Jacques Pauw, *The President's Keepers*, 141.

<sup>727</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>728</sup> Gareth Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty?*, 60.

<sup>729</sup> Ibid.

businesses financially supported most, if not all, of the successful national liberation movements. This came with conditions (we will fund you if you look after our interests later). Ironically, although the attack on corruption is linked to the World Bank, the majority of its privatisation deals with African leaders have been conducted in secret and involved the Bank secretly paying leaders high prices to sell state assets.<sup>730</sup> Even in the cases where this was not explicitly state capture, the phenomenon of false exchange is apparent here, e.g. when the Bank provides aid, it receives its stated conditions in return plus political influence. The Bank is able to pay democratically-elected leaders to do its bidding against the interests of the people, and to influence the will of the people.

The British and American governments in particular had a practice of supporting all parties to “hedge their bets”. Wanting corrupt politicians in charge, and wanting to set up climates of corruption, they deliberately supported individuals they thought would be bribable.<sup>731</sup> We looked at the example of the ANC, investigated by Terry Crawford-Browne, and how the ANC had been “bought” long before the end of apartheid. This contrasts Pauw’s view, which is similar to that of well-known journalist Ferial Haffajee, who sees the ANC as having been “corrupted after it led the liberation of South Africa from apartheid in 1994”.<sup>732</sup> In this article, Haffajee sees only two significant instances of the ANC having been corrupted: by Gavin Watson, and by the Gupta family. MI6 paying massive bribes to the ANC in the 1980s<sup>733</sup> does not count as corruption by Haffajee and Pauw’s standards, nor do many secret meetings and deals, such as those at Mells Park House. In fact, according to Haffajee and Pauw, the ANC was built entirely by its members, with no outside help.<sup>734</sup>

The ANC continually reminds South Africans to learn the history of the liberation struggle, yet it only wants certain parts of the history to be remembered, and this excludes the ANC’s corrupt foundations.<sup>735</sup> It does not want South Africans to know how it was created largely out of a Western campaign to corrupt Africa and blackness.

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<sup>730</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 303.

<sup>731</sup> Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 4-8.

<sup>732</sup> Ferial Haffajee, “Gavin Watson, the man who bought the ANC, dies in a horrific car crash”, 26 Aug 2019, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-08-26-gavin-watson-the-man-who-bought-the-anc-dies-in-horrific-car-crash/>

<sup>733</sup> Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 4.

<sup>734</sup> Jacques Pauw, *The President’s Keepers*, 62.

<sup>735</sup> Dale Mckinely, *South Africa’s Corporatised Liberation*, 19.

### **Marxism, Socialism and Social Democracy**

*The President's Keepers* shows some of the ways that the hatred of corruption is ideological, racist, and supports imperialism. To paraphrase Nils Christie, the danger to society is not so much corruption as it is the totalitarian tendencies evident in the attack on corruption.<sup>736</sup>

Pauw's book is an example of an ideology that reifies countries and leaders. Their complex relationships with the rest of the world are ignored. South Africa is presented as not influenced by the rest of the world, only by Zuma. London and New York are not identified as financial and political centres housing many institutions that create corruption in the Third World, but as vibey, busy, exciting, cosmopolitan, and metropolitan, associated with prestige, success and business (the cultural results of being financial and political centres).<sup>737</sup> Moscow is described in a similar way, but as unfriendly to tourists and austere, simultaneously "baroque" and ascetic, as not yet having rid itself of Stalin's dictatorial legacy.<sup>738</sup> Pauw's book represents South Africa as a country that exists on its own, almost totally independent of outside influence. Such reifying thought is common to decolonial, postcolonial and postmodern discourse. To see the vote and corruption as independent of other parts of complete democracy is the result of such reification.

We have seen various ways that the anticolonial parties, national bourgeoisies, people of colour, etc. copy Europe and European ideas. This mimicry is frequently presented as an opposition to European ideas. Perhaps the most explicit way national liberation parties copy the developed world is seen in their discourse on social democracy. This is an example of how the nationalist parties do not try to learn from, but try to simply imitate European countries, political parties, trade unions, etc., with a "mechanical application" which does not take into account the differences between Africa and Europe, such as different levels of industrialisation or the difference between being subject or object of imperialism.<sup>739</sup> In the attempt to imitate "successful" countries is an implication that they are better versions of the same thing; the desire to copy implies that "social democracies" are better, rather than acknowledgement that they are as they are because we are as we are.

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<sup>736</sup> Nils Christie, *Crime Control as Industry: Towards Gulags, Western Style* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 13.

<sup>737</sup> Jacques Pauw, *The President's Keepers*, 24, 62. Zuma is contrasted with New York: "even more daunting: think of him addressing the United Nations in New York." New York is the role model, a place of prestige, success and business; Zuma is the "uneducated peasant", "gauche, bumbling, unworldly, clueless, fibbing, awkward." Thus, and without realising it, Pauw associates Zuma with feudalism. Like all dictators, he is of the epoch pre-bourgeois revolution, and simultaneously stupid and brilliant.

<sup>738</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>739</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 108.

Fanon argues that the nationalist political leaders of the newly independent nation desperately want to catch up economically with Europe.<sup>740</sup> But, he rightly points out that “Europe is literally the creation of the Third World.”<sup>741</sup> That is why it is a mistake to compare African countries to Western countries, which have far greater actual independence. The newly independent countries are presented as the same as Western social democracies (or potentially the same, if it weren’t for corrupt politicians like Zuma), and this is to deny that imperialism exists. The fundamental difference, that the one kind produces wealth for the other, is ignored. The ideology of national liberation tends to examine each country on its own while ignoring its relationship with the rest of the world, for instance examining how a government behaves towards its people or how corrupt it is without exploring the global forces that influence these actions. The hatred of corruption has become a very widespread ideology, to the extent that the success and failure, the goodness and badness, of countries is commonly equated to levels of corruption. This ideology misses the fact that corruption, when measured as bribery or state capture, involves two parties: the corruptor and the corrupted. We’ve mentioned that the corruptor is usually anonymous whereas the corrupted is individualised, analysed, and criticised. We’ve seen that corruption is a bourgeois concept which presents social problems as the result of people’s personalities.

They copy not only European ideas, but Europe and Europeans, as we saw in the previous chapters. They praise and copy European and other developed states for their equality, peace, development and socialism, without realising that this is the result of wealth being continually stolen from Africa.<sup>742</sup> “Social democracies” are frequently praised as successful, as models for the underdeveloped world. The idea of social democracy (particularly as a political ideal) arises with interpretations of Adam Smith’s ideas by “libertarians of the left” in the late eighteenth century; social democracy becomes prominent as a political ideal with critiques of Marxism a century later.<sup>743</sup> Social democracy is an aim to combine laissez-faire individualism with some aspects of “socialism”, such as welfare and protection of workers from exploitation.<sup>744</sup> “Social democracies” are the countries usually praised as having the least corruption: particularly New Zealand and the Nordic countries, as measured for example

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<sup>740</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>741</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>742</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>743</sup> Gareth Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty?*, 233-4.

<sup>744</sup> Ibid., 235.



by Transparency International's annual Corruption Perceptions Index.<sup>745</sup> (This index has found that corruption has a strong inverse relationship with real GDP per capita, economic growth, strong democratic institutions and political rights; the top of the list is dominated by European countries and the bottom by African countries.) They are also praised for high standards of living, lack of violence and crime, democratic achievements (free press, transparency). As ideals, many of these states have gone beyond the model of democracy recommended for Africa (such as relative equality within the state, and the occasional implementation of aspects of direct democracy, such as in Switzerland and New Zealand). They are praised for having achieved bourgeois ideals, including many associated with postmodernism and neoliberalism (women in positions of power, acceptance of homosexuality, rejection of marriage as patriarchal and in favour of short-term contracts,<sup>746</sup> reduced carbon footprints<sup>747</sup>). The idea that certain sacred things (the vote, the integrity of leaders, the law) should be protected from commodification is part of the conception of social democracy: but they are only protected from commodification in a limited way, and in particular countries.

The "successful"<sup>748</sup> countries directly cause and benefit from the problems of the underdeveloped world. This includes the prevention of bourgeois achievements, preventing democracy and causing corruption. Germany and UK, and later France and USA are ranked as incorrupt by Transparency International's reifying standards that ignore their relationships with the rest of the world, yet they continually and deliberately create corruption in the rest of the world, in those countries listed as most corrupt. The UK and Sweden enjoyed basked towards the top of the list of apparently uncorrupt countries while their prime ministers facilitated bribes to South Africa and many other countries (frequently to both sides in wars,

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<sup>745</sup> Transparency International is named after transparency, that symbol of democracy which challenges state capture, not corruption. State capture can be seen and measured, but corruption really takes immeasurable, anonymous forms.

<sup>746</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 166.

<sup>747</sup> Although they directly and indirectly support carbon emissions in the rest of the world, e.g. by buying goods from companies that destroy the environment in the Third World.

<sup>748</sup> Those that are wealthy, have a high standard of living, relative equality and peace, apparently little corruption, women in positions of power, and high levels of democracy, low crime, good education, strong environmental laws, etc. Those states that still have some welfare are also regarded as successful, especially now when welfare has come to be regarded as a luxury beyond the hopes of most of the world. Sweden embodies the contradictions of the narrow definition of corruption. It is third on Transparency International's list of least corrupt countries, but see Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Money*, 130-4 for how the world's ninth-largest arms exporter interferes in South Africa and other countries, flouting international law; and David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 112-115 for how the Swedish capitalist class interferes in the Nobel Prize, bullies unions, funds propaganda, and forces poverty- and unemployment-increasing neoliberal reforms on the government.

e.g. ion Saudi Arabia and Qatar) on behalf of BAE Systems; the World Bank condemns corruption while financing countless corrupt schemes, such as Eskom's Medupi crisis, or allowing Hitachi to bribe top members of the ANC with billions of Rands.<sup>749</sup> Even those countries who claim to condemn the underdevelopment of the underdeveloped world make no real efforts to end it; they are complicit. I think the social democracies are far less successful than they appear, even by these reifying standards. But the success and "success" they do enjoy is the direct result of exploitation in the underdeveloped world. For instance, they benefit from cheap imports, the result of the worst exploitation (including slave and feudal modes of production: as we have seen pre-capitalist modes of production remain rife in late capitalism).<sup>750</sup> Furthermore, the social democracies appear successful in relation to Africa, rather than unsuccessful in relation to the world's potential; if all countries were really as isolated as the views I have been criticising suggest, the "developed world" would be far less wealthy than it is because it would be stealing less from Africa. Standards of living in the developed countries would be far less if they didn't continually appropriate African wealth: "the wealth of the imperial countries is our wealth too."<sup>751</sup> An interesting recent example from the Tricontinental Institute shows that (even though surplus value usually exceeds 70% of the revenue) iPhones would be unaffordable to all but the richest if they were not made from raw products obtained in Africa and cheap labour in Asian countries with lax pollution laws.<sup>752</sup>

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<sup>749</sup> Terry Crawford-Browne, "Bribe Payers are Guilty Too", Business Day, 15 April 2020, [www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/letters/2020-04-15-letter-bribe-payers-are-guilty-too/?fbclid=IwAR34bj8ELXat1aevdWIFAuk5CNI1\\_6dalxmHmMfypCeihJmz1xKRjuKzEO](http://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/letters/2020-04-15-letter-bribe-payers-are-guilty-too/?fbclid=IwAR34bj8ELXat1aevdWIFAuk5CNI1_6dalxmHmMfypCeihJmz1xKRjuKzEO)

<sup>750</sup> Canada, another apparently peaceful social democracy, is perceived as the eleventh least corrupt country, according to Transparency International. The Tricontinental Institute rubbishes the absurd notion that Canada has little corruption. Tricon notes that Canada has weak laws applying to mining companies (in fact, only two laws that apply internationally, both of which are regularly flouted: don't bribe and don't have sex with children). Because of this, sixty per cent of the world's mining companies are headquartered in Canada, and regularly bully and bribe governments (mainly in the Third World and often legally), destroy the environment and can be directly linked to rapes, murders and wars. Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research, "Briefing No 1: 10 Canadian Mining Companies: Financial Details and Violations", 2019, <https://www.thetricontinental.org/ten-canadian-mining-companies-financial-details-and-violations/>

<sup>751</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 102.

<sup>752</sup> Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research, "Notebook No 2: The Rate of Exploitation (The Case of the iPhone)", 22/09/19 <https://www.thetricontinental.org/the-rate-of-exploitation-the-case-of-the-iphone/> According to this paper, the iPhone X, which retailed at between US\$900 and US\$1 900 when released in 2019, would have cost the consumer more than US\$30 000 if made in the USA. This example shows that countries that apparently protect workers, citizens and the environment, and are apparently peaceful, democratic and uncorrupt, benefit from and support (directly and indirectly) war, slavery, degradation of the environment, and exploitation of workers in the rest of the world; furthermore, that their high standards of living are the direct result of such cruelties in the Third World.

We should also point out that in this “peculiar world in which the poor countries are in effect subsidising the richest”,<sup>753</sup> the “successful” countries make themselves independent of the rest of the world: in some ways, the reifying view (the view that analyses them without looking at their relationships with the rest of the world) is truer of them than of underdeveloped countries. Norway is an interesting example of a country that has come to be seen as vastly successful. Its wealth and status as a legitimate social democracy strongly correspond historically with the discovery of extensive oil reserves in the 1960s (the time that oil prices were increasing quickly). Although international companies had to be brought in initially to help extract the oil, the Norwegian government made it a priority to prevent this wealth from leaving the country. The social democracies use their resources to benefit their citizens, including oil in Norway, iron ore in Sweden, forests in Finland. On the other hand, African countries have vast undeveloped wealth which foreign interests prevent from development and from African ownership: we saw examples in Chapter 1, particularly diamonds and oil in Southern Africa. African independence generally came with masked but increased foreign interference, as we have seen. Especially in the neoliberal period, Harvey notes, states have to become more open (which often means losing some national sovereignty, especially if the leaders oppose such openness) for trade to be freed.<sup>754</sup> Relatively closed systems like apartheid in South Africa could not withstand these pressures.<sup>755</sup>

In order to try to catch up with Europe, many of the national liberation parties implement policies they call “socialist”, “Marxist”, “Marxist-Leninist”, etc. This is something Fanon warns about in *The Wretched of the Earth*.<sup>756</sup> Warning that it is not absolutely necessary to choose between “socialism” and “capitalism” (the newly liberated countries have to be creative and “do their utmost to find their own particular values and methods and a style which shall be peculiar to them” rather than choosing “between socialism and capitalism as they have been defined by men of other continents and of other ages”), Fanon argues that following the examples of the socialism may be the fastest way for African countries to

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<sup>753</sup> Joseph Stiglitz, quoted in David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 74, 162.

<sup>754</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>755</sup> Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Diamonds*, 233 argues that the apartheid government managed to somewhat avoid influence from the rest of the world because it controlled large amounts of gold; this could not be sustained when the price of gold fell and many of South Africa’s gold mines dried up in the 1990s.

<sup>756</sup> Patrick Bond, *Talk Left Walk Right*, 187-8. I mentioned this on page 33 of this thesis.

achieve economic development,<sup>757</sup> although he defines “capitalism” and “socialism” more precisely than the national liberation movements do.<sup>758</sup> The national liberation movements usually define these terms very loosely: even the development of a self-interested national bourgeoisie, we saw in Chapter 1, is often described as Marxism. Their definitions show the ideological separation of politics, economics, culture, and human behaviour from each other. Those leaders and parties who called themselves Marxist include

- Frelimo under Samora Machel, which had friendly relationships with and support from USA and apartheid SA, and abandoned Marxism-Leninism in 1989 at the behest of Western donors (as many countries did at the end of the Cold War).<sup>759</sup>
- Mengistu in Ethiopia, as we have seen.
- Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, who implemented World Bank- and IMF-demanded neoliberalism in Ghana from 1983.
- Mathieu Kérékou in Benin until Western donors required him to abandon “Marxism-Leninism” in the 1980s.<sup>760</sup>
- General Mohammed Siyad Barre who declared Somalia a formal “Marxist state” in 1969 in order to curry favour with the USSR.<sup>761</sup>
- Nasser called himself socialist. “His form of socialism brought little benefit to the poor whom he championed but allowed the bourgeoisie, whom he despised, to play a greatly expanded role in running industry and commerce that he nationalised.”<sup>762</sup>
- Nkrumah, who denounced African socialism, saying he believed in “scientific socialism”.<sup>763</sup> Yet his views were often closer to African socialism (something he denied, discussed below); a nationalist, he saw national liberation as the most urgent task, inspired by some of the movements we denounced as racial such as Du Bois, Garvey, Négritude, Africa for Africans. The version of socialism he advocated was also often closer to social democracy (including welfare) than Marxism, and his policies more about personal enrichment than enriching the people. In one moment

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<sup>757</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 99: “a socialist regime, a regime which is completely orientated toward 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.”

<sup>758</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>759</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 254-8.

<sup>760</sup> *Ibid.*, 313-4.

<sup>761</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>763</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

where he approached Marxism, Nkrumah noted that African countries were achieving what he called mere “nominal independence” because they were not preventing continued extraction of their wealth; Nkrumah thus recognised that true independence would mean African people severing most ties with Europe. The extreme, blatant corruption of the Nkrumah regime, to the extent that “foreign businessmen soon discovered that anyone with a bright idea and a ready bribe stood a good chance of obtaining a deal”,<sup>764</sup> allowed great foreign influence in Ghana and contradict Nkrumah’s “scientific socialism”; the most telling example is the Volta River Hydroelectric Project where, advised (and coerced) by the World Bank and USA government and under the pretext of trying to produce cheap electricity for Ghanaians, Nkrumah’s government bankrupted the country almost solely because of this project.<sup>765</sup>

- Under the political leadership of the National Liberation Front (FLN), Algeria was declared simultaneously socialist and based on Islamic principles and law.<sup>766</sup> (Interestingly and confusingly, Fanon appears to have accepted the aims of the FLN to establish an Islamic state.)<sup>767</sup>

Even the ANC and Mugabe regularly describe themselves as Marxist-Leninist.<sup>768</sup> Many of these parties, including the ANC, insisted that national liberation had to be achieved before they could achieve “socialism”,<sup>769</sup> thus seeing e.g. the vote and a non-racial constitution as more vital than, and means to achieving, the people owning the means of production. As we saw in the Introduction, most of these “socialist” movements were hostile to workers and downplayed the relevance of labour to human life. Many, like Biko, saw trade unions as part of the problem, part of the “liberal establishment”.<sup>770</sup> The ANC especially has a strategy of insisting that their critics are the ones doing the things they criticise the ANC for doing. For instance, the ANC has criticised its critics as racist, xenophobic, neoliberal, pro-privatisation,

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<sup>764</sup> Ibid., 154-6.

<sup>765</sup> Ibid. See also Terry Crawford-Browne, *Eye on the Money*, 143, 167. Crawford-Browne argues that “dam construction runs only second to the arms trade for its propensity towards corruption”, that the subsidised electricity was really intended for Kaiser Aluminium, not the people of Ghana (furthermore, that the aluminium industry is only viable with heavily subsidised electricity), and that “When Ghana became independent in 1956, its per capita income exceeded Korea’s. Ghana’s disastrous economic history and resultant political instability over forty years can be ascribed to that project [the Volta River Hydroelectric Project].”

<sup>766</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 359.

<sup>767</sup> Reiland Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory*, 168.

<sup>768</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 38.

<sup>769</sup> Ibid.

<sup>770</sup> Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 25.

anti-working class, anti-poor, pro-Washington Consensus; all criticisms that really apply to the ANC.<sup>771</sup> This is why Fanon sees the nationalist parties as ignorant and too politically-focused. For all their slogans of independence, if the nationalist party leaders are asked about their economic views, they become confused, “they are completely ignorant of the economy of their own country”.<sup>772</sup> Quoting Fanon, the SACP frequently and correctly, yet hypocritically accuses the ANC of using “irrelevant” quotes from Marx, Engels and Lenin, selectively and out of context.<sup>773</sup>

Meredith, whose book has been so useful throughout this thesis, occasionally has this view of reification. He has these problems particularly when discussing democracy and Marxism. He is often aware of the deliberate imprecision in national liberation politics, but at times lapses into using “Marxism” and “socialism” loosely, as the liberation parties do. For instance, although he recognises that Frelimo,<sup>774</sup> Mugabe,<sup>775</sup> and Kérékou,<sup>776</sup> called themselves Marxist without being Marxist, he also inaccurately uses “Marxist” to describe various regimes and people that had nothing to do with Marxism besides stealing its name, including Mengistu’s regime,<sup>777</sup> Rawlings,<sup>778</sup> MPLA,<sup>779</sup> Angola and Zimbabwe,<sup>780</sup> and Siyad.<sup>781</sup> He also links Marxism to single-party states.<sup>782</sup> This is the result of not having a definition of Marxism: Marxism is merely equated with the USSR and China, and opposed to the West. Similarly, although he is usually aware of the vast influence of the rest of the world on Africa, Meredith frequently uses the leader of a country as a metonymy for that country, something which portrays the leader as godlike, which reifies the leader much like Pauw reifies Zuma. This way of speaking reflects an ideology that sees individuals (especially African leaders) as having more power, agency and wholeness than they really have. For instance, “by 1990 Siyad’s control scarcely reached outside Mogadishu.”<sup>783</sup> Really, it was not Siyad’s personal control, but rather that of his party and its supporters. Similarly, Meredith

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<sup>771</sup> Patrick Bond, *Talk Left Walk Right*, 183-8.

<sup>772</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 150-1.

<sup>773</sup> Patrick Bond, *Talk Left Walk Right*, 187-8.

<sup>774</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 258.

<sup>775</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.

<sup>776</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

<sup>777</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>778</sup> *Ibid.*, 300.

<sup>779</sup> *Ibid.*, 337, 480.

<sup>780</sup> *Ibid.*, 342.

<sup>781</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

<sup>782</sup> *Ibid.*, 330.

<sup>783</sup> *Ibid.*, 376.

speaks of “Mengistu’s regime”<sup>784</sup> to mean the regime that was formally led by Mengistu, but actually involved many other players too. Meredith also writes that Mubarak rigged elections,<sup>785</sup> yet when these elections were rigged, this was not Mubarak’s personal doing but involved many other interests and actors. In these ways Meredith overestimates the power of the Big Men; he represents the choices of individual African leaders as causing Africa’s problems: as if their corruption, sin, nepotism, and greed are by far the main causes of poverty and underdevelopment in Africa.

One of the ways African countries are encouraged to imitate social democracy is the so-called “Third Way”, associated with Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, as well as Thabo Mbeki.<sup>786</sup> This was the name given to neoliberal policies in the USA, UK and Germany in the 1990s, and it describes the ANC’s economic and social policy.<sup>787</sup> Blair calls it an “ethical socialism” and “decentralised socialism”; it is compatible with neoliberal dismantling of the state. The “Third Way” is directly linked to “the global resurgence of corporate rule and attack on the social wage” from the 1980s.<sup>788</sup> The Third Way is one of the most bizarre uses of “socialism” and even “Marxism”. Such loose use of “socialism” is also rife in theories of African socialism where again, peculiar (and loosely-defined) conceptions of socialism are usually quite compatible with capital accumulation.

### African Socialism

In the fourth chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon criticises the “colonised intellectuals” for fetishizing precolonial African society. Fanon sees this as a response to colonial discourse, which depicts Africans as having been barbaric before Europeans attempted to civilise them. To challenge this view, the colonised intellectuals try to prove the existence of an essential African culture which is not barbaric, which was destroyed or distorted by colonisation. But to try to revive an essential African culture is to continue the colonialist project, for Fanon: to prove that Africans are essentially different from Europeans, to have and create a black culture and blackness only in relation and response to whiteness, to be given a reified culture rather than to create new culture. This is a romanticisation and

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<sup>784</sup> Ibid., 375.

<sup>785</sup> Ibid., 371.

<sup>786</sup> Peter Vale & Georgina Barret, “The Curious Career of an African Moderniser: South Africa's Thabo Mbeki”.

<sup>787</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 118.

<sup>788</sup> Ibid.

reification of history. Fanon criticises the Négritude movement for trying to recreate a fictionalised version of the past, which would mean an incomplete revolution rather than the absolute revolution and new culture recommended by Fanon.<sup>789</sup>

African socialism, a philosophy that reifies culture and history in this way, is most strongly associated with Senghor, Nkrumah, Nyerere, Sékou Touré and Modibo Keita.<sup>790</sup> It sees capitalism, socialism, colonisation and imperialism as individual choices and natures rather than complex historical events. It demands political freedom (which often takes the form of American-style democracy) before any other freedom. We have just seen that the liberation parties use “socialism” as meaningless rhetoric, that they are usually unsure of what it means. They have these problems because they perceive culture and the material base of society, human behaviour and modes of production, as completely separate things. When nationalist leaders call for socialism, this typically has little to do with the economic structure of society. This kind of socialism is ethical, not economic.<sup>791</sup> Proponents of African socialism often want industrialisation and technological advancement, but they see this as separate from socialism (unlike Marxism, according to which socialism requires a certain amount of technological development).<sup>792</sup> African socialism means a revival of old traditions, the reifying of precolonial culture, the representation of Africans as racially different from Europeans. For Fanon, on the other hand, postcolonial culture in Africa must be created, not discovered.<sup>793</sup>

Proponents of African socialism often see it as distinct from other forms of socialism (such as Marxism, social democracy, and arguably Keynesian policies/welfare) but they often also try to merge different forms of socialism (even though the different forms are usually incompatible with each other).<sup>794</sup> Nkrumah and Cabral are examples of leaders who claimed

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<sup>789</sup> Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, 35-67.

<sup>790</sup> William Friedland and Carl Rosberg, *African Socialism* (California: Stanford University Press, 1964), 3-6. Many leaders and parties, like Frelimo, prevented reestablishment of traditional customs in their aim for modernisation; but many who claimed to oppose traditionalism, like Nkrumah and Mobutu, only sometimes opposed some aspects of traditionalism.

<sup>791</sup> Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 171-2: for Fanon, socialism can only happen in Africa through revolutions that modernise the continent and defeat imperialism. In contrast, Woddis describes African socialism as socialism independent of industrialisation and technological advancement.

<sup>792</sup> Ibid.

<sup>793</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 311-6.

<sup>794</sup> A good example is George Nyandoro, “The Only Real Exploiters Are Foreigners” in Aquino de Bragança and Immanuel Wallerstein, *The African Liberation Reader*, vol 1, 74. Nyandoro said that African socialism would make for an easy transition to “scientific socialism”, that it was a step in the direction of “scientific socialism”. But really the two concepts are quite different. One is compatible with low levels of technology and imperialism, and says that people are racially different and that people of different classes can cooperate as a nation against imperialism.



to combine African socialism with Marxism. For instance, Cabral romanticised Africa's history, which he saw as having been stopped by colonialism.<sup>795</sup> Cabral wants national liberation to involve a "return" to the precolonial culture of the colonised people.<sup>796</sup> "A people who free themselves from foreign domination will not be free culturally unless, without underestimating the importance of positive contributions from the oppressor's culture and other cultures, they *return* to the upwards paths of their own culture."<sup>797</sup>

Fanon on the other hand does not idolise precolonial culture, but emphasises the need for creating new culture.<sup>798</sup> Cabral believed in the revolutionary and anti-imperial power of nationalism and the continuation of precolonial African culture.<sup>799</sup> But at other times Cabral was influenced by classical socialism and Fanonian Marxism,<sup>800</sup> and recognised the role of modes of production, calling the level of productive forces the "true and permanent driving power of history".<sup>801</sup> The demand for socialism in Africa is often a call for recreation of pre-colonial times, which are portrayed as romantic, good, just, a time where everyone shared and helped each other (these societies had not reached capitalism and are represented by proponents of African socialism as classless and unexploitative, which of course they were not).<sup>802</sup> In the previous chapter we saw that this is racist, on Fanon's view; and Fanon argued that the recognition of colonisation as extremely violent and cruel should not lead to a belief that precolonial societies were idyllic and peaceful.<sup>803</sup> In their conceptions of socialism Biko, Nyerere, and to a lesser extent Cabral saw Africans as essentially different from Europeans. Biko called for "a socialist solution that is an authentic expression of black communalism", an essentially black, African-socialist communalism that he saw as interrupted by apartheid.<sup>804</sup> Nyerere wrote that capitalism is "alien to Africa" and that "the African is by

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<sup>795</sup> Amílcar Cabral, *Unity and Struggle*, xv "African history, stopped by colonial intrusion".

<sup>796</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>797</sup> *Ibid.*, my emphasis.

<sup>798</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 312-3.

<sup>799</sup> Epifanio San Juan, "Postcolonialism and the Problematic of Uneven Development", 234-5.

<sup>800</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>801</sup> Amílcar Cabral, *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches of Amílcar Cabral* (New York: Monthly Review, 1973), 42; but then again, Cabral in *Unity and Struggle*, 143 thinks that the decolonised people will be able "freely to determine the mode of production most appropriate to the evolution of the liberated people", as if this were merely a free choice. See also Amílcar Cabral, "The Nation-Class" in Aquino de Bragança and Immanuel Wallerstein, *The African Liberation Reader*, 67-70.

<sup>802</sup> Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 35-42. Precolonial societies did not have the complex class system of capitalism, but most of them (Cabral argues for the exception of some nomadic hunter-gatherer communities) had groups of people with distinct positions in relation to the means of production (such that some appropriated the labour of others).

<sup>803</sup> Reiland Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory*, 173.

<sup>804</sup> Donald Woods, *Biko* (New York and London: Paddington Press, 1978), 100.

nature a socialistic being.”<sup>805</sup> For Nyerere Africans are by nature democratic, egalitarian and socialistic, but are prevented from exercising these qualities by European colonialism<sup>806</sup> (an assertion which would be less objectionable without its racist undertones and reification of colonialism). Nyerere used the Swahili word *ujamaa* to describe his vision for Tanzania. *Ujamaa* can be translated to “socialism”, “brotherhood”, or “extended family”. The implication is that pre-colonial Tanzania (and Africa) operated as a large idyllic family and that postcolonial Tanzania can and should do the same. *Ujamaa* thus implies (and Nyerere argues) that exploitation and social class were brought to Africa from the West, unheard of in Africa beforehand.<sup>807</sup>

Such “socialism” aims to unite individuals with necessarily opposed interests. Nationalism, racism and African socialism come together to present a false unity of the national bourgeoisie and the people. National liberation leaders have tended to deny the existence of classes in Africa, particularly at the time of Fanon’s writing, so Fanon was pioneering in his recognition of the role of class in Africa.<sup>808</sup> The idea of African socialism is reifying because (at the extreme) it says that Africa is classless, that class is unAfrican, that Africa could not become capitalist without Western interference.<sup>809</sup> It therefore assumes that the national bourgeoisie can cooperate with the rest of the nation, in the interests of the nation. This is because it sees the coloniser as the only exploiter. It also ignores Africa’s relationship with the rest of the world, seeing capitalist exploitation as something inherent in Westerners (even in the personalities of Westerners), something that would not have occurred in Africa without colonisation. In South Africa, for instance, the ANC and Communist Party joined forces in the 1930s. They tried to bring together everyone who could be brought together under black African nationalism, including the black working class, “progressive” white labour, “liberal” British and international capital.<sup>810</sup> We saw the problems with this view throughout this thesis.

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<sup>805</sup> Thomas Molony, *Nyerere: The Early Years* (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), 68-72.

<sup>806</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 125.

<sup>807</sup> It should also be pointed out that the structure of the family contains many elements that most people would not want in society, including aggression, rivalry and hostility, exploitation, and polygyny; pre-colonial Africa (and the families who lived there) was, like the rest of human history, a time and place of economic exploitation. Furthermore, the economic structure of society is a major determinant of how the families of that society behave.

<sup>808</sup> Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 35.

<sup>809</sup> Like faith in the national bourgeoisie, African socialism strongly denies the relevance of class. This makes it a bourgeois ideology; as Sartre puts it, “the bourgeois makes himself a bourgeois by denying that there are any classes”: cited in Lewis Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, 90.

<sup>810</sup> Dale Mckinley, *South Africa’s Corporatised Liberation*, 20.

In order for national liberation to occur first and successfully, the national bourgeoisie would have to choose to serve the interests of the nation;<sup>811</sup> African socialism hopes that it will. Since it does not explain how this will happen, African socialism is utopian. We saw that the national bourgeoisie usually does not serve the interests of the nation, but even becomes more exploitative than the colonists. Cabral called for the people of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde to unite, regardless of economic class. Cabral had temporary success in creating a “nation” that united against Portuguese colonialism. He wanted the newly-emerging national bourgeoisie to take over political leadership of the Portuguese colonies. He wished for the new African bourgeoisie to serve the people, not its own interests, going so far as to request this new bourgeoisie to “commit class suicide”.<sup>812</sup> Cabral recognised the some of the contradictions here: the national bourgeoisie would have to “turn its back on its natural instinct ... and share in the aspiration of the people – not only in nation building, widening of social access, but in the area of resource accumulation and control.”<sup>813</sup> Cabral argues that it is necessary to first focus on building strong “independent nations”, and then “larger constellations of independence”.<sup>814</sup> At the time of decolonisation, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde consisted of various ethnic groups that were separated from each other economically, culturally, linguistically, etc. and there was no national bourgeoisie.<sup>815</sup> Thus, there was a strong correlation between (Portuguese) coloniser and upper-class, and between native and lower class. The aim of Cabral’s PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde) was to unite the whole nation into a group that might be able to challenge Portuguese hegemony, including the petit bourgeoisie, labourers, and unemployed. However, after independence, Cabral declared that the petit bourgeoisie would have to take control of the productive apparatus, stating that he wished he were wrong, but that this was a necessary step.<sup>816</sup> Thus Cabral (reluctantly) supported the formation of classes with the creation of a national bourgeoisie. Yet as we have seen, this is precisely a class that will have interests in maintaining foreign domination, and we have seen the strong link between the national bourgeoisie and nationalist parties. Cabral argued that a petit bourgeoisie would be the only

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<sup>811</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 150.

<sup>812</sup> Patrick Bond, *Talk Left, Walk Right*, 211.

<sup>813</sup> Ibid.

<sup>814</sup> Basil Davidson, “Introduction” in Amilcar Cabral, *Unity and Struggle*, xvii.

<sup>815</sup> Epifanio San Juan, “Postcolonialism and the Problematic of Uneven Development”, 236.

<sup>816</sup> Basil Davidson, *The Liberation of Guiné* (New York: Penguin, 1969), 134.

group who could take over the state apparatus, and the only group with the consciousness necessary for leading an anti-colonial revolution.<sup>817</sup>

African socialism is based on racialism. It mobilises the people on racial, ethnic and national bases. For Nyerere, the reason capitalism is problematic in Africa and should be abolished (in Africa) is that it came here from Europe as part of colonisation. But it is actually capitalism which brings colonisation (globalisation in the search for more markets and cheaper labour and other resources, as we have seen). That is an ineffective way to challenge capitalism because it is portraying Europeans as evil and Africans as good (inherently) and capitalism as primarily an ethical problem and it makes colonialism the problem rather than capitalism itself. African socialism is consistent with advanced capitalism because it is an ethical, not economic, structure. When Nyerere says that the African has a socialistic nature, this is to say that there is something in the nature of Africans which is selfless and altruistic, something which is absent in Westerners. Similarly, trying to prove that capitalism is part of the personality of Europeans, Secretary-General of ZAPU George Nyandoro claims that before colonisation all Africans worked hard and ensured equality in their communities.<sup>818</sup>

Europeans are inherently capitalistic and Africans are inherently socialistic. Essentially, this is to say that individuals' personalities correspond to their races. Nyerere is reinforcing the racial stereotypes that support and originate from economic exploitation (as Blackburn shows and as I discussed in a previous chapter), and even saying that certain races are more ethical than others. Rather than confronting capitalism, which is the cause of many of their peoples' problems, these views sharpen the racial arrows of capitalist imperialism.

Colonialism brought many things to the Third World, including different modes of production. Capitalism arose in particular locations because of aspects of those locations, not of those people.<sup>819</sup> To say that capitalism is alien to Africa is to separate capitalism from history. Nyerere and others do not understand capitalism and usually direct their struggles against the coloniser, eurocentrism etc., and this is not an effective way to build the just, post-colonial, non-violent societies they want because even if they are effective, they are

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<sup>817</sup> Amílcar Cabral, *Unity and Struggle*, 134-5: Cabral wrote "This specific inevitability in our situation is yet another weakness of the national liberation movement." This shows that Cabral was committed to a bourgeois revolution, although he believed it to be a step towards socialism and true independence from imperialism.

<sup>818</sup> George Nyandoro, "The Only Real Exploiters Are Foreigners" in Aquino de Bragança and Immanuel Wallerstein, *The African Liberation Reader*, vol 1, 74. Nyandoro claims that "normally, if a person had no cattle, someone would give him a cow."

<sup>819</sup> For instance, Jared Diamond argues that the east-west major axis and diverse flora and fauna of Eurasia enabled the early development of certain technologies that enabled capitalism to develop there earlier. Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (Norton, 1997).

overcoming those who currently oppress them without overcoming oppression. In a 1966 speech in Havana, Cabral praised the “Cuban miracle”, saying that he would like a “productive role in this new, just and multiracial society, to help defend with our own blood the conquests of the Cuban people” because he believes in their revolution but more importantly, because he has a racial link with the people of Cuba from the slaves taken there from Guinea-Bissau and Angola.<sup>820</sup>

Samir Amin reads the centre-periphery polarisation (which includes the view that the essence of domination is Europe-Africa, North-South, West-East, white-black etc.) as the major contradiction of transnational capital, and as part of the subordination of everything to exchange value.<sup>821</sup> When nationalist leaders appear to be attacking capitalism, they are really attacking Europe, thus strengthening the white/black and European/African dichotomies and racism. It is also the African bourgeoisie that helps the capitalists; as we have seen, the coloniser especially uses a new Third World bourgeoisie to continue the extraction of wealth at the end of and after colonialism. Nyerere misunderstands the role of labour, property etc., and tries to chase out the people who are contingently but not necessarily the oppressor. Racism and eurocentrism are ideologies which support hegemony and capitalism, but seen as the foundation of modern domination and pre-capitalist; Nyerere (like many others) implies that capitalism comes from racism.<sup>822</sup>

Epifanio San Juan links African socialism and postcolonial theory to Laclau’s theory of post-Marxism for these reasons.<sup>823</sup> Both of these views emphasise the political and ideological and deemphasise the economic, to the extreme. For San Juan, such theory distorts Marxism and disavows important principles such as uneven development and dialectical thinking.<sup>824</sup> San Juan notes the historical correlation between postcolonial theory and “the recovery of finance capital”, including the greater roles of Wall Street, the World Bank, IMF, and World Trade Organisation.<sup>825</sup> According to Marx and Engels, an essential method of ideology is to make

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<sup>820</sup> Amilcar Cabral, *Unity and Struggle*, 119-121. In this speech Cabral also praises the Cuban revolution for having made Cubans more aware of their “national, continental and international rights and duties.”

<sup>821</sup> Epifanio San Juan, “Postcolonialism and the Problematic of Uneven Development”, 229.

<sup>822</sup> The Uhuru Movement conceptualises capitalism as the result and as a form of imperialism, the reversal of Lenin’s famous conception according to which imperialism is a stage/part of capitalism.

<sup>823</sup> Epifanio San Juan, “Postcolonialism and the Problematic of Uneven Development”, 221.

<sup>824</sup> *Ibid.*, 222, 229. As with racism (Chapter 2), African socialism and post-Marxism can be seen as antitheses in dialectical progressions: trying to discredit vulgar economism, they go too far and approach idealism.

<sup>825</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

ideas independent of reality in this way.<sup>826</sup> Similarly, for Fanon, this is an example of the tool possessing the man.<sup>827</sup>

### Non-Violence

At the 1958 All-Africa People's Conference, Fanon was disillusioned by the overwhelming consensus (of 200 delegates representing 25 countries) that colonisation should be fought through non-violence and negotiation; Fanon was particularly shocked that Tom M'Boya, Patrice Lumumba and Kwame Nkrumah subscribed to non-violent philosophies.<sup>828</sup> In fact, Nkrumah declared that the purpose of this conference was to plan strategies for "the African non-violent revolution".<sup>829</sup> For Fanon, true "decolonisation is always a violent phenomenon",<sup>830</sup> and Fanon argued that true liberation of Africa, and particularly Algeria, South Africa and Kenya, would only be possible specifically through armed struggle.<sup>831</sup>

Fanon argues that the nationalist parties tend to be "violent in their words and reformist in their attitudes."<sup>832</sup> Along with the national bourgeoisies, with their words they "violently attack colonial personalities ... [They] will fight to the bitter end against these people 'who insult our dignity as a nation.'"<sup>833</sup> Unfortunately, Fanon argues, this is a ruse used by the national bourgeoisie to take over the positions formerly held by the colonising class.<sup>834</sup>

Political parties that make very little substantial change are seen as very radical, and associated with groups with similarly radical names and words but reformist attitudes, e.g. the ANC with the SACP and COSATU. This non-violent philosophy, Fanon argues, sends the message to the economic elite that the nationalist party is not strongly opposed to its interests;<sup>835</sup> if they realise that colonialism will not survive or that they will profit through

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<sup>826</sup> See e.g. Karl Marx and Frederic Engels, "The German Ideology", 176-184. Also Terry Eagleton, *Ideology*, 71: "If ideas are grasped as autonomous entities, then this helps to naturalise and dehistoricise them; and this for the early Marx is the secret of all ideology."

<sup>827</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 180.

<sup>828</sup> Reiland Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory*, 167.

<sup>829</sup> Quoted in Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 36.

<sup>830</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 35.

<sup>831</sup> Reiland Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory*, 167. Fanon argues that new culture should be created through the violent struggle against the violence of imperialism.

<sup>832</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 59. In this section, Fanon continually emphasises the vast discrepancy between what the nationalist parties say and what they do.

<sup>833</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>834</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>835</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-2. Fanon suggests that the transition from colonialism occurs as a contract; the nationalist party, nationalist bourgeoisie, foreign bourgeoisie, and colonising country realise that they can protect their own interests by working with each other. Those who own wealth do not want it seized or destroyed, and the

decolonisation, colonists (and the national bourgeoisie) will support those who condemn violence and call for compromise, like nationalist parties. In fact, these “non-violent” parties often ignite ethnic violence for their own ends; their violent sentiments are sublimated into ethnic violence. “In a continent where class formation had hardly begun to alter loyalties, ethnicity provided the strongest political base. Politicians and voters alike came to rely on ethnic solidarity.”<sup>836</sup> Only certain forms of violence are condemned: these parties have no problem with violent processes of capital accumulation associated, as we have seen, with national bourgeoisies. Furthermore, black-on-white violence is condemned far more than black-on-black violence.

Cabral was a leader who understood that imperialism (in the colonial and other forms) involves systemic violence. But he advocated “counter-violence” only where “necessary” and “unavoidable”, a “monster to be used with care”, and as an inferior anti-colonial weapon to “just political analysis”.<sup>837</sup> When nationalist leaders permit violence in specific situations, however, this is usually not so much because it is necessary or unavoidable, but because it does not destroy private property. According to Fanon, the nationalist parties are committed to non-violence for two main reasons.<sup>838</sup> Firstly, having been formed and groomed largely by imperial interests, they tend to be made up of individuals who will appear radical but really manage new imperialism. Secondly, negotiations are more likely to secure their interests, whereas an outbreak of violence leaves much more to chance. Specific forms of violence are permitted, even encouraged: native-on-native ethnic violence and violent speech about colonialism. But anti-imperial violence is not allowed. This is one reason that decolonisation has been more a collusion between empire and its managers than the liberation of people.

Ghandi’s was one of the first national liberation movements. The national liberation leaders of Africa were strongly influenced by Ghandi, by the Civil Rights movement in the USA, and by Martin Luther King’s civil disobedience. They were influenced by racial philosophies, as I argued, and by religion. De Bragança and Wallerstein note that “The leadership of the

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nationalist party can help to prevent this; in return, the nationalist party (and nationalist bourgeoisie) receives financial and other support so that it can take over the (lucrative) leadership of the country. It is ironic that these self-interested and selfish acts are popularised/justified/promoted through the philosophy of non-violence, which is supposed to be selfless (and especially opposed to the self doing harm to others). This phenomenon is seen clearly in Mandela’s “negotiations” with capital.

<sup>836</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 133.

<sup>837</sup> Basil Davidson, “Introduction” in Amilcar Cabral, *Unity and Struggle*, xv-xvi.

<sup>838</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 62.

national liberation movements usually were products of mission schools.”<sup>839</sup> Biko, for instance, was strongly influenced by the American Black Power Movement and the Christian ideology known as *black theology*. Biko claimed to not trust organised religion, but he identified as Christian and practiced the religion.<sup>840</sup> The majority of ANC leaders were historically Christian, and their Christianity influenced their political beliefs and policies.<sup>841</sup> Mandela and his fellow Robben Island prisoners were also strongly influenced by Christianity; in southern Africa, Eduardo Mondlane of Frelimo and Joshua Nkomo of Zapu are perhaps the most explicit examples. National liberation leaders were commonly influenced by religion and ethics, and favoured non-violence, even though their rhetoric suggested commitment to revolutionary violence. Ujamaa, Ubuntu, Uhuru contain ideas of non-violence; they present violence as a personal moral choice of citizens. They represent material and social life as dependent on ideas; i.e. they reify ideas: ideas become more than the result of human thinking.<sup>842</sup> Ideas like non-violence, harambee, ujamaa, Ubuntu, Uhuru etc. are seen as choices by people who are completely autonomous of the material basis of society; and material and social life are represented as dependent on these ideas.<sup>843</sup> They are moral prescriptions of how individuals ought to behave, as if individuals are influenced only by their free will and these idealistic ideas. (In addition to giving utopian prescriptions to human behaviour without investigating the causes of such behaviours – e.g. telling individuals to treat others as human beings in a climate that encourages conflict, war, corruption – Ubuntu, Uhuru, harambee, ujamaa and similar ideas tend to present Africans as essentially different from Europeans.)

Non-violence has Christian justification (or often Islamic justification, mainly above the equator). Christianity was the religion of the colonisers. As we saw with humanism and the rights of man in the previous chapter, Christianity had been used by colonialism to subjugate blacks, but now (contradictorily) the liberation movements were trying to use it for black

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<sup>839</sup> Aquino de Bragança and Immanuel Wallerstein, *The African Liberation Reader*, vol 1, 167-8.

<sup>840</sup> Xolela Mangcu, *Biko*, 172-5.

<sup>841</sup> Dale Mckinley, *South Africa's Corporatised Liberation*, 19.

<sup>842</sup> See e.g. Karl Marx and Frederic Engels, “The German Ideology”, 176-84.

<sup>843</sup> For an interesting attempt to apply Ubuntu to modern societies, see Thaddeus Metz, “Ubuntu as a Moral Theory and Human Rights in South Africa”, *African Human Rights Law Journal*, vol 11 no 2, 2011. Metz argues that Ubuntu strongly informs post-1994 South African law, and makes interesting responses to the arguments that Ubuntu is a vague notion, that it is dismissive of individual liberty, and that it cannot apply to advanced industrial society; however, he does not address the charge that it is utopian to hope for individuals to become more “true”, “genuine” and “complete” through our relationships with others, in a society that prevents and erodes lasting bonds among people, alienates us from each other and presents others as means to our pleasure. On the other hand, Mogobe Ramose, “Ubuntu”, 122 argues that Ubuntu is neglected in South African law.



liberation.<sup>844</sup> As a religious ideology, non-violence is inspired by the premodern. But it takes on two modern forms. First, as we noted, it is a racist non-violence. This is non-violence against the imperial class; non-violence and violent words that mask reformist action are part of and diverted to ethnic and racial violence.<sup>845</sup> An interesting illustration is the song *Umshini wami*, associated with former South African president Jacob Zuma (it was previously associated with Umkhonto we Sizwe). This song is an example of violent words going with reformist action toward white capital (and violent behaviour among blacks). Called *Bring My Machine* in English, *Umshini wami* ostensibly refers to a machine gun to be used in the fight against apartheid. But now, this song is popular among various xenophobic groups in South Africa, who sing it during xenophobic attacks. Secondly, non-violence aims to protect property. Religious non-violence was conceived originally as not being violent towards people (sometimes extending to animals). But the non-violence of national liberation is non-violence towards private property. Non-violence means not committing crimes, obeying the law. Foucault argues that with modernity came “the shift from a criminality of blood to a criminality of fraud”: crime came to be conceptualised as something done against property more than something done against rights.<sup>846</sup> Fanon argues that though they try to appear violent, the national liberation parties do not want “the radical overthrowing of the system”.<sup>847</sup> Their goal is to protect the property of the capitalist class, to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s. Both the South African and Zimbabwean ANCs used radical, violent rhetoric to inspire their members, while giving themselves a moderate, non-violent image when dealing with those who owned capital.<sup>848</sup> Anti-colonial violence is redirected into ethnic violence. These problems are increasing; for instance, Harvey notes that neoliberalism has brought both an increase in religious views and the division of individuals on ethnic grounds.<sup>849</sup>

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<sup>844</sup> Aquino de Bragança and Immanuel Wallerstein, *The African Liberation Reader*, vol 1, 167 notes this contradiction.

<sup>845</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 157.

<sup>846</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 65-6, 78. This reflected the growing power of the bourgeoisie and its attaching greater importance to property (compared to pre-bourgeois regimes, which emphasised the sovereign).

<sup>847</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 59.

<sup>848</sup> Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 110-2.

<sup>849</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 168.

### **Decolonisation as a Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution**

By now, it will be clear to the reader that decolonisation and national liberation are usually presented as, and as Fanon shows are attempts to imitate, Western bourgeois revolutions. I have argued this throughout. As Fanon puts it, “the war of national liberation is indistinguishable from a democratic revolution”.<sup>850</sup> This is problematic: imitation bourgeois revolutions increase the power of imperial international capital over Africa. The bourgeoisie was never a revolutionary force in Africa, simply an imitation of European bourgeoisies and something that would help with indirect foreign control of Africa, “men of straw ... cleverly handled by foreign experts”.<sup>851</sup> Even when the feudal mode of production was widespread in Africa in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this was part of the world capitalist system. At the time of decolonisation, Africa was an integral part of the world economy. The global economy is capitalist (based on free labour and separation between the workers and the means of production, and using apparently non-capitalist forms of labour as a result). In certain places and times, this requires pre-capitalist modes of production which are part of capitalism (e.g. slavery and feudalism seen in Africa today). At the time of decolonisation, capitalist expansion required many parts of Africa to move on to the capitalist mode of production, but at that point they were already part of the capitalist system, based on that mode of production. In order for them to adopt the capitalist mode of production, there needed to be a process of capital accumulation. The idea that Africa needed bourgeois-democratic revolutions in the twentieth century is thus part of the reified conception, not realising that this would not bring the bourgeois benefits to Africa. Bourgeois-democratic revolutions helped people at a time when countries were more independent of each other than they are now.

“[Fanon’s] innermost being yearned for an end to the world of capitalism and the creation of a cleaner, nobler world in which men could live as brothers.”<sup>852</sup> Unlike African socialism, Fanon realised that this would take massive effort, and involve the people defeating imperialism and effecting a socialist revolution.<sup>853</sup> It would be difficult in a world where the current state of affairs is universalised; where, as Lewis Gordon puts it, “the ability to construct a *tomorrow* is concealed in a totalisation of the present.”<sup>854</sup> Africa did not need

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<sup>850</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom*, 459-61.

<sup>851</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 174.

<sup>852</sup> Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 175.

<sup>853</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>854</sup> Lewis Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, 86. Original emphasis. We saw this for instance in how national liberation ideologies associated the objects of their attack with feudalism and *ancien regimes*

bourgeois democratic revolution, but rather true independence from international capitalism and its exploitation of Africa.<sup>855</sup>

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(dictatorship, corruption, peasant-Zuma, etc.) and aim to replicate capitalist modernity. Even when bourgeois rule is said to be a means to a socialist end, we saw some examples of how they usually define socialism as something that is consistent with capitalism (including Islamic socialism, African socialism, social democracy, the Third Way, and “Marxist-Leninist” capital accumulation).

<sup>855</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 100, 311-3.

## Conclusion

In 1965, Fidel Castro sent a Guevara-led expeditionary force to help some of the African national liberation movements “confront imperialism”. Travelling through many African countries, Guevara and his troops conferred with the leaders of successful national liberation movements, including Ben Bella, Nasser and Bourkiba. They made their way to the Congo, where they wanted to support the People’s Liberation Army led by Laurent Kabila. But Guevara saw the PLA as representative of most national liberation movements: “parasitic”, selfish, entitled, engrossed in petty political squabbles, extorting provisions and labour from the population. Retreating soon, Guevara wrote, “This is the history of a failure.”<sup>856</sup>

In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* we find the famous quotation from Marx: that all great historic events and personages occur twice, once as tragedy and the second time as farce.<sup>857</sup> Fanon references this work,<sup>858</sup> and its influence is very visible in his writing (including the themes of mimicry and the role of the middle classes). I have showed that mimicry is one of the foremost themes in Fanon’s work, emphasised throughout his writing, particularly in the conclusions of *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*. Thus it appears that Fanon’s observations of mimicry are due to his Marxist influence. The false decolonisation, which is ongoing, is on this argument a great farce of history. Beneath the “idyllic” pictures (as Marx<sup>859</sup> and Fanon<sup>860</sup> describe bourgeois depictions of primitive accumulation) lie ongoing forms of capital accumulation, including theft, violence, domination, underdevelopment, and war. Fanon’s work of interpretation aims towards social and economic awareness and away from blind acceptance of and desire for Europe and its ideologies,<sup>861</sup> to help “the people come to understand that wealth is not the fruit of labour but the result of organised, protected robbery.”<sup>862</sup>

We looked at three main examples of bourgeois ideas and ideologies that appear subversive but are actually reactionary. Ideas that appear to challenge bourgeois domination turned out to really support bourgeois domination and misunderstand the bourgeoisie and domination. What they really challenge are usually remnants and deliberate constructions of power

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<sup>856</sup> Cited in Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 128-30.

<sup>857</sup> Karl Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte” in Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, 341.

<sup>858</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 174.

<sup>859</sup> E.g. Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol 1, 915.

<sup>860</sup> E.g. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 145.

<sup>861</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>862</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

resembling premodern forms. One of the primary ways these ideas get things wrong is their taking the part for the whole, largely through reification: the national middle classes for the nation, overt racism for racism, symbols of democracy for democracy, state capture for corruption, etc. This, for Fanon, is “the too-simple view”, the result of bourgeois ideology.<sup>863</sup> Whatever subversivity existed in some of the national liberation movements has been strangled out as their agendas merged with new, anticolonial forms of imperialism. We saw that the national bourgeoisie is expected to bring socialism, but it actually aims to incorporate itself within and entrench the capitalist imperial system. We saw that anti-racism does not look beyond racism, but only tries to challenge it while accepting its false bases. And we saw political freedoms coming with unfreedoms that completely negate them. Many of these leaders genuinely wanted to challenge imperial and capitalist domination and help their people.<sup>864</sup> Cabral, Senghor, Nkrumah, Chiluba for instance appear to have sincerely believed that the national bourgeoisie, Négritude and formal democracy could help the African people overcome imperialism. But they really strengthened new forms of imperialism, and the trend was for national liberation to merge with the demands of corporate capital.<sup>865</sup> The examples in this thesis show that with decolonisation, many problems associated with colonialism continued, yet in new form. Particularly, decolonisation was really only an apparent break from colonisation, but both are forms of imperialism.<sup>866</sup>

The first part of challenging this organised, protected robbery is to understand it: to explore beneath (and beyond) the idylls and through the ideologies. Fanon’s work shows how bourgeois ideologies and their facsimiles in national liberation do not understand, but mask these processes. He achieves this through understanding the subversive nature of art, and of Marxism and psychoanalysis. This thesis is a step in that direction too. This has been a thesis about interpretation. I showed how many of the freedoms won with national liberation really

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<sup>863</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>864</sup> Dale Mckinley, *South Africa’s Corporatised Liberation*, 24. See also Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 171 and the whole of this thesis for how people who genuinely want to challenge imperialism tend to end up supporting it (largely through misunderstanding it).

<sup>865</sup> Dale Mckinley, *South Africa’s Corporatised Liberation*, 24.

<sup>866</sup> Some of the examples I explained include that the development of a black middle class begins in the relatively advanced colonies well before decolonisation (i.e. it resulted not from decolonisation and freedom but from the capitalist need for managers); that the end of overt racism continues racial domination; that the vote really tends to enable political decisions to be imposed on citizens. We also saw that colonisation often did not succeed in effecting the flow of wealth to the mother countries. As early as the eighteenth century, an independent USA became more profitable to England than a colonised USA; later this applied to India (where England was spending vast sums of money to maintain political control, only to realise that it could better achieve its imperial goals through “indirect rule”) and most of the other colonies. See Gareth Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty*, 142, the beginning of Chapter 1 of this thesis, and Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 171 for examples of how new real and apparent freedoms mask new forms of domination.

mask new forms of oppression: often old forms of oppression in new disguises. I showed that national liberation is a process of capital accumulation. Colonisation was the first stage of modern imperialism, and decolonisation brought about the second stage of imperialism. Like Fanon, Harvey and Hannah Arendt see colonisation as the first stage of bourgeois political rule of the globe.<sup>867</sup> The second stage, a continuation and consolidation of the first, brings the guise of national liberation. We read Fanon as a critic of ideology. Particularly, we saw uses of symbols (blackness, the vote, consumption) that manipulate the unconscious and bypass critical thinking, noting the role of the psychoanalyst in making the unconscious conscious.<sup>868</sup> We saw that such manipulative symbolism, which aims to influence emotions rather than reasoning, and the unconscious rather than critical thinking, are characteristic of national liberation.

Whether they admitted it or not, the parties that took over African leadership were invariably nationalist. In the first chapter we saw that nationalism is fundamentally a bourgeois ideology, an example of how the national liberation parties mostly espoused bourgeois values. Over the course of the twentieth century, the world's working class increased massively (from 30 million at the beginning of the twentieth century to 540 million in 1969) and trade union membership increased even more rapidly (from 9 million in 1910 to 230 million in 1970).<sup>869</sup> What prevented anti-capitalist (including working-class) power from increasing at corresponding rates? One explanation is that nationalism, racism and other bourgeois ideologies have penetrated worker movements. This is especially apparent in this history of the ANC, Cosatu and SACP. In the early 1980s Cosatu (then Fosatu) secretary general Joe Foster saw "nationalism" and "populism", including the ANC, as "impeding the development of a working class movement".<sup>870</sup> On the other hand, the ANC insisted that national liberation was necessary before workers' demands could be met and before socialism could be achieved.<sup>871</sup> The ANC had stronger influence in the townships and rural areas, and used this influence to force Cosatu to "tone down or repress class demands." The eventual "tripartite alliance" of 1990 was not so much a union of nationalism and workerism, but an

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<sup>867</sup> David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, 42.

<sup>868</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 32, 76; Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, 100.

<sup>869</sup> Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 20.

<sup>870</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 38.

<sup>871</sup> *Ibid.*

example of how nationalist parties “moulded the unions to fit the nationalist agenda.”<sup>872</sup> The SACP declared that “new” conditions made it decide to side with the ANC in advocating the two-stage theory: it thus urged the working class to “propel this process”, including the implementation of World Bank and IMF structural adjustment.<sup>873</sup> This is an example of a global trend, according to Bond: throughout the world, the proletarian class increased in size and trade unions increased too, but unions were usually repressed by nationalism or incorporated into nationalist struggles, in an anti-democratic development.<sup>874</sup>

The nationalist control, repression and absorption of worker movements go alongside the expression of worker interests in terms of nationalism. We have seen frequent examples of this, particularly that the national liberation parties (such as Cabral and the ANC) insisted on national liberation as a means to socialism. Proletarian and anti-capitalist ideas also lost influence because people came to identify as consumers, on national and ethnic bases, even as capitalists, as we have seen. These are the identities that came with national liberation. The ideologies we explored in this thesis break down anti-capitalist identity by imposing other forms of identity on individuals; national liberation gives us examples of how “bourgeois ideology dominates other ideologies.”<sup>875</sup> We saw various examples, three main ones, of bourgeois ideology dominating other ideologies. For instance, we saw a complete shift in the experience of being black: from blackness as exploited to blackness as happy consumer. But these are only a few examples of very many. A further exploration of the violence beneath the idylls would likely explore the following topics and reach the following conclusions.

Adding to Chapter 2, it would be interesting to do a thorough investigation of Fanon’s theory of labour. Fanon insisted that an authentic revolution (and the humanisation of “this world which has been forced down to animal level”) would require fundamental changes in “conditions of work”.<sup>876</sup> Fanon links the alterations to conditions of work to actual liberation and rule of the people by the people. Here Fanon’s Marxism shows, and this investigation would necessarily include a discussion of alienated labour, plus a comparison of authentic liberation to alienated labour and of false liberation to alienating labour. As Nigel Gibson

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<sup>872</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>873</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>874</sup> Ibid., 37-9. See also Dale Mckinley, *South Africa’s Corporatised Liberation*, 28.

<sup>875</sup> Louis Althusser, *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of the Scientists, and Other Essays*, 30, here strongly echoes Marx and Engels in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “The German Ideology”, 192, who argue that “the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to” the ideas of the class that controls the means of both mental and material production.

<sup>876</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 100.

puts it, “Fanon’s attention to the conditions of labour is reminiscent of Marx’s contention that the realm of freedom is based on the transformation of alienated labour into a form of self-realisation.”<sup>877</sup>

The role of women and feminism. Alice Clark argues that historically capitalism leads to women being made less equal to men. Women were more involved in industry and culture before capitalism. But early capitalism separated men’s and women’s work. Men would do paid work outside the house, and women would do unpaid work within the house. Women thus lost (or were perceived to lose) economic importance and power.<sup>878</sup> But Tilly and Scott show that with late capitalism, it has been normalised for women to be employed: this has to do with their role in the “family consumer economy”.<sup>879</sup> If this has empowered women, it has also given them consumer, borrower and racial identities that support their disempowerment. The Second World War pushed many women into industry in the West (to take over jobs that men had left to become soldiers). Advertising campaigns were used to make female workers more acceptable to the public. The opposite happened in Germany, where Nazi policies said women should not work. This weakened the Nazi war effort by forcing many potential soldiers to work in factories. Parallel to the case we made about racism, bourgeois rule led to the exploitation of women in two stages: first in their oppression and disempowerment, and second in their liberation and empowerment. National liberation is often presented (directly and indirectly) as something that aims to overcome the oppression of women.<sup>880</sup> But it has not led to female rights or equality, and in many ways national liberation has come with and caused increasing oppression of women and children, especially in the poorest countries. The disempowerment of men and women (which comes with exploitation, unemployment, neoliberalism and capital accumulation) leads to gender-based violence. Harvey shows that neoliberal policies tend to have harsher effects on women than men, especially in poor countries.<sup>881</sup> Although Fanon does not write much about women, his ideas can help us understand the effects of national liberation on women, and can even be a basis for a critique of feminism.

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<sup>877</sup> Nigel Gibson, “Fanon and the Pitfalls of Cultural Studies”, 134.

<sup>878</sup> Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>879</sup> Louise Tilly and Joan Wallach Scott, *Women, Work, and Family* (London: Routledge, 2016); we also briefly discussed this at the end of Chapter 2.

<sup>880</sup> Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid*, 18.

<sup>881</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 202.



Most of the major national liberation leaders were made into gods in the collective unconscious. They developed personality cults, enchanted by their Messiah status. This is most obvious perhaps with Haile Selassie, who was not unique but representative of Big Men leaders. Mandela is a similar example. He was so equated with the South African nation that the negotiation process was almost solely a “personal engagement” between Mandela and De Klerk, and Mandela and “international corporate capital”, yet generally perceived as something accomplished by the South African nation.<sup>882</sup> These negotiations were often conducted in secret and excluded many of the high-ranking ANC and SACP leadership.<sup>883</sup> This is interesting because decolonisation is represented as moving towards equality and away from seeing one individual as superior to the nation, as equal to the nation, as above the people and the law. We saw a bit in Chapter 3 that national liberation involves both (often simultaneous) rejection and embracing of dictator figures. This is expressed particularly in the idea of representative democracy but also in ethnic rivalry, aggression, right-wing groups, neoconservative policies, religion. National liberation has a strongly psychotic structure. This should be read with Adorno, who sees the false exchange and “identity thinking” of ideology essentially as paranoid (thus psychotic) rationality;<sup>884</sup> it should also be read with Freud’s theories, especially the story of the horde of brothers overcoming the primal father, which we briefly visited in Chapter 2.

The role of ethnic and other forms of aggression and conflict is important in national liberation. National liberation parties continued to divide the population on ethnic grounds, on lines created or solidified by colonising powers. They did this in various ways, including that they mobilised the population on ethnic grounds to get political support. It would be interesting to explore the various reasons for extreme aggression and violence that has historically accompanied national liberation. It is caused by technology and the repression of libido, as Marcuse shows.<sup>885</sup> It is often anti-imperial aggression diverted towards other members of the nation or other nations. It is also caused by extreme poverty and a feeling that the revolution was a betrayal of the people. Violence among politicians (including frequent coups) is part of a West-imposed culture of violence. Aggression and ethnic rivalry are mobilised in various ways, and can be seen (for Fanon) in how the postcolonial governments emphasise development of the army and police (interesting also because this happens in

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<sup>882</sup> Dale Mckinley, *South Africa’s Corporatised Liberation*, 25-9.

<sup>883</sup> Ibid.

<sup>884</sup> Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 161; Terry Eagleton, *Ideology*, 126.

<sup>885</sup> E.g. Herbert Marcuse, *Negations*, 187-202, and Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*.

societies that have increasingly less use for armies, and where armies and police take on a more ideological role, e.g. in making Africa corrupt and violent, or maintaining the separation between “us” and the Other/Stranger/delinquent). Bird-Pollan argues that the insatiable desire to be white lies behind much decolonial aggression.<sup>886</sup>

In their attempts to copy the colonising class, the governments and armies newly liberated countries frequently try to practice their own imperialism where they can, although this is obviously limited compared to the imperialism of the great global hegemon. But it is visible for instance in South Africa’s Mandela-ordered invasion of Lesotho, or the relationships between Nigeria and Benin, or Sudan and South Sudan.

We did discuss the roles of neoliberalism and neoconservatism, but in a longer thesis I would have emphasised them much more, especially when considering the later stages of decolonisation.<sup>887</sup> Similarly, I touched on postmodernism; in many ways, this is a thesis about postmodernity, and many of the ideas I analysed are postmodern, but there was insufficient space to make this explicit or explore it thoroughly. The postcolonial period, described by e.g. Amin, Nkrumah and Rabaka as “neo-colonial”,<sup>888</sup> is part of postmodernity: thus Rabaka correctly observes that many of the ideas we have discussed are postmodern.<sup>889</sup>

Postmodernism in national liberation deserves much more investigation in another thesis, which would take into account the pioneering work of Zygmunt Bauman, which I briefly mentioned at times.

Scientific thinking as reification: this theme has come up throughout, e.g. in discussions of operationalism. But the role of rational and scientific thinking in ideology, and particularly the ideology of national liberation, deserves a thorough exploration. Faith in science and technology is also linked to faith in modernisation and development, but we have seen that when these happened, they generally did not help the people. Related to this is the notion (notably used to promote neoliberal policies and justify unemployment and governmental budget cuts) that anything that makes “economic sense” needs no other justification.

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<sup>886</sup> Stefan Bird-Pollan, *Hegel, Freud and Fanon*, 155-6.

<sup>887</sup> In fact, although neoliberalism really comes to Africa well after Fanon’s death, he mentions “the confusion of neo-liberal universalism”, which he opposes to nationalism: Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 148.

<sup>888</sup> Fanon also calls this period “neo-colonial”, e.g. in Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 167, 176, 179. I think “neo-colonial” reifies colonialism, so I have rather described this period as imperial, and/or as the second major stage of Western imperialism.

<sup>889</sup> Reiland Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory*, 176.

Themes of hegemony were present throughout this thesis. For instance, we saw that for Fanon, people of colour, workers and the national bourgeoisie are manipulated against their own interests and made reactionary through gratification, for instance in consumerism. But it would be interesting to do a thorough reading of Fanon's work along with Gramsci's theory of hegemony, and this would add insights to this thesis.

In addition to these points, it would be interesting to use the arguments in this thesis as bases for comprehensive studies of individual countries (albeit without becoming lost in the isolated segments of society). Fanon has been accused of not doing this and of making generalisations;<sup>890</sup> I started it here, but focused like Fanon on the broader view, which has to come first.

National liberation is replete with examples of bourgeois ideologies that legitimise and naturalise the enrichment of the few at the cost of the suffering of the majority. They are ideologies that present strengthening imperialism as freedom from colonialism. I have focused mainly on the 1945-1994 period (the African decolonisation that coincided with the Cold War, and with the end of apartheid symbolising perhaps the last major step towards national liberation), but I have also discussed events before and after this, mainly in their relation to this period. In this discussion we have seen many frightening ways that imperialism controls the lives of people. Sinisterly, it appears that domination of Africa, already so complete, is only in its infancy. Africa still has potential new markets, many non-capitalist sectors (part of the capitalist system but having undergone incomplete capital accumulation), and vast unused resources. For instance, Harvey suggests that for the near future, "whoever controls the global oil spigot can control the global economy, at least for the near future."<sup>891</sup> USA, North Sea, Canadian, Russian, and Chinese oilfields are almost depleted, and Middle Eastern oil is expected to last until approximately 2050.<sup>892</sup> Crawford-Browne argues that Middle Eastern oil is running out, and that Africa will soon be the main global supplier of oil. African governments have shown little inclination or ability, in the face of imperialism, to prevent outflow of wealth such as oil. Once Middle Eastern oil reserves are depleted, imperial interests will likely take an even greater interest in Africa, continuing and increasing Africa's colonial and neo-colonial role of providing wealth to the developed

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<sup>890</sup> See Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, 165-75.

<sup>891</sup> David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, 19.

<sup>892</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

world. (Improved technology effecting increased energy production has led to dubious Trumpian claims of “energy independence”; this may delay imperial interference in oil-rich countries but has not and probably will not reduce it.)<sup>893</sup>

With imperialism potentially increasing in the near future, it is likely that we will experience the bolstering of national liberation ideology, even though (as we have seen) nationalism is peculiar and filled with contradictions, especially in a world that is becoming increasingly globalised. Even when it undermines the sovereignty and power of nation-states, globalisation leads to increased discourse on identity and bolstering of nationalism and national identity.<sup>894</sup> When imperialism is unnoticed during national liberation, this is due to thinking that is not dialectical, that does not see far beyond surfaces and constraints. In order to overcome colonisation and imperialism we have to understand them, and this requires critical thinking. Fanon constantly emphasises the need for critical evaluation: evaluation that will show and see through the problems, the false equivalences, the reifications, the idylls, imitations, ideologies and imperialisms that persist, with evolving form. His work helps us to understand colonisation, imperialism, and national liberation and its ideologies. It helps us to conceive of a future that overcomes these problems. And this is why he is important. It is time we turn to Fanon, and read his work critically.

For Fanon, instead of looking to the past or being stuck in the present, in the framework of bourgeois ideology,<sup>895</sup> we should try to create a new future. We should move completely away from the domination of the past: only a radically different new society can be “authorised and produced by those who live in it.”<sup>896</sup> This will be a socialist and democratic

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<sup>893</sup> David Blackmon, “The Key Distinction between US Energy Independence and Energy Security”. Forbes, 07/01/2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidblackmon/2020/01/07/the-key-distinction-between-us-energy-independence-and-energy-security/#3fb55fff7859>

<sup>894</sup> Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman, *Nationalism*, 58, 157-9, 172. In the era of globalisation there has been an increase of Third-World nationalism (which we connected to national liberation and saw only aims to prevent certain forms of foreign interference). There has also been an increase of First-World nationalism, largely taking the form of wealthier regions (e.g. Barcelona, or the North of Italy) trying to “protect” themselves from poorer regions/countries they see themselves as supporting. The phenomenon of Brexit has come with massive resurgences of English and Irish nationalisms (and Irish workerism is currently at its weakest historically). See also Tom Nairn and Paul James, *Global Matrix*, for an insightful discussion of globalisation and nationalism. We also saw globalisation strengthening racial identification, and in Chapter 3 we explored the absurdities that come from trying to analyse countries on their own.

<sup>895</sup> See also Lewis Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, 86-103 on the universalisation of this framework. Reading Fanon with *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Nigel Gibson, *Fanonian Practices in South Africa*, 138 puts it that “decolonisation is revolutionary insofar as the content exceeds the expression”.

<sup>896</sup> Stefan Bird-Pollan, *Hegel, Freud and Fanon*, 105.

society, where all people participate in ruling and where all actually participate in the revolution (and the revolution does not end). In *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx criticises French intellectuals and politicians for their “structurally constrained thought”: he saw them as representative of the petty bourgeoisie because their ideas were limited by the current material constraints faced by the petty bourgeoisie.<sup>897</sup> We have seen that this is true of national liberation ideologies, limiting their thinking by universalising capitalism and imperialism and their ideologies. This limitation includes that they fail to see the potential for a better future in the present: they look to the past (as with African socialism) and to the West (as with social democracy) for any potential for a better future. On the other hand, through their critique of the given society, their dialectical, literary, anti-ideology and broad thinking, Marx and Fanon see potential for overcoming the problems of modernity. For instance, drawing *Black Skin, White Masks* to a close, Fanon cites Marx: “The social revolution ... cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future”.<sup>898</sup> The future may be unknowable, may be a continuation of the past and the present; but there is potentiality in a critical examination of the past and present for the construction of a future that transcends bourgeois domination. Similarly, concluding *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon writes, “Let us decide not to imitate Europe; let us combine our muscles and our brains in a new direction. Let us try to create the whole man, whom Europe has been incapable of bringing to triumphant birth.”<sup>899</sup>

We need, Fanon writes, “to rehabilitate mankind, and make man victorious everywhere, once and for all.”<sup>900</sup> We should, he appeals, pause and “take stock of the situation”. We need “to pass from total, indiscriminating nationalism to social and economic awareness”.<sup>901</sup> We need to get beyond nations, beyond races, beyond the bourgeois framework, beyond imperialism. “We today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe, so long as we are not obsessed by the desire to catch up with Europe.”<sup>902</sup> We need to stop using Europe as a model, because to use Europe as a model is to say that Europe is better, and to try to be like countries that benefit directly and indirectly from imperialism while forgetting that they continually

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<sup>897</sup> Karl Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte”, 329-53.

<sup>898</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 174. The citation is from Karl Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte”, 341. That the social revolution must “draw its poetry” from the future, not the past, is one of the foremost themes in *The Wretched of the Earth* too.

<sup>899</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 313.

<sup>900</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>901</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>902</sup> *Ibid.*, 312.

exploit and destroy us. Rather, our “historic mission”<sup>903</sup> is to get beyond the structures of national liberation and bourgeois ideologies. Let us go forth to achieve our mission: to invent and to make discoveries; to turn over a new leaf, work out new concepts, and set afoot a new man.<sup>904</sup>

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<sup>903</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>904</sup> Ibid., 315-6.

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