***“Start Stabbing Before the Soup Cools Down”: Dialectics of Black Thought from Frantz Fanon to Huey P. Newton***

***0: Introduction of the Argument***

Black/Africana philosophers have made great contributions towards improving our understanding of Frantz Fanon’s philosophical thought by falsifying the assumptions of epistemological convergence between his dialectical thinking and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s. However, they have yet to provide an account of how Fanon’s dialectical thinking about violence evolved to be centered around 20th century breakthroughs in anticolonial guerilla warfare and its systematic negation as theorized and practiced by European empires throughout the colonial era: counterinsurgency (or savage) warfare. In this essay, I fill this gap in knowledge by arguing that the central object of Fanonian dialectics is violence (anticolonial guerilla warfare), the achievement of the decolonized Black nation and the eventual creation of a new anti-colonial (Pan-African) world order over and against its dialectical negation: Neo-colonialism via colonial counterinsurgency. Furthermore, I argue that Fanon’s dialectical thought helped lay the basis for the emergence of a new theory of revolution against US empire coined by Huey P. Newton as intercommunalism. The complementarity and conceptual harmony between Fanon’s and Newton’s dialectical thinking about US/colonial empire, counterinsurgency, the imperative of creating new forms of humanism, and the lumpen masses as primary agents in the revolutionary transformation of society comprise what I call the ‘empire as pacification’ thesis.

There has been a negligible amount of intellectual history within the discipline of philosophy around slavery and empire, but recent work in political theory has documented how anticolonial Black nationalist critiques of Western Liberalism helped establish a universal right to self-determination in the post-WW2 period.[[1]](#endnote-1) In his arguments against nationalism and federalism, Fanon anticipates some of the oversights and assumptions of anticolonial Pan-African self-determination and offers a population-centric approach to the creation of a new world order premised on the revolutionary agency of the lumpenproletariat. This insight is adapted and extended upon by Huey P. Newton’s philosophy of ‘intercommunalism’. In its formulation by Fanon, and later by Newton, what I identify as the ‘empire as pacification’ thesis is grounded in the normative goal of creating a new order of being and human existence. That is to say, the logical consequence of the thesis is that the warlike triumph of the masses of people around the world over empire (pacification) will generate a new (and truly universal) order of existence outside of the pseudo-logics/categories that sustain our current world order and its idea of the human.

This essay contains five parts. First, I will introduce the problem of epistemic convergence and how the broader theoretical and structural regime of academic philosophy limits our understanding of Black diasporic thinkers in general and Frantz Fanon in particular. In the second section, I introduce counterinsurgency as a paradigm of war that has changed assumptions in modern military thinking about the importance of civilian populations for accomplishing victory. In the third section, I will go on to outline Fanon’s magnum opus, *Wretched of the Earth* (WOTE), and how his arguments position the unemployed colonized masses (the lumpen) at the ‘center of gravity’ in anticolonial guerrilla warfare and as the basis for the accomplishment of a new world order/idea of humanity. In the fourth, I will demonstrate the intellectual link and subsequent evolution of key ideas from Fanon to the theory posited by Huey P. Newton as ‘intercommunalism’. Theorizing the enormous technological power of the US and its emergence as the first extraterritorial empire in the history of humanity, Newton synthesized the insights of Fanon, Malcolm X (“El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz”), and a host of other anti-colonial/Black nationalist ideas within a dialectical materialist framework to identify the conceptual basis of this new empire as counterinsurgency. Furthermore, Newton argues that its negation entailed a world revolution led by a Black lumpen-vanguard. The observed complementarity and conceptual harmony between Fanon’s and Newton’s dialectical thinking about US/colonial empire, counterinsurgency, the imperative of creating new forms of humanism, and the lumpen masses as primary agents in the revolutionary transformation of society comprise what I call the ‘empire as pacification’ thesis.

This thesis not only verifies an understudied intellectual link between Anglophone and Francophone vectors of Black thought but shows how these were formulated in dialectical opposition to cutting-edge Western epistemology, military and strategic thinking.[[2]](#endnote-2) Furthermore, the empire as pacification thesis expresses a nexus between the thought of El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, Frantz Fanon and Huey P. Newton around the militarized forms of repression associated with colonial imperialism, neo-colonialism and the radical potentiality of the Black lumpenproletariat. As a result, it can help improve philosophers’ grasp of deep historical trends in modern military thinking but also potentially provides a theoretical basis for resisting the criminalization of (and therefore reinventing) the concept of Black self-defense given the enduring centrality of counterinsurgent methods of managerialism to liberal democratic governance today.[[3]](#endnote-3)

***1: The Problem of Stasis in Black Thought***

Western liberal arts scholars employ a limited set of methodologies to interpret Black African and/or Diasporic thought. The idea that Black thought is the product of “an autonomous historical dynamic” with its own intellectual genealogy “is foreign to many contemporary theorists” in the Western academy.[[4]](#endnote-4) In the case of psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon, scholars either emphasize aspects of his corpus more amenable to existentialist inquiry or interpret his analysis of violence in the struggle for decolonization in his worksas an oversimplified and exaggerated aspect of his thought that ultimately boils down to a racialized recapitulation of Hegelian dialectics, or some other aspect of European philosophy. This epistemological problem is acute throughout contemporary academic philosophy. As philosopher Tommy Curry argues in *On Derelict and Method* (2011), Black thought is both in stasis and systematically under-specialized under the assimilationist paradigm of legitimacy in academic philosophy.[[5]](#endnote-5) Accordingly, Black philosophers are only regarded as contributing to legitimate advances in knowledge to the extent “they extend or reify currently maintained traditions of thought in” European/American philosophy.[[6]](#endnote-6) This problematic, wherein “the actual thought of Black thinkers are distorted so they can be framed within the disciplinary structure of philosophy,” is called epistemic convergence.[[7]](#endnote-7) Despite the enduring structural reification of epistemic convergence and its normative counterpart – racial normativity – in American philosophy as an academic endeavor whose “unspoken function” is “preventing the falsification of white thought,” Africana philosophers have pushed for an understanding of thinkers like Fanon grounded in intellectual history and the anticolonial roots of his dialectical thinking.[[8]](#endnote-8)

In his article *Dialectics of Oppression: Fanon’s Anticolonial Critique of Hegelian Dialectics* (2018), philosopher Adebayo Ogungbre shows that Hegelian dialectics and Fanonian dialectics are not co-extensive.[[9]](#endnote-9) Hegel used a system of dialectics to theorize about the axis of being and the logical structure of self-consciousness in terms of “lord-bondsman dialectics,” allowing for the possibility of a shared philosophical anthropology or ontological register between the two *only* after the lord educates the bondsman through: a) exercising power so that the bondsman comes to have a “fear of death”; b) subjecting them to harsh “external discipline”; and c) forcing them to “labour on the external world.”[[10]](#endnote-10) The sheer brutality of Hegelian dialectics is exemplified by the fact that the ‘lord-bondsman’ thesis corresponds to his racist philosophical anthropology. His various writings about ethnology and human diversity confirm that for Hegel Black/African peoples are “outside of the realm of consciousness and as such” they lack “the ultimate marker of being human or human being.”[[11]](#endnote-11)

Ogungbre explains further that Hegel’s dialectics reflected “anthropological assumptions about being and reason, consciousness and non-being” that “laid the groundwork for what he would later develop as a theory of human (white European) consciousness” which also understood Black Africans to be savages and ‘things’ who possessed no formal ontological categories due to their racial inferiority.[[12]](#endnote-12) Reducing “an entire race of people to the realm of nothingness,” Hegelian dialectics postulates Africans/African-descended peoples to be objects of “no value” rather than humans worthy of reciprocity.[[13]](#endnote-13) Thus, Hegel used the “lord-bondsman” dialectic to defend slavery as an institution that “can develop ‘ethical insight’ in him by lifting the slave ‘above a worse servitude to his passions and appetites’ (that is, by breaking his self-will).”[[14]](#endnote-14) Hegel was not alone in this postulation of the lord-bondsman dialectic to support the enslavement of Africans as an ultimate good. His ideas concerning the dialectic, the “immense benefits” of lordship, and the ultimate necessity of breaking the African slave’s self-will to educate him into white civilization “reflected the most authoritative ethnological thinking of the nineteenth century” and was “used to justify the modernization of the American slave institution” in the US by his readers.[[15]](#endnote-15)

Conversely, Fanon responded to Hegel’s centering of the power to define Being and non-Being in the white race by introducing a new bifurcation “to rupture the fundamental assumptions of Hegelian dialectics” – the colonizer and the colonized – in his first work *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952).[[16]](#endnote-16) On this basis, Fanon conceptualized Black existence on a register called the ‘zone of nonbeing’. Recognition akin to the Hegelian formula is not a possibility under colonialism because the logics of dehumanization overdetermine Black humanity as devoid of rationality and beast-like. As Ogungbre explains, “Fanon sees Hegel’s system of consciousness and Absolute spiritism as the banishment of the “Negro” to racialized violence” and slavery.[[17]](#endnote-17) So, Fanon reasoned, the violence that proceeds from colonial anthropology and epistemology demands violence on the part of the colonized as a dialectical counter-response. Furthermore, this violence functions as a psycho-existential cleansing mechanism that allows the objectified/dehumanized colonials to reinvent their humanity through the struggle for liberation.

As Ogungbure writes, the struggle for existence on behalf of Black humanity “necessitates the use of violence because the only way Black people could gain recognition as human is to impose themselves on the colonialists who have excluded them from the realm of being.”[[18]](#endnote-18) Here, Ogungbure makes clear that Fanon asserted that the colonized “must confront the total negation to which they are subjected by another negation. They must confront violence with violence. Force can only be resisted and transcended with counter-force.”[[19]](#endnote-19) For Fanon, violence is as an “intrinsic good rather than a means to an end” that can potentially lay the basis for “the colonized affirming and reconstructing him/herself” and contributing to a new theory of man or philosophical anthropology beyond the humanism and racial taxonomy championed by Hegel.[[20]](#endnote-20) Thus, the imposition of negation and death on Black/colonized populations is dialectical because these conditions provide the possibility for the Black/colonized subject to reconstitute its own being and attain self-mastery or Being ‘in-itself-for-itself’ through confrontation and a struggle to the death against the colonizer.

***2: Savage Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and the Significance of Civilian Populations in Modern Unconventional Military Strategy***

As opposed to attrition styles of warfare intent on wearing down the enemy to the point of collapse through continuous losses in personnel and material on the battlefield, counterinsurgency (and its goal of pacification) centers on entire population groups and is defined in a recent US military field manual as the “military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency.”[[21]](#endnote-21) Said differently, counterinsurgency is “an umbrella term that describes the complete range of measures that governments take to defeat insurgencies” – such measures “may be political, administrative, military, economic, psychological, or informational, and are almost always used in combination.”[[22]](#endnote-22)

However, the conceptual origin of counterinsurgency lies in the ethnological (racial) division between the civilized white race and uncivilized/savage non-white races established during the late 18th and early 19th century.[[23]](#endnote-23) For European colonial empires, warfare against nonwhite racial groups was “shaped by the colonial ideologies and racial hierarchies implicit in the ‘civilizing mission’ and central to the imperial experience.”[[24]](#endnote-24) Thus, the “[c]onstruction of the enemy as ‘un-civilized’, ‘savage’, or ‘fanatic’ had severe implications for the conduct of what became known as savage warfare; it dictated and justified techniques of violence that were by the same token considered unacceptable in conflicts between so-called ‘civilized’ nations.”[[25]](#endnote-25)

Exploring the theoretical origins of counterinsurgency in the European experience of colonialism in his work, *The 19th century Origins of Counterinsurgency Doctrine* (2010), political scientist Thomas Rid explains that because counterinsurgency is rooted in colonial warfare it is centered on civilians or the masses of the population. The modern military focus on populations is usually traced to the work of David Galula’s *Counter-insurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (1962), which theorizes victory as pacification. That is, victory as “conditional on the isolation of the insurgent from the population, an isolation not enforced by external actors but maintained by and with the population.”[[26]](#endnote-26) Though well-developed, Rid shows that Galula’s ideas were “hardly innovative” and reflected the French (and British) experience with “irregular warfare and counterinsurgency in North Africa and elsewhere.”[[27]](#endnote-27)

Showing how colonialism fueled European modern operational military thinking and the creation of new tactics of unconventional war, Rid explains that beginning in the 1830s, French officers adapted the indigenous ‘ghazya’ tactic into ‘razzias’ that imposed indiscriminate slaughter and produced terror among the population of Algeria. In its initial formula conducted by Bedouin nomadic societies, the ‘ghazya’ was a kind of competitive exhibition wherein “marauding expeditions of clansmen seized camels, goats, and livestock” from other groups—rarely resulting in death.[[28]](#endnote-28) But given the ethnological (racial) inferiority of their enemy, European military strategists began to construct people in the region as particularly barbarous threats who could only be defeated using equally barbarous methods like the razzia—which left hundreds of bodies in its wake.[[29]](#endnote-29)

Importantly though, the razzia was just one dimension of a new doctrinal approach to war in colonial territories against darker races or ‘savages’. Rather than “conducting war in a regimental or industrial manner a new standard of warfare was operationalized as tactics became centered on racialized populations” – counterinsurgency — according to which “victory necessitated violence being imposed on the multitude.”[[30]](#endnote-30) Importantly though, the flipside of the razzia within this new approach to warfighting was the *bureaux arabes*, which functioned as an organ of civil-military administration and drew on ethnological sciences to provide an apparatus which would surveil, manage, and ‘develop’ the broader colonial population in Algeria. Though seemingly inapplicable as a military approach, Rid explains that this aspect of pacification was posited by the same thinker who adapted the razzia strategy, General Marshal Thomas Robert Bugeaud. As Rid writes, “[t]he same fierce general who elevated the brutal razzia to a systematic method to deal with adversarial tribes also understood that a more civil and cooperative method was required to deal with cooperative tribes and populations.”[[31]](#endnote-31)

Drawing on their colonial experiences across Africa (from Algeria to Madagascar), French officers conceptualized the emerging role of populations in warfare using ideas that “still dominate the counterinsurgency debate” and guide the conduct of unconventional wars today.[[32]](#endnote-32) As they understood it, to achieve victory or pacification in a counterinsurgency required a two-step approach: the conquest of land/territory and the *culture* (or morals) of a people. The first is secured by force, the second is secured by the manipulation of the subject population’s culture through social engineering and persuading them that working with the white colonial regime is in their best interests. As Rid explains, French military strategists like General “Gallieni, and then his disciple [Colonel] Lyautey, developed the oil-slick/stain method and regarded the population as the central battleground that needed not only to be secured and protected from insurgent violence – but persuaded that working with the French was better for them than letting the rebels take over government.”[[33]](#endnote-33)

Thus, counterinsurgency came to be characterized by the “stark operational and philosophical contrast between the razzia [brute force] and the buereaux arabes [civil administration/development] on the other.”[[34]](#endnote-34) This operational duality would become the basis by which insurgencies would be countered by Western Liberal regimes writ large in the aftermath of WW2. During this period “Maoism became the main paradigm of insurgency warfare throughout the developing world and COIN would evolve to respond to such a paradigm” through ‘comprehensive’ approaches to pacification.[[35]](#endnote-35) This meant that Western world powers came to see “that the responsibility to fight an insurgency is not exclusive of security institutions but of a wider range of state and even societal organizations.”[[36]](#endnote-36) So, from its 19th century origins in European colonial military strategy these counterintuitive “principles would later become a central tenet of modern COIN, as it has been experienced in Afghanistan, Iraq and Colombia.”[[37]](#endnote-37) Importantly, Western regimes also shifted the primary justification of counterinsurgency away from the division between the civilized white race and the uncivilized dark savage during this period as well.

As political scientist Laleh Khalili explains in *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies* (2019), the Western-liberal will to improve lesser/darker races and the colonial discourse of the civilizing mission has been reconfigured into nonracial terms in the post-WWII era. Traditionally, a white supremacist hierarchy of races and civilizations “has been used to justify conquest, to epistemologically construe some peoples as outside history, to allow for differential application of ostensibly universal laws” and to impose violent forms of discipline and dehumanization that represents European conquest as “vested in the education and uplift of the native.”[[38]](#endnote-38) But these explicit racial hierarchies and their justifications for colonialism were restated by the West in cultural terms due to both embarrassment in the aftermath of the Third Reich’s pogrom of Jews and the rise of anticolonial guerrilla resistance in the international arena. As Khalili writes, “[e]verywhere, past intimations of racial inferiority gave way to a language of developmental backwardness.”[[39]](#endnote-39)

Similar processes occurred in Britian and the United States and “with the emergence of modernization theory,” cultures (rather than biological races) “were ranked according to an exclusive set of criteria that in a predetermined fashion” placed European/American culture at the summit and “the colonized on the other end.”[[40]](#endnote-40) As Historian Michael H. Hunt explains in his work *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (2009), modernization theory assumed that it “was up to the United States to perfect the techniques of counterinsurgency and stand ready to apply them” to the globe.[[41]](#endnote-41) Like its predecessor – the colonial civilizing mission – modernization theory was grounded in American/Western civilizational condescension and paternalism and thus “carried forward the long-established American views on race.”[[42]](#endnote-42)

Accordingly, “Black Africa occupied the lowest rung, just as black ghettoes represented the lower reaches of American society.”[[43]](#endnote-43) On this new foundation in the cultural (rather than racial) dehumanization of formerly colonized/non-white groups, counterinsurgency has been installed as the spatially and temporally indeterminate basis by which the US manages the expression of human life in the 21st century and represses all forms that “threaten its dominance via the deployment of highly technologized, population centric practices of coercion, detention and the selective killing of insurgents (‘irreconcilables’) as the primary forces of social regulation.”[[44]](#endnote-44)

***3: Countering Counter-Insurgency? Introducing the Empire as Pacification Thesis***

In his magnum opus, *Wretched of the Earth* (1961),Frantz Fanon lays the basis for an identification of Western imperialism as counterinsurgency (pacification) and theorizes the colonized lumpen as the primary agents of revolution. This follows from his arguments that hinge on a population-centric approach to victory to resist the neo-colonization of Africa and accomplish a new anti-colonial world order. The book consists of five chapters that theorize anticolonial guerilla warfare, the decolonial role of violence, nationalism/national consciousness, and the psychosocial implications of the colonial endeavor and its negation by revolution for all parties involved (the colonizer and colonized). Improvising on the insights of Mao Tse-Tung and the role of the mass party in anticolonial guerilla warfare within an underdeveloped territory, the masses function as the ‘center of gravity’ for Fanon and thus are the agents of a revolutionary violence whose totalizing force will decide the fate of the colonized population (comprised of the peasantry, the lumpenproletariat and the native intellectuals).

As Fanon writes, in the wake of decolonization there is no “period of transition, there is a total, complete and absolute substitution” in the entire society.[[45]](#endnote-45) In short, success would only be proven by the violent transformation of the complete social structure. Decolonization in such a manner, for Fanon, allows the native to initiate the process of creating a new kind of man, language, and potentially egalitarian register of humanity that destroys his former existence as a mere “object” or “thing” under colonial rule. The anthropological (racial) categories which structure the colonial world into a bifurcated reality are instantiated by the force of the colonial police and military which impose a “governing [white] race” who “is first and foremost those who come from elsewhere [Europe], those who are unlike the original inhabitants, ‘the others.’”[[46]](#endnote-46)

The totality of force on behalf of the colonizer is reflected at the level of epistemology and civilizational values, dehumanizing the native and prefiguring him “as a sort of quintessence of evil” who is the corporeal antithesis of Western ethics.[[47]](#endnote-47) Fanon explains further that the colonial endeavor is deemed successful by the white world when the native admits “loudly and intelligibly the supremacy of the white man’s values.”[[48]](#endnote-48) But in the period of decolonization, “the colonized masses mock at these very values, insult them, vomit them up.”[[49]](#endnote-49) Violent rebellion on behalf of the masses spurs a concomitant transformation of native intellectuals, who initially accepted the cogency of Western ideas. But the integration of the native intellectual with the masses is fraught with difficulties at first. Nevertheless, the struggle for decolonization leads to the realization of a new epistemic order that falsifies the “truths” which supported colonialism.

His compartmentalization within the colonial world cordons off the native into a designated place, and criminalizes him at every turn, keeping the native “in a state of permanent tension” and enviousness, thus placing him at the center of anticolonial struggle.[[50]](#endnote-50) Through the centralized organization of police and military power, the settler “keeps alive in the native an anger which he deprives of outlet,” but between tribal warfare, in-feuds, individual quarrels, and the seductive power of myth and magic, the native delays the inevitable: armed resistance to colonialism.[[51]](#endnote-51) According to Fanon, during the struggle for liberation, the masses cease fratricidal and supernatural practices and prepare to fight for their lives against the forces of colonial domination. Said differently, the native emerges from his stupor, discovers “reality and transforms it into the pattern of his customs, into the practice of violence and into his plan for freedom.”[[52]](#endnote-52) This violence on behalf of the masses must be organized and channeled towards new aims by a nationalist political party. But by and large, the political organs in the colony are organized by urban workers and native intellectuals who are alienated by the phenomenon of guerilla warfare and who have a “barely veiled desire to assimilate” within the colonial world for their own individual interests.[[53]](#endnote-53)

This antagonism between the class interests of the peasants/lumpen, the native intellectuals, and urban workers reveals the central role of the masses (unemployed/peasants) in overturning colonialism and highlights the importance of compromise/development as a factor in stalling decolonization. Because both the colonial administrators and the young native nationalist bourgeoisie are both “genuinely afraid of being swept away by” the masses in revolt, both “find themselves somersaulted into the van of negotiations and compromise—precisely because the party has taken very good care never to break contact with colonialism.”[[54]](#endnote-54) Though this class attempts to rationalize the violence of the masses before negotiations begin, they take the position that violent methods are void of any effectiveness. But Fanon exposes the narrow frame of reference implied by this position when he argues that the positive possibilities of revolutionary guerrilla warfare lie in its ability to aggravate the participatory phase of capital accumulation in the colonies, which signals a successful counterinsurgency: pacification. In other words, the increased frequency of guerrilla warfare disrupts the symbiosis between security and economic development that characterize victorious colonial counterinsurgencies. As Fanon writes,

The colonies have become a market. The colonial population is a customer who is ready to buy goods; consequently, if the garrison has to be perpetually reinforced, if buying and selling slackens off, that is to say if manufactured and finished goods can no longer be exported, there is clear proof that the solution of military force must be set aside. A blind domination founded on slavery is not economically speaking worthwhile for the bourgeoisie of the mother country. The monopolistic group within this bourgeoisie does not support a government whose policy is solely that of the sword. What the factory-owners and finance magnates of the mother country expect from their government is not that it should decimate the colonial peoples, but that it should safeguard with the help of economic conventions their own "legitimate interests."[[55]](#endnote-55)

Importantly, these violent struggles within colonies occur amid international actors and the “pitiless war which financial groups wage upon each other.”[[56]](#endnote-56) Clearly cognizant of the aforementioned shift by liberal empires towards a nonracial and “humane” formulation of counterinsurgency warfare and its logic of modernization/development, Fanon observes that “wars of repression are no longer waged against rebel sultans; everything is more elegant, less bloodthirsty.”[[57]](#endnote-57) However, although more elegant, repression results in nothing effectively changing for “independent” countries. Though the colonialist bourgeois uses the danger of “mass mobilization,” they functionally “avoid the actual overthrowing of the state” and lull the masses to sleep.[[58]](#endnote-58) But once the masses go about making history and break down the colonial structures, their violence can finally pose a challenge to the European military forces that sustain the colony.

In addition, Fanon argues that the prolonged nature of guerrilla warfare in the colonies can exhaust the military capacities of liberal/western empires. In his own words, “[t]he truth is that there is no colonial power today which is capable of adopting the only form of contest which has a chance of succeeding, namely, the prolonged establishment of large forces of occupation.”[[59]](#endnote-59) Violence aggravates the colonialist countries because they faced opposition from both the colonized masses as well as their own internal working classes (which will demand the use of more police/military forces in the colony at the outbreak of revolt). In the aftermath of the explosion of violence and the compromise for national independence, Fanon argues for the continuing importance of violence in the global context of the Cold War under the framework of peaceful co-existence and the emergence of the US as the spearhead of international capitalism. Keeping anticolonial warfare in a global context, Fanon writes:

From then on, we understand why the violence of the native is only hopeless if we compare it in the abstract to the military machine of the oppressor. On the other hand, if we situate that violence in the dynamics of the international situation, we see at once that it constitutes a terrible menace for the oppressor. Persistent jacqueries and Mau-Mau disturbance unbalance the colony's economic life but do not endanger the mother country. What is more important in the eyes of imperialism is the opportunity for socialist propaganda to infiltrate among the masses and to contaminate them. This is already a serious danger in the cold war; but what would happen to that colony in case of real war, riddled as it is by murderous guerillas? Thus capitalism realizes that its military strategy has everything to lose by the outbreak of nationalist wars.[[60]](#endnote-60)

The relations between the West and the Soviets “provokes and feeds violence in the colonial countries” because national liberation struggles threatened the capitalist world with the possibility of global communism.[[61]](#endnote-61) Despite the western supposition that they are led by the Soviets, Fanon argues that the citizens of the formerly colonized world are adhering to a kind of neutralism in the Cold War conflict that stems from their realizations that their “true interests” lie not “in the protraction nor in the accentuation of this cold war.”[[62]](#endnote-62) Nevertheless, neither side “asks their advice.”[[63]](#endnote-63) Still, anticolonial resistance exists within the global stream of revolt: from Indochina, Indonesia, Guinea, and Somaliland.[[64]](#endnote-64) For Fanon, the dialectical cycle of violence initiated by the anticolonial masses develop and eventually become characterized by what he calls “a point of no return” wherein the population-centric nature of repression “engulfs all sectors of the colonized people.”[[65]](#endnote-65) At this point in the conflict, the logics of colonialism become concrete, and the population-level dehumanization of the native is refracted back onto the settler.

Citing Algeria, Indochina, Madagascar and other colonies as examples, Fanon explains that armed struggle changes the consciousness of the native, which comes to reflect the absolutism of the colonizer: “The settler's work is to make even dreams of liberty impossible for the native. The native's work is to imagine all possible methods for destroying the settler. On the logical plane, the Manicheism of the settler produces a Manicheism of the native. To the theory of the ‘absolute evil of the native’ the theory of the ‘absolute evil of the settler’ replies.”[[66]](#endnote-66) In other words, wars of liberation mobilize the masses and facilitate the introduction of a new schedule of consciousness infused with “the ideas of a common cause, of a national destiny, and of a collective history.”[[67]](#endnote-67) But once the struggle for national liberation have succeeded against colonialism, the people will also have to mobilize against “poverty, illiteracy, and underdevelopment” and come to the realization that “life is an unending contest.”[[68]](#endnote-68) Thus, the mastery of violence towards armed struggle reveals new truths and its sociogenic transformation of the consciousness of the colonized makes pacification (as a population-centric endeavor) ineffective as a weapon of control on the masses. Once the people are mobilized, the “demagogues, the opportunists, and the magicians have a difficult task” and attempts at “mystification [of the colonial situation] becomes, in the long run, practically impossible.”[[69]](#endnote-69)

Contra the assumptions of modernization theory, Fanon argues that decolonized nations do not aspire to follow the path of development of European nations whose progress has been historically secured “with the sweat and dead bodies of Negroes, Arabs, Indians, and the yellow races.”[[70]](#endnote-70) Still, a former colonial country is generally “an economically dependent country.”[[71]](#endnote-71) This situation “unveils the true economic state” of most of the world’s people and places attention on a problem that he surmises is even more important for humanity than the dichotomies between anticolonialism/colonialism or capitalism/socialism: the calcification of wealth among the Western elite.[[72]](#endnote-72) Thus, the next logical step for decolonization is to facilitate “large-scale investments and technical aid” to underdeveloped regions of the world and the reinvention of what it means to be human.[[73]](#endnote-73) The reconceptualization of “the whole of mankind” will not be solely composed of formerly colonized groups but also “carried out with the indispensable help of the European peoples” who must have a change of consciousness before they can fulfill their role.[[74]](#endnote-74) Reiterating the asymmetry between Western (Liberal Capitalist or Soviet Communist) and formerly colonized visions of a just world order, Fanon argues that what the capitalist world does not understand is that “the fundamental problem of our time is not the struggle between the socialist regime [the USSR] and them,” but the struggles of the colonial/underdeveloped peoples of the world.[[75]](#endnote-75)

Having established that violence can explode the categories of the colonizer and reveal new truths, Fanon goes on to outline the proper relationship between the lumpen and the colonized elite in the process of decolonization. Starting with the differences between the masses and the leaders of political or trade-union organizations, Fanon observes some of the issues that arise when trying to organize the masses. The intellectual elite put too much emphasis on organization because it is a notion that they have “imported from the mother country.”[[76]](#endnote-76) But the great mistake in the unimaginative application of colonial ideas in the underdeveloped areas is that they engage only a tiny portion of the population: the working classes in the towns, the skilled workers, and the civil servants. This leaves most of the colonized people (the lumpen) out of the picture. In the colonial territories, Fanon argues that the proletariat is not a revolutionary class but at “the nucleus of the colonized population which has been the most pampered by the colonial regime.”[[77]](#endnote-77) Because it is necessary for the broader scheme of colonization, these elements “constitute the most faithful followers of the nationalist parties, and who because of the privileged place which they hold in the colonial system constitute also the ‘bourgeois’ fraction of the colonized people.”[[78]](#endnote-78)

Made up of colonial workers, the nationalist parties demonstrate a deep bias toward the masses in line with western thinking. As Fanon outlines, the lumpen are assumed to be basically reactionary. This leaves the masses trapped in an unorganized cycle of spontaneity and an antagonistic relationship with the townspeople (colonial middle-classes). Simply put, the antagonism “exists between the native who is excluded from the advantages of colonialism and his counterpart who manages to turn colonial exploitation to his account.”[[79]](#endnote-79) Rather than building up the traditional cultures, the colonial elites erect a westernized framework which contradicts local structures and leaves the lumpen to survive savage warfare/police repression without the benefit of organization. This also leaves colonial armed rebellions based solely on the proletariat susceptible to repression and pacification. Consider the disorganization that occurs once the lumpen spontaneously revolt. As Fanon writes:

Thereupon the accumulated, exacerbated hate explodes. The neighboring police barracks is captured, the policemen are hacked to pieces, the local schoolmaster is murdered, the doctor only gets away with his life because he was not at home, etc. Pacifying forces are hurried to the spot and the air force bombards it. Then the banner of revolt is unfurled, the old warriorlike traditions spring up again, the women cheer, the men organize and take up positions in the mountains, and guerrilla war begins. The peasantry spontaneously gives concrete form to the general insecurity; and colonialism takes fright and either continues the war or negotiates.[[80]](#endnote-80)

Though they don’t oppose it, the nationalist party leaders generally fail to seize the energy of the masses towards armed rebellion and neglect to “send leaders into the countryside to educate the people politically, or to increase their awareness or put the struggle onto a higher level.”[[81]](#endnote-81) Despite the willingness of the people to listen to them, the colonial elite simply hope that they don’t contaminate the party and seek to “give the impression to the colonialist that they have no connection with the rebels.”[[82]](#endnote-82) This same relationship of distrust persists into the period of national liberation—which Fanon argues is due to the laziness and mimicry of westernized ideals on behalf of the colonial elite. All in all, the new independent yet neo-colonial government “in its dealings with the country people as a whole is reminiscent of certain features of the former colonial power.”[[83]](#endnote-83)

This situation plays into the hand of a given neo-colonial regime who can divide and manipulate the various interests of the parties and trade-unions outside the purview of the masses (whose hostility could be provoked by legislation aimed at bettering the living conditions of the most favored elements of the nation). The etiology of this volatile situation “shows the objective necessity of a social program which will appeal to the nation as a whole” as opposed to the instrumentalization of the masses as an inert and brute force which eases the possibility for the colonized elite to compromise with the oppressor.[[84]](#endnote-84) In this way, Fanon posits the “horde of starving men” – the lumpenproletariat – to be the spearhead of anti-colonial revolution.[[85]](#endnote-85) In his own words,

So the pimps, the hooligans, the unemployed, and the petty criminals, urged on from behind, throw themselves into the struggle for liberation like stout working men. These classless idlers will by militant and decisive action discover the path that leads to nationhood. They won't become reformed characters to please colonial society, fitting in with the morality of its rulers; quite on the contrary, they take for granted the impossibility of their entering the city save by hand grenades and revolvers. These workless less-than-men are rehabilitated in their own eyes and in the eyes of history. The prostitutes too, and the maids who are paid two pounds a month, all the hopeless dregs of humanity, all who turn in circles between suicide and madness, will recover their balance, once more go forward, and march proudly in the great procession of the awakened nation.[[86]](#endnote-86)

With no organizational program, the natives aim at materializing the new nation but the optimism that characterizes the initial outbreak of warfare is dissipated by heavy losses and “bodies mown down by machine guns.”[[87]](#endnote-87) Citing Angola as an example, Fanon notes that the masses used spontaneous violence in successive waves against the settler but sustained many losses: “thousands of Angolans were mown down by colonialist machine guns.”[[88]](#endnote-88) Thereafter, the national army was reorganized using guerilla techniques and a new paradigm of engagement based on population-centric approaches. In other words, rather than a national army of liberation being one which engages in enemy-centric (conventional) engagement it fights on behalf of and alongside the colonized masses going “from village to village, falling back on the forests.”[[89]](#endnote-89)

Astute leaders operationalize the structure of the national liberation army to educate and indoctrinate the masses to control and direct their violence based on “clear objectives, a definite methodology, and above all the need for the mass of the people to realize that their unorganized efforts can only be a temporary dynamic.”[[90]](#endnote-90) Resentment won’t win national wars of liberation, but the raising of the standard of consciousness of the rank-and-file can inoculate the people against techniques of pacification. Cognizant of the two-pronged approach of colonial counterinsurgency, Fanon notes that as decolonial wars develop the enemy pairs “his policy of brutal repression with spectacular gestures of friendship, maneuvers calculated to sow division, and ‘psychological action.’”[[91]](#endnote-91) In addition to the use of agent provocateurs and collaborators, counterinsurgency operations center the lumpen. As a dialectical response, Fanon argues that “any movement for freedom ought to give its fullest attention” to this class because if they are ignored the colonialist will be able to manipulate and organize them to fight “as hired soldiers side by side with the colonial troops.”[[92]](#endnote-92) With Algeria, Angola, and the Congo as examples, Fanon articulates his dialectics of freedom in direct opposition to the population-centric logics of colonial warfare. As he explains,

The enemy is aware of ideological weaknesses, for he analyzes the forces of rebellion and studies more and more carefully the aggregate enemy which makes up a colonial people; he is also aware of the spiritual instability of certain layers of the population. The enemy discovers the existence, side by side with the disciplined and well-organized advance guard of rebellion, of a mass of men whose participation is constantly at the mercy of their being for too long accustomed to physiological wretchedness, humiliation, and irresponsibility. The enemy is ready to pay a high price for the services of this mass. He will create spontaneity with bayonets and exemplary floggings.[[93]](#endnote-93)

In other words, ideological weakness is due to a failure of consciousness-raising – leaving the masses of the people vulnerable to techniques of pacification in a protracted struggle. These methods of pacification psychologically disarm the native who is made to feel things have substantially changed as acts of courtesy, humanitarianism, and respectability become the *modus operandi* of the settlers and the colonial police force. Effective leaders, Fanon argues, will demonstrate the real objectives of the fight, show the people “where they are going, and how they are to get there” and theorize victory within “a series of local engagements,” none of which are decisive.[[94]](#endnote-94) Once this task of raising the consciousness of the people is accomplished by effective political education they will transition from the “primitive Manicheism of the settler” to a new social and economic awareness.[[95]](#endnote-95) This will allow them to distinguish class interests among themselves and the colonialists alike. As this process of enlightenment develops though, effective leaders refer to each local skirmish to analytically review the phenomena from the standpoint of all the people – giving proof of “its rational basis and its maturity each time that it uses a particular case to advance the people's awareness.”[[96]](#endnote-96)

By fusing intellectual thought to the movement for decolonization, the concrete realities of the people direct them toward making the future as “an invitation to action and a basis for hope.”[[97]](#endnote-97) The awakening of a national consciousness among the lumpen is intimately tied to the eradication of the colonial system because a colonized culture cannot be modified to yield new values. In other words, the “condition for its existence is therefore national liberation and the renaissance of the state.”[[98]](#endnote-98) This fight thus opens the space for “the renewing of forms of expression and the rebirth of the imagination.”[[99]](#endnote-99) In its growth and internal progression, armed struggle traces out entirely new paths of development towards “a fundamentally different set of relations between men,” the “disappearance of colonialism but also the disappearance of the colonized man.”[[100]](#endnote-100) That is to say, the accomplishment of a new humanism is the apotheosis of the struggle itself and provides the possibility for the existence of a truly universal human identity. As Fanon writes, “[t]his new humanity cannot do otherwise than define a new humanism both for itself and for others. It is prefigured in the objectives and methods of the conflict.”[[101]](#endnote-101)

The final portions of his text turns to the dialectical implications of colonial counterinsurgency operations. While he explores mental disorders in all parties involved, these are centered around the notion of pacification, the torture tactics employed to sustain it and the criminogenic dynamics of the colonial endeavor. Counterinsurgency and its negation by the violent anticolonial struggle of the masses animates Fanonian dialectics and lays the basis for the first iteration of the ‘empire as pacification’ thesis he defends throughout WOTE. However, these insights also helped lay the basis for a subsequent formulation of empire as pacification by the vanguard of the Black Power movement in the US: the Black Panther Party.

***4: Huey P. Newton’s Philosophy of Intercommunalism – Black America (the Lumpen) as the Vanguard to World Revolution?***

Though the identification of Black males as a lumpen/peasant (as opposed to working-poor) class was first suggested by Richard Wright, as the primary theoretician of the Black Panther Party, Huey P. Newton synthesized the insights of Malcolm X, Frantz Fanon, and a host of other anti-colonial thinkers to posit a unique theory of revolution which held that this class was the vanguard of a worldwide insurgency: the philosophy of intercommunalism.[[102]](#endnote-102) Across his writings, Newton is clear about the influence of Frantz Fanon to his thinking and scholars have verified this intellectual link – particularly as it relates to the notion of the lumpen as a vanguard to revolutionary struggle. In his own assessment of Fanon’s impact on the Black Panther Party (BPP) sociologist Peter Worsley argued that many of his contemporaries “have pointed out that Fanon's readers have responded to his celebration of being Black, and his stress on "violence": that revolutions are made by having them,” yet some underestimated “the importance of Fanon's message about the lumpenproletariat.”[[103]](#endnote-103) This notion became “central to the theory” of the BPP.[[104]](#endnote-104)

More scholarly work has engaged this conceptual link and gives theoretical significance to the correspondence between Fanon’s views concerning the sexual configuration of racism and Newton’s arguments concerning of reactionary suicide to understand how the social organization of Western society criminalizes and targets poor/lumpen young Black men with death to prevent revolt and sustain liberal democracy. For instance, in his work *The Man-Not: Race, Class, Genre and the Dilemmas of Black Manhood* (2017), Tommy Curry argues that the poor Black male who primarily constitutes the lumpen so central to Fanon’s and Newton’s thought is a kind of being confronted by death in such an intense manner that it ruptures the very anthropos from which Western ethics and its temporal logics cohere. Indeed, Fanon is key to Curry’s postulation that Black men experience the world as a Man-Not, or an entity “that is negated not from an origin of (human) being, but from nihility.”[[105]](#endnote-105) As Curry writes, Fanon’s “reflections on objecthood and nonbeing are not simply descriptions of negation” but these express “the condition of Black male being—the nihility from which it is birthed.”[[106]](#endnote-106)

Drawing on Newton’s concept of reactionary suicide, Curry argues for an understanding of Black male existence as one that is denied futurity and outside of the realm of ethics. As he explains, “Newton understood Black maleness had a particular relation to racial oppression” and sought to articulate this through the concept of reactionary suicide.[[107]](#endnote-107) The condition Newton posits as reactionary suicide – the “vacating of self-worth by the society that is thereby internalized by the Black male individual that makes suicide appear as a tenable escape from dehumanization” — and the spiritual death among the race with which it is connected cannot be understood through the prism of ethics.[[108]](#endnote-108) As Curry writes, “Black male death places Black men and boys within a horizon of finality.”[[109]](#endnote-109) This group is “confined to the present by the denial of futurity” and death functions as “the border of this time—a medium of what is known that Black males share.”[[110]](#endnote-110) Such logics operate “not only within but as the foundation” of liberal democracy and a fortiori Curry argues that “[r]eason, ethics, and love have little effect in a world engineered to kill” Black people.[[111]](#endnote-111)

While Curry masterfully articulates the Black male/revolutionary lumpen agents of Fanon and Newton’s thinking as recasting time and the normative expectations of revolt, the guiding thread between them as it relates to the empire as pacification thesis is that for Newton (like Fanon), the figure of the lumpen black male (and thereby the masses) remain the basis for the development of a new humanism (universal identity) and egalitarian culture in its aftermath *despite* their deaths in the struggle for freedom. The theoretical origins of Newton’s argument for intercommunalism lie in the development of revolutionary Black nationalism. Though he and the intellectual-political tradition he represents is demonized as hyper-masculine, sexist, and basically misrepresented in academic literature, Robert Allen established in his magisterial account of the neo-internal colonization of Black America, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* (1969), that Malcolm X was not only the most potent factor in the development of Black nationalist thought in the US since Martin Delaney but also that he pioneered the foundational ideas concerning the nature of the Black condition (particularly internal colonialism theory) that went on to be assimilated by the BPP and evolved by them into what became revolutionary Black nationalism.[[112]](#endnote-112)

Because Malcolm X identified Black nationalism with self-determination, the struggle for freedom for Black people was placed outside the US/Western ‘monopoly of humanity’ or pseudo liberal humanism and directed towards “an international struggle for human rights.”[[113]](#endnote-113) This normative goal led Malcolm to theorize the Black revolution and the methods required to counter its dialectical negation – “the international power structure” of US neocolonialism – “in terms of the worldwide anticolonial revolt.”[[114]](#endnote-114) Indeed, Malcolm X was the “archetype of the Black Power paradigm” and identified the US as the 20th century’s “leading neo-colonialist power” whose interests lied in domesticating the issue of racism, taking the Black American struggle out of the domain of human dignity, self-defense (including guerilla warfare, if necessary), and human rights.[[115]](#endnote-115) For the Black Power generation, Malcolm was the personification of the “fusion and transformation” of activism and criminality, a fact often overlooked by scholars who, in line with the doxa in the academy and the broader society, hold the Party in contempt for appealing to the Black lumpen/criminal elements of society.[[116]](#endnote-116)

In his innovative work *Black Minded* (2020), Africana Studies scholar Michael Sawyer probed Malcolm X’s philosophy of Black nationalism and found an emphasis on spatiality which makes Malcolm’s thinking about Black freedom “profoundly transnational as well as ‘quasi-terrestrial’.”[[117]](#endnote-117) As Sawyer writes, Malcolm construes “the revolutionary Black subject as transnational” but also as one with a status that is “expansive enough to allow it to encompass others who have suffered at the hands of European-based systems of oppression.”[[118]](#endnote-118) Rather than “a particular form of victimhood,” Malcolm envisions the Black subject to be the “point of departure for the wholesale alteration of the world system.”[[119]](#endnote-119) For his part, Huey P. Newton synthesized Malcolm X’s theoretical insights around internal colonialism theory, his spatial sensibilities and identification of Black America with the species’ “revolutionary possibility broadly defined,” and Fanon’s emphasis on the lumpen as the agents of revolt to postulate the theory of intercommunalism as the basis by which the BPP could organize the Black population into a militaristic force that could challenge Western civilization from inside US empire.[[120]](#endnote-120)

Intercommunalism holds that the lumpen/colonized masses of Black America are the basis of a world revolution against the species’ *first* extra-territorial empire: the US. Clarifying the theoretical origins of Panther ideology, historian Sean Malloy explains in his work *Out of Oakland: Black Panther Party Internationalism During the Cold War* (2013), that not only did Fanon provide the BPP with a “bridge between decolonization in the Third World and the struggles of people of color in the First World” but he also “challenged Marxist notions that the industrial working class was the sine qua non of revolution” – an insight adapted upon by Newton and key to the logic of the thesis of intercommunalism.[[121]](#endnote-121) By the mid-1960s, Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* was “known as the ‘black bible’ among African American militants” in the Black Power Movement.[[122]](#endnote-122)

Among the co-founders of the BPP, Fanon’s work “was mulled over as a valued resource, which found its way into the canons of the Party and the fundament of BPP ideology and political thought.”[[123]](#endnote-123) As a result of his influence, the guiding philosophy of the Party – intercommunalism – combined “revolutionary black nationalism with Third World adaptions of Marxism-Leninism.”[[124]](#endnote-124) Following Fanon, the BPP’s organization and conceptual “focus of interest” was on “the black lumpenproletariat (those outside the labor force because of their inability to find employment), or the so-called street blacks” who were postulated by their ideology to be the basis by which US empire would be destroyed and a new truly universal human identity and egalitarian social order would emerge.[[125]](#endnote-125)

In his essay *Intercommunalism* (1974), Newton articulates the BPP ideology of intercommunalism and argues that the emergence of the US as an extraterritorial empire has given the Black lumpen a new role in the struggle for human freedom. He begins by explaining that in the aftermath of WW2 and the explosion of communications and weapons technology by the US, the socialist image of “the New Man” came under intense assault. Through an analysis of US foreign policy, Newton shows that its functions contradict its highest ideals and took an unprecedented counter-revolutionary turn during the Cold War. Furthermore, he argues that since the US’s emergence in “the role of a great and then dominant world power, it has more and more consistently opposed the major social revolutions of our time.”[[126]](#endnote-126)

This counter-revolutionary policy reached an apex in the American intervention in Vietnam, which was conducted with unanticipated ferocity as just one part of America’s global crusade “organized around the unprecedented concept of counterinsurgency.”[[127]](#endnote-127) The fusion of this doctrine of war with the US State as the basis of foreign (and domestic) policy, Newton avers, stems from a deeper contradiction that can only be understood through an examination of the small group of corporate and elite actors who control the US policy making apparatus. As Newton argues, these “paradoxes can only be answered if it can be shown that there is a group wielding predominant power in the American polity whose interests run counter to America’s high ideals and which can impose its own interpretation of the American tradition onto the framework of policy-making in the state.”[[128]](#endnote-128) Not only can “[s]uch a ‘ruling class’ can, in fact, be readily shown to exist,” but Newton explains that its “locus of power and interest is in the giant corporations and financial institutions which dominate the American economy, and moreover, the economy of the entire Western world.”[[129]](#endnote-129)

This corporate based modality of US foreign policy is leveraged in the investment decision conducted by a small group of men which has widespread implications. As Newton explains, this decision impacts not only “how much corporations spend, what they produce, where the products are to be manufactured and who is to participate in the process of production” but also who administrates strategic state agencies so that business comes to be understood “as the fount of critical assumptions or goals and strategically placed personnel.”[[130]](#endnote-130) Because the dominant ideology of US politics and the federal structure itself is corporate, the framework of policy choices are delimited within its scope and “political outsiders may be tolerated and even highly effective in serving the corporate system and its programs.”[[131]](#endnote-131) US foreign policy is dominated by two core mechanisms of corporate thinking: (1) upper-class control of communications, technology, and ideas; (2) the political realism of the broader society and its reification of corporate epistemology that dictate that policymakers work within the imperial framework and accept its assumptions. Thus, the chief function of corporate ideology is “to make an explicit identification of the national tradition and interest—the American Way of Life—with its own particular interest.”[[132]](#endnote-132)

With a root premise of economic determinism that “takes as its cardinal principle the proposition that political freedom is inseparably bound up with corporate property,” Newton argues that this ideology has been articulated by US policymakers since the 19th century and views “an expanding frontier of ever new and accessible markets” as essential for its domestic affluence.[[133]](#endnote-133) Though this initially took shape as an “Open Door” policy to prevent the closing of the “external frontier” by European colonial empires and ensure American access, in the post-WW2 period it was transformed into a “policy of preserving and extending American hegemony and the free enterprise system throughout” the world.[[134]](#endnote-134) For Newton, it is this messianic logic and its expression in the US’s commitment to the “internal status quo in other countries” that makes the counterinsurgent creed of Washington “the very source of Cold War conflict” and thus a “permanent menace to mankind’s survival.”[[135]](#endnote-135) After assessing the works of the “academic model builders” of US global counterinsurgency and “the policy of counterrevolutionary intervention necessary to maintain” American empire, Newton falsifies the arguments of modernization theory.[[136]](#endnote-136) Summarizing these first, he writes:

In the writings of such theorists, the expansion of America’s monopolistic giants and their control of the markets and resources of the poverty-stricken regions is presented as entailing the net export of capital to these capital-starved areas, the transfer of industrial technologies and skills, and the flow of wealth generally from the rich world to the poor. From this point of view, revolutions which challenge the presence and domination of foreign corporations and their states are either misguided or sinister in intent, and contrary to the real needs and interests of the countries involved. Indeed, for those who maintain this view, revolutions are regarded as alien-inspired efforts aimed at subverting and seizing control of the countries in question during periods of great difficulty and instability prior to the so-called takeoff into self-sustaining growth. This is the argument advanced by W. W. Rostow, former director of the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff and the chief rationalizer of America’s expansionist counterrevolutionary crusade.[[137]](#endnote-137)

Against modernization theory, Newton shows that the penetration of underdeveloped territories by Western capital has been deleterious and unproductive; foreign capital investment produces patterns of underdevelopment or “growth without development” that becomes a nightmarish reality for these regions of the earth.[[138]](#endnote-138) This expropriation by US empire of the world’s people is identified by Newton as “the crisis of reactionary intercommunalism” which has laid the basis for its dialectical negation: revolutionary intercommunalism.[[139]](#endnote-139) After outlining the dialectical materialist method and its basic assumptions, Newton maintains that a recent breakthrough in technology has led to a qualitatively new development of US empire which explains the emergence of reactionary intercommunalism.

In the past, empires and nations could co-exist. This is because nation-states were composed of specific ethnic groups and separated by natural partitions that allowed its dominant classes and the people “control over their destiny and territory” to the extent that they “would not be attacked or violated by another nation” miles away.[[140]](#endnote-140) But with the emergence of new technology, these relationships and conditions of power have been fundamentally changed. “Using the dialectical materialist method,” Newton argued that the US is now an empire in that it “is a nation-state that has transformed itself into a power controlling all of the world’s land and people” through military technology.[[141]](#endnote-141) Thus, there are no more colonies or neo-colonies: nations no longer have the conditions to emerge, and decolonization is functionally meaningless since there can be no “return to the former conditions of existence” before US empire.[[142]](#endnote-142) Under this new global order of reactionary intercommunalism, a “ruling circle, a small group of people” in North America are able to control “all other people using their technology.”[[143]](#endnote-143) Within his broader framework, Newton understands this same technology to have the dialectical potentiality of aiding in the creation of a new essentially humanist culture (premised on universal identity) once controlled by the lumpen masses – this stage is called revolutionary intercommunalism. Thereafter, the world will reach a stage he calls “pure communism and anarchy.”[[144]](#endnote-144)

The revolutionary thrust to transform reactionary to revolutionary intercommunalism will come from the Black lumpen and unemployables/criminalized sectors of American society. This massive revolution will trigger the people of the world to move and “seize power from the small ruling circle and expropriate the expropriators, pull them down from their pinnacle and make them equals, and distribute the fruits of our labor that have been denied us in some equitable way.”[[145]](#endnote-145) To be clear, Newton theorizes the emergence of revolutionary intercommunalism as yoked to the situation of Black America because “black people are the vanguard of world revolution” who have a cultural orientation historically conditioned towards egalitarianism.[[146]](#endnote-146) As he writes, Black Americans were internationally dispersed due to slavery and developed ways to “easily identify with people in other cultures” after being in a foreign land for so long.[[147]](#endnote-147) Furthermore, because of slavery Black Americans “never really felt the same way that the peasant was attached to the soil in Russia. We are always a long way from home.”[[148]](#endnote-148) This cultural-psychosocial orientation alongside the “historical condition of black Americans” which has led them to be progressive and “want to live with other people” contribute to their vanguard position in the revolution and role as the archetype for a new kind of universal human identity in the aftermath of reactionary intercommunalism. [[149]](#endnote-149)

Reiterating that this is ultimately what revolutionary intercommunalism entails, Newton explains that the transformation of world affairs from reactionary to revolutionary intercommunalism “will not immediately bring into being either a universal identity or a culture that is essentially human.”[[150]](#endnote-150) However, it will “provide the material base for the development of those tendencies.”[[151]](#endnote-151) So, once the masses “seize the mass media and so forth, you will still have racism, you will still have ethnocentrism, you will still have contradictions”; but once the people go about solving these conflicts it “will produce new values, new identities; it will mold a new and essentially human culture” which will facilitate another qualitative transformation: the transformation of revolutionary intercommunalism into communism.[[152]](#endnote-152)

For Newton, communism refers to a point in history where people “will not only control the productive and institutional units of society but they will also have seized possession of their own subconscious attitudes towards these things; and for the first time in history they will have a more rather than less conscious relationship to the material world.”[[153]](#endnote-153) Until the accomplishment of revolutionary intercommunalism though, Newton argues that the role of the BPP is to raise the consciousness of the lumpen class of Black America towards a humanist identification with all of the oppressed people of the world and against the ruling circle of US Empire through revolutionary suicide. Thus, victory and the transformation of society lie in the masses of the population – spearheaded by Black America as the vanguard – seizing the technology of the US ruling class and transforming themselves (and the world) into something new.

***5: Conclusion***

This essay has endeavored to reveal a heretofore unexplored current in Black thought: the pacification as empire thesis. Beginning with an outline of Fanon’s thinking about violence and decolonization, this essay sought to establish anticolonial guerrilla warfare as the central object of Fanonian dialectics in WOTE. As opposed to conceptualizing empire as slavery, Fanon’s dialectical thinking laid the basis for an alternative understanding of empire as pacification or counterinsurgency that is adapted upon by Huey P. Newton and posited as the theory of intercommunalism. In the first section, I outlined the problem of stasis affecting Black thought under an integrationist academic milieu. In section two, I provided a historical account of the evolution of unconventional/savage warfare and how pacification became the chief aim of European military strategy as it related to non-white revolutionaries and/or populations in the 19th century. Outside of the assimilationist logics of western academia and the liberal caricatures of Fanonian thought, the third section shows that Frantz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* advanced a strategy of anticolonial guerrilla warfare that was fixed towards the accomplishment of a new concept of the human and identified the chief obstacle to doing so as colonial counterinsurgency or neo-colonialism.

Synthesizing Fanon’s focus on the lumpen in his own theory, the second section demonstrates how these ideas around an understanding of empire as counterinsurgency were reconceptualized within the framework of reactionary intercommunalism by Huey P. Newton. Newton provides us with a new ontology and diagnosis of US empire. According to his dialectical analysis, the conditions of national liberation no longer exist, and counterinsurgency emerged in the 20th century to organize the modus operandi of the first extra-territorial US empire in human history. The remedy to this deleterious situation is a population-centric theory of victory; the global redistribution of technology and wealth, as well as the formulation of a universal human identity, named revolutionary intercommunalism. The intellectual link between Frantz Fanon and Huey P. Newton – the empire as pacification thesis – centered on the agency of the revolutionary lumpen (the multitude) and their repression via Western liberal counterinsurgency highlights the continuity and complementarity of ideas in the anti-colonial/Black nationalist tradition, and gives scholars a deeper historical grasp of trends in modern military thinking but also potentially provides a basis for reinventing and resisting the criminalization of the concept of Black self-defense given the enduring centrality of counterinsurgent methods of managerialism to liberal democratic governance today.

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