OTHER WORKS BY FRANTZ FANON
PUBLISHED BY GROVE PRESS:

Black Skin, White Masks

A Dying Colonialism

Toward the African Revolution

THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH

Frantz Fanon

Translated from the French
by Richard Philcox

with commentary by
Jean-Paul Sartre
and
Homi K. Bhabha

GROVE PRESS
New York

Originally published in the French language by François Maspero éditeur, Paris, France, under the title *Les damnés de la terre*, copyright © 1961 by François Maspero éditeur S.A.R.L.

Published simultaneously in Canada
Printed in the United States of America

FIRST EDITION

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Fanon, Frantz, 1925–1961.
[Damnés de la terre. English]
The wretched of the earth / Frantz Fanon ; translated from the French by Richard Philcox ; introductions by Jean-Paul Sartre and Homi K. Bhabha.
p. cm.
Originally published: Damnés de la terre. Paris : F. Maspero, 1961.
ISBN 0-8021-4132-3
1. France—Colonies—Africa. 2. Algeria—History—1945–1962. I. Philcox, Richard. II. Title.
DT33.F313 2004
960'.097 1244—dc22 2004042476

Grove Press
an imprint of Grove/Atlantic, Inc.
841 Broadway
New York, NY 10003

05 06 07 08 09 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

governments. This colossal task, which consists of reintroducing man into the world, man in his totality, will be achieved with the crucial help of the European masses who would do well to confess that they have often rallied behind the position of our common masters on colonial issues. In order to do this, the European masses must first of all decide to wake up, put on their thinking caps and stop playing the irresponsible game of Sleeping Beauty.

Grandeur and Weakness of Spontaneity

These reflections on violence have made us realize the frequent discrepancy between the cadres of the nationalist party and the masses, and the way they are out of step with each other. In any union or political organization there is a traditional gap between the masses who demand an immediate, unconditional improvement of their situation, and the cadres who, gauging the difficulties likely to be created by employers, put a restraint on their demands. Hence the oft-remarked tenacious discontent of the masses with regard to the cadres. After a day of demonstrations, while the cadres are celebrating victory, the masses well and truly get the feeling they have been betrayed. It is the repeated demonstrations for their rights and the repeated labor disputes that politicize the masses. A politically informed union official is someone who knows that a local dispute is not a crucial confrontation between him and management. The colonized intellectuals, who in their respective metropolises have studied the mechanism of political parties, establish similar organizations so as to mobilize the masses and put pressure on the colonial administration. The formation of nationalist parties in the colonized countries is contemporary with the birth of an intellectual and business elite. These elite attach primordial importance to the organization as such, and blind devotion to the organization

often takes priority over a rational study of colonial society. The notion of party is a notion imported from the metropolis. This instrument of modern resistance is grafted onto a protean, unbalanced reality where slavery, bondage, barter, cottage industries, and stock transactions exist side by side.

The weakness of political parties lies not only in their mechanical imitation of an organization which is used to handling the struggle of the proletariat within a highly industrialized capitalist society. Innovations and adaptations should have been made as to the type of organization at a local level. The great mistake, the inherent flaw of most of the political parties in the underdeveloped regions has been traditionally to address first and foremost the most politically conscious elements: the urban proletariat, the small tradesmen and the civil servants, i.e., a tiny section of the population which represents barely more than one percent.

However, although this proletariat understood the party propaganda and read its publications, it was much less prepared to respond to any slogans taking up the unrelenting struggle for national liberation. It has been said many times that in colonial territories the proletariat is the kernel of the colonized people most pampered by the colonial regime. The embryonic urban proletariat is relatively privileged. In the capitalist countries, the proletariat has nothing to lose and possibly everything to gain. In the colonized countries, the proletariat has everything to lose. It represents in fact that fraction of the colonized who are indispensable for running the colonial machine: tram drivers, taxi drivers, miners, dockers, interpreters, and nurses, etc. These elements make up the most loyal clientele of the nationalist parties and by the privileged position they occupy in the colonial system represent the "bourgeois" fraction of the colonized population.

So it is understandable that the clientele of the nationalist parties is above all urban: technicians, manual workers, intellectuals, and tradespeople living mainly in the towns. Their way of thinking in many ways already bears the mark of the technically advanced and relatively comfortable environment in which they

live. Here "modernism" is king. These are the very same circles which will oppose obscurantist traditions and propose innovations, thereby entering into open conflict with the old granite foundation that is the national heritage.

The large majority of the nationalist parties regard the rural masses with great mistrust. These masses give them the impression of being mired in inertia and sterility. Fairly quickly the nationalist party members (the urban workers and intellectuals) end up passing the same pejorative judgment on the peasantry as the colonists. In our endeavor to understand the reasons for this distrust of the rural masses by the political parties we should not forget that colonialism has often strengthened or established its domination by an organized petrification of the peasantry. Regimented by *marabouts*, witch doctors and traditional chiefs, the rural masses still live in a feudal state whose overbearingly medieval structure is nurtured by the colonial administrators and army.

The young national bourgeoisie, especially the business sector, now competes with these feudal rulers in a number of areas: *Marabouts* and witch doctors prevent the sick from consulting a physician; the rulings of the *djemaas* make lawyers redundant; the *kaids* use their political and administrative powers to launch a trucking business or establish a commerce; the local chiefs oppose the introduction of trade and new products in the name of religion and tradition.

The young class of colonized businessmen and traders needs to eliminate these prohibitions and barriers in order to grow. The indigenous clientele which represents the exclusive preserve of the feudal overlords and sees itself more or less banned from purchasing new products, constitutes therefore a market which both parties are fighting over.

The feudal agents form a barrier between the young Westernized nationalists and the masses. Every time the elite makes a gesture toward the rural masses, the tribal chiefs, the religious

rulers, and the traditional authorities issue repeated warnings, threats, and excommunications. These traditional authorities, sanctioned by the occupying power, feel threatened by the growing endeavors of the elite to infiltrate the rural masses. They know too well that the ideas imported by these urban elements are likely to threaten the very existence of their feudal authority. As a result, their enemy is not the occupying power with whom, in fact, they get along very well, but these modernists who are bent on dislocating the indigenous society and in doing so, take the bread out of their mouths.

The Westernized elements' feelings toward the peasant masses recall those found among the proletariat in the industrialized nations. The history of bourgeois revolutions and the history of proletarian revolutions have demonstrated that the peasant masses often represent a curb on revolution. In the industrialized countries the peasant masses are generally the least politically conscious, the least organized as well as the most anarchistic elements. They are characterized by a series of features—individualism, lack of discipline, the love of money, fits of rage, and deep depression—defining an objectively reactionary behavior.

We have seen that the nationalist parties base their methods and doctrines on the Western parties and therefore in the majority of cases do not direct their propaganda at the rural masses. In fact, a rational analysis of colonial society would have shown them that the colonized peasants live in a traditional environment whose structures have remained intact, whereas in the industrialized countries it is these traditional circles which have been splintered by the progress of industrialization. It is within the burgeoning proletariat that we find individualistic behavior in the colonies. Abandoning the countryside and its insoluble problems of demography, the landless peasants, now a lumpenproletariat, are driven into the towns, crammed into shanty towns and endeavor to infiltrate the ports and cities, the creations of colonial domination. As for the mass of the peasantry,

they continue to live in a petrified context, and those who cannot scrape a living in the countryside have no other choice but to emigrate to the cities. The peasant who stays put is a staunch defender of tradition, and in a colonial society represents the element of discipline whose social structure remains community-minded. Such a static society, clinging to a rigid context, can of course sporadically generate episodes of religious fanaticism and tribal warfare. But in their spontaneity the rural masses remain disciplined and altruistic. The individual steps aside in favor of the community.

The peasants distrust the town dweller. Dressed like a European, speaking his language, working alongside him, sometimes living in his neighborhood, he is considered by the peasant to be a renegade who has given up everything which constitutes the national heritage. The town dweller is a "traitor, a mercenary" who apparently gets along very well with the occupier and strives to succeed in the context of the colonial system. Hence the reason why we often hear the peasant say that the town dwellers have no moral standards. This is not the traditional opposition between town and country. It is the opposition between the colonized excluded from the benefits of colonialism and their counterparts who manage to turn the colonial system to their advantage.

The colonialists, moreover, use this antagonism in their opposition to the nationalist parties. They mobilize the population in the mountains and the interior against the urban population. They set the back country against the coast, they revive tribal identities, and it should come as no surprise to see Kalondji crowned king of Kasai or some years back, the Assembly of Chiefs in Ghana hold its ground against N'Krumah.

The political parties are unable to establish roots in the countryside. Instead of adapting the existing structures in order to invest them with nationalist or progressive elements, they are intent on disrupting traditional existence within the context of the colonial system. They imagine they can jump-start the nation

whereas the mesh of the colonial system is still tightly interlocked. They make no effort to reach out to the masses. They do not place their theoretical knowledge at the service of the people, but instead try to regiment the masses according to a pre-determined schema. Consequently, they parachute into the villages inexperienced or unknown leaders from the capital who, empowered by the central authorities, endeavor to manage the *douar* or the village like a company committee. The traditional chiefs are ignored, sometimes taken down a peg. Instead of integrating the history of the village and conflicts between tribes and clans into the people's struggle, the history of the future nation has a singular disregard for minor local histories and tramples on the only thing relevant to the nation's actuality. The elders, held in respect in traditional societies and generally invested with an undeniable moral authority, are publicly ridiculed. The occupier's services have no scruples making use of the ensuing resentment and are kept informed of the slightest decision adopted by this caricature of authority. A well-informed police repression, based on factual intelligence gathering, is quick to follow. The leaders parachuted in from the outside and the main members of the new assembly are arrested.

These setbacks confirm "the theoretical analysis" of the nationalist parties. The disastrous attempts at regimenting the rural masses reinforce the parties' distrust and crystallize their aggressiveness toward this section of the population. After the victorious struggle for national liberation, the same mistakes are repeated fostering the trend to decentralize and self-govern. The tribalism of the colonial phase is replaced by regionalism in the national phase expressed institutionally as federalism.

But it so happens that the rural masses, in spite of the little control the parties have over them, play a crucial role either in the gestation of the national consciousness or in relaying the initiatives of the nationalist parties, and in some rare cases taking over purely and simply from the parties' sterility.

The nationalist parties' propaganda always finds a response among the peasantry. The memory of the precolonial period is still very much alive in the villages. Mothers still hum to their children the songs which accompanied the warriors as they set off to fight the colonizer. At the age of twelve or thirteen the young villagers know by heart the names of the elders who took part in the last revolt, and the dreams in the *douars* and villages are not those of the children in the cities dreaming of luxury goods or passing their exams but dreams of identification with such and such a hero whose heroic death still brings tears to their eyes.

At a time when the nationalist parties are endeavoring to organize the embryonic working class in the towns, we are witnessing apparently inexplicable social unrest in the interior. We can take as an example the infamous 1947 insurrection in Madagascar. The colonial services stated categorically that it was a peasant revolt. In fact we now know that things, as always, were much more complex. During the Second World War the major colonial companies extended their influence and grabbed any remaining land. There was also talk at the same period of the possible settlement on the island of Jewish, Kabyle, and West Indian refugees. The rumor also spread of an imminent invasion of the island by the whites from South Africa abetted by the colonists. After the war, therefore, the candidates on the nationalist ticket were triumphantly elected. Immediately afterwards, factions of the MDRM party (Mouvement Démocratique de la Rénovation Malgache) underwent repression. In order to achieve their ends the colonial authorities employed the usual methods: mass arrests; intertribal, racist propaganda; and the creation of a party with the unorganized factions of the lumpenproletariat. This party, called the Disinherited of Madagascar (PADESM), and its decidedly provocative actions, was to provide the colonial authorities with the legal pretext it needed to maintain law and order. Such a premeditated, commonplace

operation as eliminating a political party, however, here took on gigantic proportions. On the defensive for three or four years the rural masses suddenly felt themselves in mortal danger and decided to violently resist the colonialist forces. Armed with spears, and more often with sticks and stones, the population rose up in a widespread revolt with the aim of national liberation. We know how it ended.

Such armed revolts constitute but one of the methods used by the rural masses to join in the national struggle. In some cases the peasants act as a relay following the unrest in the towns where the nationalist party is the object of police repression. The news reaches the interior exaggerated out of all proportion: leaders arrested, others gunned down, the city running red with the blood of blacks, the poor white settlers swimming in Arab blood. All the pent-up hatred, all the exacerbated hatred then explodes. The local police station is taken over, the officers hacked to pieces, the elementary school teacher murdered, the doctor gets away with his life only because he is absent, etc., etc. Pacifying troops are dispatched to the field, the air force drops bombs. The banner of revolt is then unfurled, the old warrior traditions resurface, the women cheer on the men who band together and take up their positions in the mountains, and guerrilla warfare begins. Spontaneously the peasants create a widespread sense of insecurity; colonialism takes fright, settles into a state of war, or else negotiates.

How do the nationalist parties react to this decisive irruption by the peasant masses into the national struggle? We have seen that the majority of the nationalist parties have not written the need for armed intervention into their propaganda. They are not opposed to a sustained revolt, but they leave it up to the spontaneity of the rural masses. In other words, their attitude towards these new developments is as if they were heaven-sent, praying they continue. They exploit this godsend, but make no attempt

to organize the rebellion. They do not dispatch agents to the interior to politicize the masses, to enlighten their consciousness or raise the struggle to a higher level. They hope that swept along by its own momentum the action of the masses will not flag. There is no contamination of the rural movement by the urban movement. Each side evolves according to its own dialectic.

At a time when the rural masses are totally receptive, the nationalist parties make no attempt to introduce them to an agenda. They have no objective to offer and simply hope that the movement will continue indefinitely and that the bombardments will not win the day. We thus see that the nationalist parties do not make use of even this opportunity to integrate the rural masses and raise their political awareness as well as their struggle to a higher level. They stubbornly maintain their criminal position of distrust with regard to the interior.

The political cadres hole up in the towns and make it clear to the colonial authorities they have no connections with the rebels, or else leave the country. Seldom do they join forces with the people in the mountains. In Kenya, for example, during the Mau-Mau insurrection no known nationalist claimed he was a member of the movement or attempted to defend it.

There are no constructive talks, no confrontation between the different social strata of the nation. Once independence has been achieved after repression of the rural masses and collusion between the colonial authorities and the nationalist parties, we find this mutual incomprehension exacerbated. The peasantry balk at the structural reforms proposed by the government as well as the even objectively progressive social innovations, precisely because the current leaders of the regime did not explain to the people during the colonial period the party objectives, national policy, and international issues, etc.

The mistrust felt by the rural population and the traditional leaders toward the nationalist parties during the colonial period is matched by equal hostility during the national period. The

colonialist secret service, which is still at work after independence, foments discontent and still manages to create serious difficulties for the young governments. When all is said and done, the government is merely paying for its idleness during the liberation period and its enduring contempt for the peasantry. The nation may well have a rational, even progressive head, but its huge body remains retarded, rebellious and recalcitrant.

The temptation is great therefore to crush this body by centralizing the administration and keeping a firm control over the people. This is one of the reasons why we often hear that the underdeveloped countries need a dose of dictatorship. The leaders distrust the rural masses. This distrust, moreover, can take on serious proportions. Such is the case for certain governments that, long after national independence, consider the interior as an unpacified region where the head of state and his minsters only venture during army maneuvers. The interior is considered a virtual terra incognita. Paradoxically, the national government's attitude toward the rural masses is reminiscent in some ways of the colonial power. "We are not too sure how the masses will react"; "We need to use the lash if we want to take this country out of the Dark Ages," the young leaders are not afraid to say. But, as we have seen, the political parties' disregard for the rural masses during the colonial period can only be prejudicial to national unity and to setting rapidly the nation in motion.

Sometimes colonialism endeavors to diversify and dislocate the nationalist upsurge. Instead of stirring up the sheiks and the chiefs against the "revolutionaries" in the towns, the Native Bureaus organize the tribes and religious brotherhoods into parties. Confronted with an urban party which is beginning to "embody the will of the nation" and constitute a threat to the colonial regime, factions are born, and sympathies and parties based on tribe and region emerge. The entire tribe is transformed into a political party in close consultation with the colonialists. Roundtable discussions

can now begin. The party of national unity is swamped by the very number of political factions. The tribal parties oppose centralization and unity and denounce the one party dictatorship.

Later on the same tactics will be used by the national opposition. The occupier has already made his choice from the two or three nationalist parties who led the liberation struggle. The method of choice is typical: Once a party has achieved national unanimity and has emerged as the sole negotiator, the occupier begins his maneuvering and delays negotiations as long as possible. The delay is used to whittle away the party's demands and obtain concessions from the leadership to remove certain "extremist" elements.

If, however, no single party emerges, the occupier is content to favor the one which seems to him to be the most "reasonable." The nationalist parties, which were excluded from the negotiations, then loudly denounce the agreement concluded between the other party and the occupier. The party which takes over power from the occupier, conscious of the danger of the rival party's vague, strictly demagogic positions, endeavors to dismantle and outlaw it. The persecuted party has no other alternative but to take refuge on the periphery of the towns and in the interior. It attempts to stir up the rural masses against the "mercenaries of the coast and the corrupt elements in the capital." Any excuse is good enough—from religious arguments to the tradition-breaking innovations introduced by the new national authority. It exploits the obscurantist tendencies of the rural masses. Its so-called revolutionary doctrine is in fact based on the reactionary, heated, and spontaneous nature of the peasantry. It spreads the rumor here and there that the mountainous regions of the interior are on the move, that there is discontent among the peasants. It claims that in one region the police have opened fire on the peasants, reinforcements have been dispatched, and the government is about to collapse. With no clear program and

no other objective but to take over from the team in power, the opposition parties put their fate in the hands of the spontaneous and obscure mass of the peasantry.

Conversely, in some cases the opposition no longer seeks support from the rural masses but from the progressive elements of the young nation's labor unions. In this case the government calls upon the masses to resist the workers' demands, calling them rash, antitraditionalist maneuvers. The observations we have noted concerning the political parties can now be applied to the labor unions, mutatis mutandis. The first labor unions in the colonial territories are usually local branches of their metropolitan counterparts and their slogans echo those of the metropolis.

Once the crucial phase of the liberation struggle begins to take shape, a group of indigenous union leaders decides to create a national labor movement. The locals desert en masse the previous organization imported from the metropolis. The formation of this union is another way for the urban population to exert pressure on the colonial authorities. We have already said that the proletariat in the colonies is embryonic and represents the most privileged fraction of the population. The national labor unions born out of the liberation struggle are urban organizations and their program is above all political and nationalist. But this national union born during the decisive phase of the fight for independence is in fact the legal enlistment of dynamic, politically conscious nationalist elements.

The rural masses, despised by the political parties, continue to be kept on the sidelines. There is, of course, an agricultural workers' union but such a formation is content to satisfy the formal need for "a united front against colonialism." The union leaders who began their careers in the context of the metropolitan unions are at a loss when it comes to organizing the rural masses. They have lost touch with the peasantry and are mainly concerned with enlisting steelworkers, dockers and civil servants in the utilities sector, etc.

During the colonial phase the nationalist labor unions represent a spectacular strike force. In the towns these unions can paralyze or at least disrupt at any moment the colonialist economy. Since the European settlements are mostly confined to the towns, the psychological repercussions are considerable: no gas, no electricity, no garbage pickup, and produce lies rotting on the wharfs.

These metropolitan enclaves, which the towns represent in the colonial context, are profoundly affected by this labor unrest. The stronghold of colonialism, the capital, has difficulty withstanding such a battering. But the rural masses of the interior remain unaffected by this confrontation.

There is, therefore, a clear disproportion from the national point of view between the importance of the labor unions and the rest of the nation. After independence the workers enlisted in the unions have the impression of running on empty. Once the limited objectives they set themselves have been achieved, they prove to be extremely precarious given the huge task of nation building. Faced with a national bourgeoisie whose relations with the government are often very close, the union leaders discover they can no longer confine themselves to labor disputes. Congenitally isolated from the rural masses, incapable of extending their influence beyond the urban periphery, the unions adopt an increasingly political stance. In fact they become political candidates. They endeavor by every means possible to drive the bourgeoisie into a corner: protests are made against keeping foreign bases on national soil, commercial deals are exposed, and criticism is voiced against the national government's foreign policy. The workers, now "independent," are getting nowhere. The unions realize in the aftermath of independence that if their social demands were to be expressed they would scandalize the rest of the nation. The workers are in fact pampered by the regime. They represent the most well-to-do fraction of the people. Any unrest aimed at winning improved living standards for the laborers and dock workers would not only be unpopular but might very well stir up the hostility of

the disinherited rural population. The unions, banned from union activities, make no headway.

This malaise conveys the objective need for a social program which, at long last, concerns the entire nation. The unions suddenly discover that the interior must also be enlightened and organized. But since they never bothered to establish working links between their organization and the peasantry, who represent the only spontaneously revolutionary force in the country, the unions prove to be ineffective and realize the anachronistic nature of their program.

The union leaders, immersed in worker-control politics, inevitably reach the preparatory stage for a coup d'état. But here again the interior is excluded. It is a showdown restricted to the national bourgeoisie and the unionized workers movement. The national bourgeoisie, appropriating the old traditions of colonialism, flexes its military and police muscle, whereas the unions organize meetings and mobilize tens of thousands of their members. The peasants shrug their shoulders as they muse over this national bourgeoisie and these workers who after all have enough to eat. The peasants shrug their shoulders for they realize that both parties treat them as a makeshift force. The unions, the parties and the government, in a kind of immoral Machiavellianism, use the peasant masses as a blind, inert force of intervention. As a kind of brute force.

In certain circumstances, however, the peasant masses make a crucial contribution to the struggle for national liberation as well as to the course of action opted for by the future nation. For the underdeveloped countries this phenomenon is of fundamental importance, and this is the reason why we propose to study it in detail.

We have seen that the nationalist parties' will to smash colonialism works hand in hand with the will to remain on good terms with the colonial authorities. Within these parties two lines of action can emerge. First of all, some of the intellectual elements,

who have made a thorough analysis of the colonial reality and the international situation, begin to criticize the ideological vacuum of the national party and its dearth of strategy and tactics. They never tire of asking the leaders the crucial questions "What is nationalism? What does it mean to you? What does the term signify? What is the point of independence? And first how do you intend to achieve it?" while at the same time demanding that methodological issues be vigorously addressed. To electioneering methods they suggest adding "any other means." At the first signs of a skirmish, the leaders are quick to call them juvenile hotheads. But because these demands are neither juvenile nor hotheaded, the revolutionary elements articulating them are rapidly isolated and removed. The leaders cloaked in their experience ruthlessly reject "these upstarts, these anarchists."

The party machine tends to resist any innovation. The revolutionary minority finds itself isolated, confronted by a leadership, frightened and anguished at the idea it could be swept away in a whirlwind whose nature, strength and direction are beyond its imagining.

The second line of action involves the senior or junior cadres whose activities have been the object of colonialist police persecution. It is worth noting that these men attained the leadership of the party through sheer hard work, self-sacrifice, and an exemplary patriotism. These men from the rank and file are often laborers, seasonal workers and sometimes even genuinely unemployed. For them, being activists in a national party is not a question of politics but the only way of casting off their animal status for a human one. These men, uncomfortable with the party's exacerbated legalism, demonstrate, within the limits of their assigned activities, a spirit of initiative, courage, and a sense of purpose which almost systematically make them targets for the forces of colonialist repression. Arrested, convicted, tortured, and amnestied, they use their period of detention to compare ideas and harden their determination. Strengthened by the ordeal of hunger strikes and the brutal solidarity of the prisons that are little

better than communal graveyards, they live out their liberation as a godsent opportunity to launch the armed struggle. Meanwhile outside, the colonial authorities, besieged now from all sides, are making overtures to the nationalist moderates.

What we see therefore is a splintering close to breaking point between the official and the unofficial party factions. The unofficial elements are made to feel undesirable, and are shunned. The legal factions come to their aid, but taking so many precautions that the unofficial factions already feel themselves to be outsiders. These men then make contact with the intellectual elements whose position they admired a few years previously. The encounter leads to the formation of an underground party, parallel to the official party. But the repression of these irredeemable elements intensifies as the official party draws closer to colonialism and attempts to change it "from the inside." The unofficial faction then finds itself in an historical dead end.

Driven from the towns, these men first of all take refuge in the urban periphery. But the police network smokes them out and forces them to leave the towns for good and abandon the arena of political struggle. They retreat to the interior, the mountains, and deep into the rural masses. Initially, the masses close in around them, protecting them from the manhunt. The nationalist militant who decides to put his fate in the hands of the peasant masses, instead of playing hide-and-seek with the police in the urban centers, will never regret it. The peasant cloak wraps him in a mantle of unimagined tenderness and vitality. Veritable exiles in their own country and severed from the urban milieu where they drew up the concepts of nation and political struggle, they take to the *maquis*. Constantly forced to remain on the move to elude the police, walking by night so as not to attract attention, they are able to travel the length and breadth of their country and get to know it. Gone are the cafés, the discussions about the coming elections or the cruelty of such-and-such a police officer.

Their ears hear the true voice of the country and their eyes see the great and infinite misery of the people. They realize that precious time has been wasted on futile discussion about the colonial regime. They realize at last that change does not mean reform, that change does not mean improvement. Now possessed with a kind of vertigo they realize that the political unrest in the towns will always be powerless to change and overthrow the colonial regime.

Discussions with the peasants now become a ritual for them. They discover that the rural masses have never ceased to pose the problem of their liberation in terms of violence, of taking back the land from the foreigners, in terms of *national struggle* and armed revolt. Everything is simple. These men discover a coherent people who survive in a kind of petrified state, but keep intact their moral values and their attachment to the nation. They discover a generous people, prepared to make sacrifices, willing to give all they have, impatient, with an indestructible pride. Understandably, the encounter between these militants, hounded by the police, and these restless, instinctively rebellious masses can produce an explosive mixture of unexpected power. The men from the towns let themselves be guided by the people and at the same time give them military and political training. The people sharpen their weapons. In fact the training proves short-lived, for the masses, realizing the strength of their own muscles, force the leaders to accelerate events. The armed struggle is triggered.

Insurrection disorients the political parties. Their doctrine has always claimed the ineffectiveness of any confrontation and their very existence serves to condemn any idea of revolt. Certain political parties secretly share the optimism of the colonists and are glad to be no party to this madness which, it is said, can only end in bloodshed. But the flames have been lit and like an epidemic, spread like wildfire throughout the country. The tanks and planes do not achieve the success they counted on. Faced with the extent of the damage, colonialism begins to have second

thoughts. Voices are raised within the oppressor nation that draw attention to the gravity of the situation.

As for the people living in their huts and their dreams, their hearts begin to beat to the new national rhythm and they softly sing unending hymns to the glory of the fighters. The insurrection has already spread throughout the nation. It is now the turn of the parties to be isolated.

Sooner or later, however, the leaders of the insurrection realize the need to extend the insurrection to the towns. Such a realization is not fortuitous. It completes the dialectic which governs the development of an armed struggle for national liberation. Although the rural areas represent endless reserves of popular energy and its groups of armed men maintain a reign of insecurity, colonialism never really doubts the strength of its system. It does not feel in actual danger. The leaders of the insurrection therefore decide to move the war into enemy territory, i.e., into the serenity and grandiloquence of the cities.

It is no easy matter for the leadership to foment an insurrection in the cities. We have seen that most of the leaders, born or raised in the towns, were so hounded by the colonialist police and so generally misunderstood by the rationally minded, overcautious cadres of the political parties, that they fled their home environment. Their retreat to the interior was both an escape from repression and a distrust of the old political formations. The natural urban relays for these leaders are the nationalists who have made a name for themselves in the political parties. But we have seen that their recent history has little in common with these timorous leaders who spend their time mired in endless discussions on the evils of colonialism.

Moreover, the first overtures made by the men from the *maquis* in the direction of their former friends, those they consider to be farthest to the left, confirm their fears and eradicate any desire to renew their acquaintance with them again. In fact the insurrection, which starts in the rural areas, is introduced into the towns by that fraction of the peasantry blocked at the urban

periphery, those who still have not found a single bone to gnaw in the colonial system. These men, forced off the family land by the growing population in the countryside and by colonial expropriation, circle the towns tirelessly, hoping that one day or another they will be let in. It is among these masses, in the people of the shanty towns and in the lumpenproletariat that the insurrection will find its urban spearhead. The lumpenproletariat, this cohort of starving men, divorced from tribe and clan, constitutes one of the most spontaneously and radically revolutionary forces of a colonized people.

In Kenya, during the years preceding the Mau-Mau revolt, the British colonial authorities increased their intimidation tactics against the lumpenproletariat. The police and missionaries coordinated their efforts in the years 1950–51 to respond appropriately to the enormous influx of young Kenyans from the countryside and the forest who, unable to find jobs, took to stealing, debauchery and alcoholism, etc. Juvenile delinquency in the colonized countries stems directly from this lumpenproletariat. Similarly, drastic measures were taken in the Congo from 1957 onwards to send back to the interior the "young hooligans" who were disturbing the peace. Relocation camps were opened and assigned to the evangelical missions under the protection, of course, of the Belgian army.

The formation of a lumpenproletariat is a phenomenon which is governed by its own logic, and neither the overzealousness of the missionaries nor decrees from the central authorities can check its growth. However hard it is kicked or stoned it continues to gnaw at the roots of the tree like a pack of rats.

The shanty town is the consecration of the colonized's biological decision to invade the enemy citadel at all costs, and if need be, by the most underground channels. The lumpenproletariat constitutes a serious threat to the "security" of the town and signifies the irreversible rot and the gangrene eating into the heart of colonial domination. So the pimps, the hooligans, the