

the hands of cadres and leaders working with the tide of history who use their muscles and their brains to lead the struggle for liberation. It is national, revolutionary, and collective. This new reality, which the colonized are now exposed to, exists by action alone. By exploding the former colonial reality the struggle uncovers unknown facets, brings to light new meanings and underlines contradictions which were camouflaged by this reality. The people in arms, the people whose struggle enacts this new reality, the people who live it, march on, freed from colonialism and forewarned against any attempt at mystification or glorification of the nation. Violence alone, perpetrated by the people, violence organized and guided by the leadership, provides the key for the masses to decipher social reality. Without this struggle, without this praxis there is nothing but a carnival parade and a lot of hot air. All that is left is a slight readaptation, a few reforms at the top, a flag, and down at the bottom a shapeless, writhing mass, still mired in the Dark Ages.

The Trials and Tribulations of National Consciousness

History teaches us that the anticolonialist struggle is not automatically written from a nationalist perspective. Over a long period of time the colonized have devoted their energy to eliminating iniquities such as forced labor, corporal punishment, unequal wages, and the restriction of political rights. This fight for democracy against man's oppression gradually emerges from a universalist, neoliberal confusion to arrive, sometimes laboriously, at a demand for nationhood. But the unpreparedness of the elite, the lack of practical ties between them and the masses, their apathy and, yes, their cowardice at the crucial moment in the struggle, are the cause of tragic trials and tribulations.

Instead of being the coordinated crystallization of the people's innermost aspirations, instead of being the most tangible, immediate product of popular mobilization, national consciousness is nothing but a crude, empty, fragile shell. The cracks in it explain how easy it is for young independent countries to switch back from nation to ethnic group and from state to tribe—a regression which is so terribly detrimental and prejudicial to the development of the nation and national unity. As we shall see, such shortcomings and dangers derive historically from the incapacity of the national bourgeoisie in underdeveloped countries

to rationalize popular praxis, in other words their incapacity to attribute it any reason.

The characteristic, virtually endemic weakness of the underdeveloped countries' national consciousness is not only the consequence of the colonized subject's mutilation by the colonial regime. It can also be attributed to the apathy of the national bourgeoisie, its mediocrity, and its deeply cosmopolitan mentality.

The national bourgeoisie, which takes over power at the end of the colonial regime, is an underdeveloped bourgeoisie. Its economic clout is practically zero, and in any case, no way commensurate with that of its metropolitan counterpart which it intends replacing. In its willful narcissism, the national bourgeoisie has lulled itself into thinking that it can supplant the metropolitan bourgeoisie to its own advantage. But independence, which literally forces it back against the wall, triggers catastrophic reactions and obliges it to send out distress signals in the direction of the former metropolis. The business elite and university graduates, who make up the most educated category of the new nation, are identifiable by their small numbers, their concentration in the capital, and their occupations as traders, landowners and professionals. This national bourgeoisie possesses neither industrialists nor financiers. The national bourgeoisie in the underdeveloped countries is not geared to production, invention, creation, or work. All its energy is channeled into intermediary activities. Networking and scheming seem to be its underlying vocation. The national bourgeoisie has the psychology of a businessman, not that of a captain of industry. And it should go without saying that the rapacity of the colonists and the embargo system installed by colonialism hardly left it any choice.

Under the colonial system a bourgeoisie that accumulates capital is in the realm of the impossible. To our thinking, therefore, the historical vocation of an authentic national bourgeoisie in an underdeveloped country is to repudiate its status as bourgeoisie and

an instrument of capital and to become entirely subservient to the revolutionary capital which the people represent.

In an underdeveloped country, the imperative duty of an authentic national bourgeoisie is to betray the vocation to which it is destined, to learn from the people, and make available to them the intellectual and technical capital it culled from its time in colonial universities. We will see, unfortunately, that the national bourgeoisie often turns away from this heroic and positive path, which is both productive and just, and unabashedly opts for the antinational, and therefore abhorrent, path of a conventional bourgeoisie, a bourgeois bourgeoisie that is dimly, inanely, and cynically bourgeois.

We have seen that the objective of the nationalist parties from a certain period onward is geared strictly along national lines. They mobilize the people with the slogan of independence, and anything else is left to the future. When these parties are questioned on their economic agenda for the nation or the regime they propose to establish they prove incapable of giving an answer because, in fact, they do not have a clue about the economy of their own country.

This economy has always developed outside their control. As for the present and potential resources of their country's soil and subsoil, their knowledge is purely academic and approximate. They can only talk about them in general and abstract terms. After independence, this underdeveloped bourgeoisie, reduced in number, lacking capital and rejecting the road to revolution, stagnates miserably. It cannot give free expression to its genius that was in the past hampered by colonial domination, or so it claims. The precariousness of its resources and the scarcity of managerial talent force it for years into an economy of cottage industries. In its inevitably highly limited perspective, the bourgeoisie's idea of a national economy is one based on what we can call local products. Grandiloquent speeches are made about local crafts. Unable to establish factories which would be more

profitable for the country and for themselves, the bourgeoisie cloaks local artisanship in a chauvinistic tenderness which not only ties in with the new national dignity, but also ensures them substantial profits. This cult for local products, this incapacity to invent new outlets is likewise reflected in the entrenchment of the national bourgeoisie in the type of agricultural production typical of the colonial period.

Independence does not bring a change of direction. The same old groundnut harvest, cocoa harvest, and olive harvest. Likewise the traffic of commodities goes unchanged. No industry is established in the country. We continue to ship raw materials, we continue to grow produce for Europe and pass for specialists of unfinished products.

Yet the national bourgeoisie never stops calling for the nationalization of the economy and the commercial sector. In its thinking, to nationalize does not mean placing the entire economy at the service of the nation or satisfying all its requirements. To nationalize does not mean organizing the state on the basis of a new program of social relations. For the bourgeoisie, nationalization signifies very precisely the transfer into indigenous hands of privileges inherited from the colonial period.

Since the bourgeoisie has neither the material means nor adequate intellectual resources such as engineers and technicians, it limits its claims to the takeover of businesses and firms previously held by the colonists. The national bourgeoisie replaces the former European settlers as doctors, lawyers, tradesmen, agents, dealers, and shipping agents. For the dignity of the country and to safeguard its own interests, it considers it its duty to occupy all these positions. Henceforth it demands that every major foreign company must operate through them, if it wants to remain in the country or establish trade. The national bourgeoisie discovers its historical mission as intermediary. As we have seen, its vocation is not to transform the nation but prosaically serve as a conveyor belt for capitalism, forced to camouflage it-

self behind the mask of neocolonialism. The national bourgeoisie, with no misgivings and with great pride, revels in the role of agent in its dealings with the Western bourgeoisie. This lucrative role, this function as small-time racketeer, this narrow-mindedness and lack of ambition are symptomatic of the incapacity of the national bourgeoisie to fulfil its historic role as bourgeoisie. The dynamic, pioneering aspect, the inventive, discoverer-of-new-worlds aspect common to every national bourgeoisie is here lamentably absent. At the core of the national bourgeoisie of the colonial countries a hedonistic mentality prevails — because on a psychological level it identifies with the Western bourgeoisie from which it has slurped every lesson. It mimics the Western bourgeoisie in its negative and decadent aspects without having accomplished the initial phases of exploration and invention that are the assets of this Western bourgeoisie whatever the circumstances. In its early days the national bourgeoisie of the colonial countries identifies with the last stages of the Western bourgeoisie. Don't believe it is taking short cuts. In fact it starts at the end. It is already senile, having experienced neither the exuberance nor the brazen determination of youth and adolescence.

In its decadent aspect the national bourgeoisie gets considerable help from the Western bourgeoisies who happen to be tourists enamored of exoticism, hunting and casinos. The national bourgeoisie establishes holiday resorts and playgrounds for entertaining the Western bourgeoisie. This sector goes by the name of tourism and becomes a national industry for this very purpose. We only have to look at what has happened in Latin America if we want proof of the way the ex-colonized bourgeoisie can be transformed into "party" organizer. The casinos in Havana and Mexico City, the beaches of Rio, Copacabana, and Acapulco, the young Brazilian and Mexican girls, the thirteen-year-old mestizas, are the scars of this deprivation of the national bourgeoisie. Because it is lacking in ideas, because it is inward-looking, cut off from the people, sapped by its congenital incapacity to evaluate

issues on the basis of the nation as a whole, the national bourgeoisie assumes the role of manager for the companies of the West and turns its country virtually into a bordello for Europe.

Once again we need only to look at the pitiful spectacle of certain republics in Latin America. U.S. businessmen, banking magnates and technocrats jet "down to the tropics," and for a week to ten days wallow in the sweet depravity of their private "reserves."

The behavior of the national landowners is practically the same as that of the urban bourgeoisie. As soon as independence is proclaimed the big farmers demand the nationalization of the agricultural holdings. Through a number of schemes they manage to lay hands on the farms once owned by the colonists, thereby reinforcing their control over the region. But they make no attempt to diversify, increase production or integrate it in a genuinely national economy.

In fact the landowners call on the authorities to increase a hundredfold the facilities and privileges now theirs but once reserved for the foreign colonists. The exploitation of farm workers is intensified and justified. Capitalizing on two or three slogans, these new colonists demand a colossal effort from these farm laborers — in the name of the national interest, of course. There is no modernization of agriculture, no development plan, no initiative, for initiatives imply a degree of risk, and would throw such milieus into a panic, and put to flight a wary, overcautious, landed bourgeoisie which is sinking deeper and deeper into the ruts established by colonialism. In such regions, initiatives are handled by the government. It is the government which approves them, encourages them and finances them. The landed bourgeoisie refuses to take the slightest risk. It is hostile to gambling and ventures. It has no intention of building upon sand. It demands solid investments and quick returns. The profits it pockets are enormous compared to the gross national product, and are not reinvested. Its only mentality is to hoard its savings. This bourgeoisie especially in the

aftermath of independence, has no scruples depositing in foreign banks the profits it has made from the national resources. Major sums, however, are invested for the sake of prestige in cars, villas, and all those ostentatious goods described by economists as typical of an underdeveloped bourgeoisie.

We have said that the colonized bourgeoisie which attains power utilizes the aggressiveness of its class to grab the jobs previously held by foreigners. In the aftermath of independence, faced with the human consequences of colonialism, it wages a ruthless struggle against the lawyers, tradespeople, landowners, doctors, and high-ranking civil servants "who insult the national dignity." It frantically brandishes the notions of nationalization and Africanization of the managerial classes. In fact, its actions become increasingly tinged with racism. It bluntly confronts the government with the demand that it must have these jobs. And it does not tone down its virulence until it occupies every single one of them.

The urban proletariat, the unemployed masses, the small artisans, those commonly called small traders, side with this nationalist attitude; but, in all justice, they are merely modeling their attitude on that of their bourgeoisie. Whereas the national bourgeoisie competes with the Europeans, the artisans and small traders pick fights with Africans of other nationalities. In the Ivory Coast, outright race riots were directed against the Dahomeans* and Upper Voltans who controlled much of the business sector and were the target of hostile demonstrations by the Ivorians following independence. We have switched from nationalism to ultranationalism, chauvinism, and racism. There is a general call for these foreigners to leave, their shops are burned, their market booths torn down and some are lynched; consequently, the Ivorian government orders them to leave, thereby satisfying

* Translator's Note: Present-day Beninese and Burkinabés

The triumph of federalism in certain young independent nations must be interpreted along these lines. We know that colonial domination gave preferential treatment to certain regions. The colony's economy was not integrated into that of the nation as a whole. It is still organized along the lines dictated by the metropolis. Colonialism almost never exploits the entire country. It is content with extracting natural resources and exporting them to the metropolitan industries thereby enabling a specific sector to grow relatively wealthy, while the rest of the colony continues, or rather sinks, into underdevelopment and poverty.

In the aftermath of independence the nationals who live in the prosperous regions realize their good fortune and their gut reaction is to refuse to feed the rest of the nation. The regions rich in groundnuts, cocoa, and diamonds stand out against the empty panorama offered by the rest of the country. The nationals of these regions look upon the others with hatred detecting envy, greed, and murderous impulses. The old precolonial rivalries, the old intertribal hatreds resurface. The Balubas refuse to feed the Lulus. Katanga becomes a state on its own and Albert Kalondji crowns himself king of southern Kasai.

African unity, a vague term, but nevertheless one to which the men and women of Africa were passionately attached and whose operative function was to put incredible pressure on colonialism, reveals its true face and crumbles into regionalisms within the same national reality. Because it is obsessed with its immediate interests, because it cannot see further than the end of its nose, the national bourgeoisie proves incapable of achieving simple national unity and incapable of building the nation on a solid, constructive foundation. The national front that drove back colonialism falls apart and licks its wounds.

This ruthless struggle waged by the ethnic groups and tribes, and this virulent obsession with filling the vacancies left by the foreigners also engender religious rivalries. In the interior and

the bush, the minor confraternities, the local religions, and *marabout* cults spring back to life and resort once more to the vicious circle of mutual denunciation. In the urban centers the authorities are confronted with a clash between the two major revealed religions: Islam and Catholicism.

Colonialism, which the birth of African unity had trembling on its foundations, is now back on its feet, and now undertakes to break this will to unify by taking advantage of every weak link in the movement. Colonialism will attempt to rally the African peoples by uncovering the existence of "spiritual" rivalries. In Senegal the magazine *Afriqué Nouvelle* secretes its weekly dose of hatred against Islam and the Arabs. The Lebanese, who control most of the small businesses along the West Coast of Africa, are publicly vilified. The missionaries opportunely remind the masses that the great African empires were dismantled by the invasion of the Arabs long before the arrival of European colonialism. They even go so far as to say that the Arab occupation paved the way for European colonialism; references are made to Arab imperialism, and the cultural imperialism of Islam is denounced. Muslims are generally kept out of managerial positions. In other regions the reverse is true and it is the indigenous Christians who are the targets and treated as conscious enemies of national independence.

Colonialism shamelessly pulls all these strings, only too content to see the Africans, who were once in league against it, tear at each other's throats. The notion of another Saint Bartholomew's massacre takes shape in some people's minds, and colonialism snickers when it hears the magnificent speeches on African unity. Within the same nation, religion divides the people and sets the spiritual communities, fostered and encouraged by colonialism and its apparatus, at odds with each other. Totally unexpected events break out here and there. In predominantly Catholic or Protestant countries the Muslim minority redoubles its religious fervor. Muslim festivals are revived and Islam defends itself every

inch of the way against the violent absolutism of the Catholic religion. Ministers are heard telling certain individuals that if they are not content, they should go and live in Cairo. In some cases American Protestantism transports its anti-Catholic prejudices onto African soil and uses religion to encourage tribal rivalries.

On the scale of the continent this religious tension can take the shape of the crudest form of racism. Africa is divided into a white region and a black region. The substitute names of Saharan Africa and North Africa are unable to mask this latent racism. In some places you hear that White Africa has a thousand-year-old tradition of culture, that it is Mediterranean, an extension of Europe and is part of Greco-Roman civilization. Black Africa is looked upon as a wild, savage, uncivilized, and lifeless region. In other places, you hear day in and day out hateful remarks about veiled women, polygamy, and the Arabs' alleged contempt for the female sex. The aggressiveness of all these remarks recalls those so often attributed to the colonist. The national bourgeoisie of each of these two major regions, who have assimilated to the core the most despicable aspects of the colonial mentality, take over from the Europeans and lay the foundations for a racist philosophy that is terribly prejudicial to the future of Africa. Through its apathy and mimicry it encourages the growth and development of racism that was typical of the colonial period. It is hardly surprising then in a country which calls itself African to hear remarks that are nothing less than racist and to witness paternalistic behavior bitterly reminiscent of Paris, Brussels, or London.

In certain regions of Africa, bleating paternalism toward blacks and the obscene idea drawn from Western culture that the black race is impermeable to logic and science reign in all their nakedness. There are some places where black minorities are confined in semi slavery, which justifies the caution, even distrust, that the countries of Black Africa manifest toward the countries of

White Africa. It is not unusual for a citizen of Black Africa walking in a city of White Africa to hear children call him "nigger" or to find the authorities speaking to him in pidgin.

Unfortunately, alas, it is all too likely that students from Black Africa enrolled in schools north of the Sahara will be asked by their schoolmates whether people live in houses in their home countries, whether they have electricity, and if their family practices cannibalism. Unfortunately, alas, it is all too likely that in certain regions north of the Sahara Africans from the south will encounter fellow countrymen who beg them to take them "anywhere there are blacks." Likewise, in certain newly independent states of Black Africa, members of parliament, even government ministers, solemnly declare that the danger lies not in a reoccupation of their country by a colonial power but a possible invasion by "Arab vandals from the north."

As we have seen, the inadequacies of the bourgeoisie are not restricted to economics. Achieving power in the name of a narrow-minded nationalism, in the name of the race, and in spite of its magnificently worded declarations totally void of content, irresponsibly wielding phrases straight out of Europe's treaties on ethics and political philosophy, the bourgeoisie proves itself incapable of implementing a program with even a minimum humanist content. When it is strong, when it organizes the world on the basis of its power, a bourgeoisie does not hesitate to maintain a pretense of universal democratic ideas. An economically sound bourgeoisie has to be faced with exceptional circumstances to force it to disregard its humanist ideology. Although fundamentally racist, the Western bourgeoisie generally manages to mask this racism by multiplying the nuances, thereby enabling it to maintain intact its discourse on human dignity in all its magnanimity.

Western bourgeoisie has erected enough barriers and safeguards for it to fear no real competition from those it exploits and

despises. Western bourgeois racism toward the "nigger" and the "towelhead" is a racism of contempt—a racism that minimizes. But the bourgeois ideology that proclaims all men to be essentially equal, manages to remain consistent with itself by urging the subhuman to rise to the level of Western humanity that it embodies.

The racism of the young national bourgeoisie is a defensive racism, a racism based on fear. Basically it does not differ from common tribalism or even rivalry between clans or confraternities. It is easy to understand why perspicacious international observers never really took the lofty speeches on African unity very seriously. The flagrant flaws are so numerous that one clearly senses that all these contradictions must first be solved before unity can be achieved.

The peoples of Africa have recently discovered each other and, in the name of the continent, have decided to pressure the colonial regimes in a radical way. The national bourgeoisies, however, who, in region after region, are in a hurry to stash away a tidy sum for themselves and establish a national system of exploitation, multiply the obstacles for achieving this "utopia." The national bourgeoisies, perfectly clear on their objectives, are determined to bar the way to this unity, this coordinated effort by 250 million people to triumph over stupidity, hunger, and inhumanity. This is why we must understand that African unity can only be achieved under pressure and through leadership by the people, i.e., with total disregard for the interests of the bourgeoisie.

The national bourgeoisie also proves incompetent in domestic politics and institutionally. In a certain number of underdeveloped countries the parliamentary rules are fundamentally flawed. Economically powerless, unable to establish coherent social relations based on the principle of class domination, the bourgeoisie chooses what seems to be the easiest solution, the single-party system. It does not possess as yet that ease of conscience and serenity that only economic power and control of

the state system can give it. It does not establish a reassuring State for the citizen, but one which is troubling.

Instead of inspiring confidence, assuaging the fears of its citizens and cradling them with its power and discretion, the State, on the contrary, imposes itself in a spectacular manner, flaunts its authority, harasses, making it clear to its citizens they are in constant danger. The single party is the modern form of the bourgeois dictatorship—stripped of mask, makeup, and scruples, cynical in every aspect.

Such a dictatorship cannot, in fact, go very far. It never stops secreting its own contradiction. Since the bourgeoisie does not have the economic means both to ensure its domination and to hand out a few crumbs to the rest of the country—so busy is it lining its own pockets not only as fast as it can, but also in the most vulgar fashion—the country sinks ever deeper into stagnation. And in order to hide this stagnation, to mask this regression, to reassure itself and give itself cause to boast, the bourgeoisie has no other option but to erect imposing edifices in the capital and spend money on so-called prestige projects.

The national bourgeoisie increasingly turns its back on the interior, on the realities of a country gone to waste, and looks toward the former metropolis and the foreign capitalists who secure its services. Since it has no intention of sharing its profits with the people or of letting them enjoy the rewards paid by the major foreign companies, it discovers the need for a popular leader whose dual role will be to stabilize the regime and perpetuate the domination of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois dictatorship of the underdeveloped countries draws its strength from the existence of such a leader. We know that in the developed countries the bourgeois dictatorship is the product of the bourgeoisie's economic power. In the underdeveloped countries, however, the leader represents the moral force behind which the gaunt and destitute bourgeoisie of the young nation decides to grow rich.

The people, who for years have seen him or heard him speak, who have followed from afar, in a kind of dream, the leader's

tribulations with the colonial powers, spontaneously place their trust in this patriot. Before independence, the leader, as a rule, personified the aspirations of the people—independence, political freedom, and national dignity. But in the aftermath of independence, far from actually embodying the needs of the people, far from establishing himself as the promoter of the actual dignity of the people, which is founded on bread, land, and putting the country back into their sacred hands, the leader will unmask his inner purpose: to be the CEO of the company of profiteers composed of a national bourgeoisie intent only on getting the most out of the situation.

Honest and sincere though he may often be, in objective terms the leader is the virulent champion of the now combined interests of the national bourgeoisie and the ex-colonial companies. His honesty, which is purely a frame of mind, gradually crumbles. The leader is so out of touch with the masses that he manages to convince himself they resent his authority and question the services he has rendered to the country. The leader is a harsh judge of the ingratitude of the masses and every day a little more resolutely sides with the exploiters. He then knowingly turns into an accomplice of the young bourgeoisie that wallows in corruption and gratification.

The economic channels of the young state become irreversibly mired in a neocolonialist system. Once protected, the national economy is now literally state controlled. The budget is funded by loans and donations. The heads of state themselves or government delegations make quarterly visits to the former metropolis or elsewhere, fishing for capital.

The former colonial power multiplies its demands and accumulates concessions and guarantees, taking fewer and fewer precautions to mask the hold it has over the national government. The people stagnate miserably in intolerable poverty and slowly become aware of the unspeakable treason of their leaders. This awareness is especially acute since the bourgeoisie is incapable of forming a class. Its organized distribution of wealth is not

diversified into sectors, is not staggered, and does not nuance its priorities. This new caste is an insult and an outrage, especially since the immense majority, nine tenths of the population, continue to starve to death. The way this caste gets rich quickly, pitilessly and scandalously, is matched by a determined resurgence of the people and the promise of violent days ahead. This bourgeois caste, this branch of the nation that annexes the entire wealth of the country for its own gain, true to its nature, but nevertheless unexpectedly, casts pejorative aspersions about the other blacks or Arabs, which recall in more ways than one the racist doctrine of the former representatives of the colonial power. It is both this wretchedness of the people and this dissolute enrichment of the bourgeois caste, the contempt it flaunts for the rest of the nation, that will harden thoughts and attitudes.

But the looming threat results in a strengthening of authority and the emergence of a dictatorship. The leader with his militant past as a loyal patriot constitutes a screen between the people and the grasping bourgeoisie because he lends his support to the undertakings of this caste and turns a blind eye to its insolence, mediocrity, and fundamental immorality. He helps to curb the growing awareness of the people. He lends his support to this caste and hides its maneuvers from the people, thus becoming its most vital tool for mystifying and numbing the senses of the masses. Every time he addresses the people he recalls his life, which was often heroic, the battles waged and the victories won in the people's name, thus conveying to the masses they should continue to place their trust in him. There are many examples of African patriots who have introduced into the cautious political struggle of their elders a bold, nationalistic style. These men came from the interior. Scandalizing the colonizer and shameing the nationalists in the capital, they proclaimed loud and clear their origins and spoke in the name of the black masses. These men who have praised the race, who were not ashamed of the past—its debasement and cannibalism—today find themselves,

alas, heading a team that turns its back on the interior and proclaims that the vocation of the people is to fall in line, always and forever.

The leader pacifies the people. Years after independence, incapable of offering the people anything of substance, incapable of actually opening up their future, of launching the people into the task of nation building and hence their own development, the leader can be heard churning out the history of independence and recalling the united front of the liberation struggle. Refusing to break up the national bourgeoisie, the leader asks the people to plunge back into the past and drink in the epic that led to independence. The leader objectively places a curb on the people and desperately endeavors either to expel them from history or prevent them from setting foot in it. During the struggle for liberation the leader roused the people and promised them a radical, heroic march forward. Today he repeatedly endeavors to lull them to sleep and three or four times a year asks them to remember the colonial period and to take stock of the immense distance they have covered.

We must point out, however, that the masses are quite incapable of appreciating the immense distance they have covered. The peasant who continues to scratch a living from the soil, the unemployed who never find a job, are never really convinced that their lives have changed, despite the festivities and the flags, however new they might be. No matter how hard the bourgeoisie in power tries to prove it, the masses never manage to delude themselves. The masses are hungry and the police commissioners, now Africans, are not particularly reassuring. The masses begin to keep their distance, to turn their backs on and lose interest in this nation which excludes them.

From time to time, however, the leader rallies his forces, speaks over the radio and tours the country in order to reassure, pacify, and mystify. The leader is even more indispensable since there is no party. During the struggle for independence there was in

fact a party headed by the current leader. But since that period the party has sadly disintegrated. Only the party in name, emblem, and motto remains. The organic party, designed to enable the free circulation of an ideology based on the actual needs of the masses, has been transformed into a syndication of individual interests. Since independence the party no longer helps the people to formulate their demands, to better realize their needs and better establish their power. Today the party's mission is to convey to the people the instructions handed down from the top. That productive exchange between the rank and file and the higher echelons and vice versa, the basis and guarantee of democracy in a party, no longer exists. On the contrary, the party now forms a screen between the masses and the leadership. The party has been drained of life. The branches created during the colonial period are today in a state of total demobilization.

The militant is running out of patience. It is now we realize how right certain militants were during the liberation struggle. In fact, during the struggle, a number of militants asked the leading organizations to elaborate a doctrine, to clarify objectives and draw up a program. But under the pretext of safeguarding national unity the leaders categorically refused to address such a task. The doctrine, they retorted, was national unity versus colonialism. And on they forged, armed with only a fiery slogan for a doctrine, reducing any ideological activity to a series of variants on the right of peoples to self-determination and the wind of history that would inevitably sweep away colonialism. When the militants asked that the wind of history be given a little more in-depth analysis, the leaders retorted with the notion of hope, and the necessity and inevitability of decolonization, etc.

After independence the party sinks into a profound lethargy. The only time the militants are called upon to rally is during so-called popular festivals, international conferences, and independence day celebrations. The local cadres of the party are

appointed to administrative jobs, the party itself becomes an administration and the militants fall back into line and adopt the hollow title of citizen.

Now that they have fulfilled their historic mission of bringing the bourgeoisie to power, they are firmly asked to withdraw so that the bourgeoisie can quietly fulfill its own mission. We have seen, however, that the national bourgeoisie of the underdeveloped countries is incapable of fulfilling any kind of mission. After a few years the disintegration of the party becomes clear and any observer, however superficial, can see for himself that the only role of the former party, now reduced to a skeleton, is to immobilize the people. The very same party, which during the liberation struggle became the focus of the entire nation, now decomposes. The current behavior of the intellectuals, who on the eve of independence had rallied around the party, is proof that such a rally at the time served no other purpose than to have their share of the independence cake. The party becomes a tool for individual advancement.

Inside the new regime, however, there are varying degrees of enrichment and acquisitiveness. Some are able to cash in on all sides and prove to be brilliant opportunists. Favors abound, corruption triumphs, and morals decline. Today the vultures are too numerous and too greedy, considering the meagerness of the national spoils. The party, which has become a genuine instrument of power in the hands of the bourgeoisie, reinforces the State apparatus and determines the containment and immobilization of the people. The party helps the State keep its grip on the people. It is increasingly an instrument of coercion and clearly antidemocratic. The party is unknowingly, and in some cases knowingly, the accomplice of the mercantile bourgeoisie. Just as the national bourgeoisie sidesteps its formative phase to revel in materialism, likewise, at the institutional level, it skips the parliamentary phase and chooses a national-socialist-type dictatorship. We now know that the shortsighted

fascism that has triumphed for half a century in Latin America is the dialectical result of the semicolonial State which has prevailed since independence.

In these poor, underdeveloped countries where, according to the rule, enormous wealth rubs shoulders with abject poverty, the army and the police force form the pillars of the regime; both of which, in accordance with another rule, are advised by foreign experts. The strength of this police force and the power of this army are proportional to the marasmus that afflicts the rest of the nation. The national bourgeoisie sells itself increasingly openly to the major foreign companies. Foreigners grab concessions through kickbacks, scandals abound, ministers get rich, their wives become floozies, members of the legislature line their pockets, and everybody, down to police officers and customs officials, joins hands in this huge caravan of corruption.

The opposition becomes more aggressive and the people are quick to latch on to its propaganda. Hostility toward the bourgeoisie is now manifest. The young bourgeoisie, which seems stricken by premature senility, ignores the advice proffered and proves incapable of understanding that it is in its own interest to veil, even slightly, its exploitation of the people.

The very Christian magazine *La Semaine Africaine* in Brazzaville addresses the barons of the regime thus: "Men in power, and you their wives, today your wealth has afforded you comfort, education perhaps, a beautiful home, contacts and many missions abroad that have opened up new horizons. But all your wealth has encased you in a shell which prevents you from seeing the poverty surrounding you. Beware." This warning from *La Semaine Africaine* addressed to Mr. Youlou's lieutenants is, of course, not revolutionary in the least. What *La Semaine Africaine* wants to convey to those starving the Congolese people is that God will punish them: "If there is no room in your heart

for the people under you, there will be no room for you in the house of God."

It is obvious that the national bourgeoisie is little troubled by such denunciations. Focused solely on Europe, it remains firmly resolved to get the most out of the situation. The enormous profits it makes from exploiting the people are shipped abroad. The young national bourgeoisie is very often more wary of the regime it has installed than are the foreign companies. It refuses to invest on home soil and is remarkably ungrateful to the State that protects and feeds it. On the European stock exchanges it buys foreign stocks and spends weekends in Paris and Hamburg. The behavior of the national bourgeoisie of certain underdeveloped countries is reminiscent of members of a gang who, after every holdup, hide their share from their accomplices and wisely prepare for retirement. Such behavior reveals that the national bourgeoisie more or less realizes it will lose out in the long term. It foresees that such a situation cannot last for ever, but intends making the most of it. Such a level of exploitation, however, and such distrust of the State inevitably trigger popular discontent. Under the circumstances the regime becomes more authoritarian. The army thus becomes the indispensable tool for systematic repression. In lieu of a parliament, the army becomes the arbiter. But sooner or later it realizes its influence and intimidates the government with the constant threat of a pronunciamiento.

As we have seen, the national bourgeoisie of certain underdeveloped countries has learned nothing from history. If it had looked closer at Latin America it would have no doubt identified the dangers awaiting it. We thus arrive at the conclusion that this microbourgeoisie, despite all the fanfare, is doomed to make no headway. In the underdeveloped countries a bourgeoisie phase is out of the question. A police dictatorship or a caste of profiteers may very well be the case but a bourgeois society is doomed to failure. The band of gilded profiteers grabbing banknotes against a background of widespread misery will sooner or later be a straw in the hands of the army, which is cleverly manipulated

by foreign advisors. The former metropolis therefore governs indirectly both through the bourgeoisie it nurtures and the national army which is trained and supervised by its experts to transfix, immobilize and terrorize the people.

The few remarks we have made concerning the national bourgeoisie lead us to an inevitable conclusion. In the underdeveloped countries the bourgeoisie should not find conditions conducive to its existence and fulfilment. In other words, the combined efforts of the masses, regimented by a party, and of keenly conscious intellectuals, armed with revolutionary principles, should bar the way to this useless and harmful bourgeoisie.

The theoretical question, which has been posed for the last fifty years when addressing the history of the underdeveloped countries, i.e., whether the bourgeois phase can be effectively skipped, must be resolved through revolutionary action, and not through reasoning. The bourgeois phase in the underdeveloped countries is only justified if the national bourgeoisie is sufficiently powerful, economically and technically, to build a bourgeois society, to create the conditions for developing a sizeable proletariat, to mechanize agriculture, and finally pave the way for a genuine national culture.

The bourgeoisie, which evolved in Europe, was able to elaborate an ideology while strengthening its own influence. This dynamic, educated, and secular bourgeoisie fully succeeded in its undertaking of capital accumulation and endowed the nation with a minimum of prosperity. In the underdeveloped countries we have seen that there was no genuine bourgeoisie but rather an acquisitive, voracious, and ambitious petty caste, dominated by a small-time racketeer mentality, content with the dividends paid out by the former colonial power. This short-sighted bourgeoisie lacks vision and inventiveness. It has learned by heart what it has read in the manuals of the West and subtly transforms itself not into a replica of Europe but rather its caricature.

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The struggle against the bourgeoisie in the underdeveloped countries is far from being simply theoretical. It is not a question of deciphering the way history has judged and condemned it. The national bourgeoisie in the underdeveloped countries should not be combated because it threatens to curb the overall, harmonious development of the nation. It must be resolutely opposed because literally it serves no purpose. Mediocre in its winnings, in its achievements and its thinking, this bourgeoisie attempts to mask its mediocrity by ostentatious projects for individual prestige, chromium-plated American cars, vacations on the French Riviera and weekends in neon-lit nightclubs.

This bourgeoisie, which increasingly turns its back on the overall population, fails even to squeeze from the West such spectacular concessions as valuable investments in the country's economy or the installation of certain industries. Assembly plants, however, are on the increase, a tendency that confirms the neo-colonialist model in which the national economy is struggling. In no way, therefore, can it be said that the national bourgeoisie slows the country's development, that it is wasting the nation's time or possibly leading it into a dead end. But the truth is that the bourgeois phase in the history of the underdeveloped countries is a useless phase. Once this caste has been eliminated, swallowed up by its own contradictions, it will be clear to everyone that no progress has been made since independence and that everything has to be started over again from scratch. This restructuring of the economy will not be based on the order set in place by the bourgeoisie during its reign, since this caste has done nothing else but prolong the heritage of the colonial economy, thinking, and institutions.

It is that much easier to neutralize this bourgeois class since, as we have seen, it is numerically, intellectually, and economically weak. In the colonized territories after independence the

bourgeois caste draws its main strength from agreements signed with the former colonial power. The national bourgeoisie has an even greater chance of taking over from the colonialist oppressor since it has been given every opportunity to maintain its close links with the ex-colonial power. But deep-rooted contradictions shake the ranks of this bourgeoisie, giving the close observer an impression of instability. There is not yet a homogeneity of caste. Many intellectuals, for instance, condemn this regime based on domination by a select few. In the underdeveloped countries there are intellectuals, civil servants, and senior officials who sincerely feel the need for a planned economy, for outlawing profiteers and doing away with any form of mystification. Moreover, such men, to a certain degree, are in favor of maximum participation by the people in the management of public affairs.

In underdeveloped countries that acquire independence there is almost always a small number of upstanding intellectuals, without set political ideas, who instinctively distrust the race for jobs and handouts that is symptomatic of the aftermath of independence. The personal situation of these men (breadwinners for an extended family) or their life story (hardship and strict moral upbringing) explains their clear distrust for the smart alecks and profiteers. These men need to be used intelligently in the decisive struggle to steer the nation in a healthy direction. Barring the way to the national bourgeoisie is a sure way of avoiding the pitfalls of independence, the trials and tribulations of national unity, the decline of morals, the assault on the nation by corruption, an economic downturn and, in the short term, an antidemocratic regime relying on force and intimidation. But it also means choosing the only way to go forward.

The profoundly democratic and progressive elements of the young nation are reluctant and shy about making any decision due to the apparent resilience of the bourgeoisie. The colonial cities of the newly independent underdeveloped countries are

teeming with the entire managerial class. For want of any serious analysis of the population as a whole, observers are inclined to believe in the existence of a powerful and perfectly organized bourgeoisie. In fact we now know that there is no bourgeoisie in the underdeveloped countries. What makes a bourgeoisie is not its attitude, taste, or manners. It is not even its aspirations. The bourgeoisie is above all the direct product of precise economic realities.

Economic reality in the colonies, however, is a foreign bourgeois reality. It is the metropolitan bourgeoisie, represented by its local counterparts, which is present in the colonial towns. Before independence the bourgeoisie in the colonies is a Western bourgeoisie, an authentic branch of the metropolitan bourgeoisie from which it draws its legitimacy, its strength and its stability. During the period of unrest preceding independence, indigenous intellectual and business elements within this imported bourgeoisie endeavor to identify themselves with it. Theirs is a wish to identify permanently with the bourgeois representatives from the metropolis.

This bourgeoisie, which has unreservedly and enthusiastically adopted the intellectual reflexes characteristic of the metropolis, which has alienated to perfection its own thought and grounded its consciousness in typically foreign notions, has difficulty swallowing the fact that it is lacking in the one thing that makes a bourgeoisie—money. The bourgeoisie of the underdeveloped countries is a bourgeoisie in spirit only. It has neither the economic power, nor the managerial dynamism, nor the scope of ideas to qualify it as a bourgeoisie. Consequently, it is in its early stages and remains a bourgeoisie of civil servants. Whatever confidence and strength it possesses will derive from the position it occupies in the new national administration. Given time and opportunity by the authorities, it will succeed in amassing a small fortune that will reinforce its domination. But it will still prove incapable of creating a genuine bourgeois society with all the economic and industrial consequences this supposes.

* * *

The national bourgeoisie from the outset is geared toward intermediate activities. Its power base lies in its business sense and petty trading, in its capacity to grab commissions. It is not its money that is working but its sense of business. It does not invest, and cannot achieve that accumulation of capital needed for the formation and expansion of an authentic bourgeoisie. At this rate it would take centuries for it to set up the rudiments of industrialization. In any case it would come up against the implacable opposition of the former metropolis, which will have taken every possible precaution in the framework of neocolonialist agreements.

If the authorities want to lift the country out of stagnation and take great strides toward development and progress, they first and foremost must nationalize the tertiary sector. The bourgeoisie, who wants the spirit of lucre and materialism to prevail as well as its contemptuous attitude toward the masses and the scandalous aspect of profit, or theft we should say, in fact invests massively in this sector. Once dominated by the colonists the tertiary sector is raided by the young national bourgeoisie. In a colonial economy the tertiary sector is by far the most important. For the sake of progress the decision to nationalize this sector must be made in the first few hours. But it is evident that such a nationalization must not take on the aspect of rigid state control. This does not mean putting politically uneducated citizens in managerial positions. Every time this procedure has been adopted it was found that the authorities had in fact contributed to the triumph of a dictatorship of civil servants, trained by the former metropolis, who quickly proved incapable of thinking in terms of the nation as a whole. These civil servants swiftly begin to sabotage the national economy and dismantle the national institutions, while corruption, fraud, misappropriation of goods, and black market trafficking set in. To nationalize the tertiary sector means organizing democratically the cooperatives for buying and selling. It means decentralizing these cooperatives

by involving the masses in the management of public affairs. All this obviously cannot succeed unless the people are politically educated. Previously the need to clarify such a paramount issue once and for all would have been recognized. Today the principle of educating the masses politically is generally taken for granted in the underdeveloped countries. But it is apparent that this basic task is not being honestly addressed. The decision to politicize the people implies that the regime expects to make popular support a condition for any action undertaken. A government which declares its intent to politicize the people expresses its desire to govern with the people and for the people. It should not use a language designed to camouflage a bourgeois leadership. The bourgeois governments of the capitalist countries have long since left this infantile phase of power behind. They govern dispassionately using their laws, their economic power, and their police force. Now that their authority is solidly established they are not obliged to waste time with demagogic considerations. They govern in their own interest and make no nonsense about it. They have made themselves legitimate and are strong in their own right.

The bourgeois caste of the newly independent countries has not yet attained either the cynicism or the serenity on which the old bourgeoisies based their power. Hence its concern to hide its deep-rooted convictions, to allay suspicions, in short to demonstrate its popularity. It is not by mobilizing dozens or hundreds of thousands of men and women three or four times a year that you politically educate the masses. These meetings, these spectacular rallies, are similar to the old preindependence tactics whereby you displayed your strength to prove to yourself and to others that you had the people on your side. The political education of the masses is meant to make adults out of them, not to make them infantile.

This brings us to consider the role of the political party in an underdeveloped country. We have seen in the preceding pages

that very often simplistic minds, belonging, moreover, to the emerging bourgeoisie, repeatedly argue the need for an underdeveloped country to have a strong authority, even a dictatorship, to head its affairs. With this in mind the party is put in charge of monitoring the masses. The party doubles the administration and the police force, and controls the masses not with the aim of ensuring their actual participation in the affairs of the nation but to remind them constantly that the authorities expect them to be obedient and disciplined. This dictatorship, which believes itself carried by history, which considers itself indispensable in the aftermath of independence, in fact symbolizes the decision of the bourgeois caste to lead the underdeveloped country, at first with the support of the people but very soon against them. The gradual transformation of the party into an intelligence agency is indicative that the authorities are increasingly on the defensive. The shapeless mass of the people is seen as a blind force that must be constantly held on a leash either by mystification or fear instilled by police presence. The party becomes a barometer, an intelligence service. The militant becomes an informer. He is put in charge of punitive missions against the villages. Embryonic opposition parties are eliminated at the stroke of a baton or in a hail of stones. Opposition candidates see their houses go up in flames. The police are increasingly provocative. Under these circumstances, there is, of course, but a single party and the government candidate receives 99 percent of the votes. We have to acknowledge that a certain number of governments in Africa operate along these lines. All the opposition parties who were generally progressive and strove for a greater participation of the masses in the management of public affairs, who wanted to see the arrogant and mercantile bourgeoisie brought to heel, have been bludgeoned and incarcerated into silence and then driven underground.

In many of today's independent regions of Africa the political party is being seriously bloated out of all proportion. In the

presence of a party member the people keep mum, behave like sheep, and pay tribute to the government and the leader. But in the street, away from the village of an evening, in the café or on the river, the people's bitter disappointment, their desperation, but also their pent-up anger, can be clearly heard. Instead of letting the people express their grievances, instead of making the free circulation of ideas between the people and the leadership its basic mission, the party erects a screen of prohibitions. The party leaders behave like common sergeants major and constantly remind the people of the need to keep "silence in the ranks." This party, which claimed to be the servant of the people, which claimed to work for the people's happiness, quickly dispatches the people back to their caves as soon as the colonial authorities hand over the country. The party will also commit many mistakes regarding national unity. For example, the so-called national party operates on a tribal basis. It is a veritable ethnic group which has transformed itself into a party. This party which readily proclaims itself national, which claims to speak in the name of the people as a whole, secretly and sometimes openly sets up a genuine ethnic dictatorship. We are no longer witness to a bourgeois dictatorship but to a tribal one. The ministers, private secretaries, ambassadors, and prefects are chosen from the leader's ethnic group, sometimes even directly from his family. These regimes based on the family unit seem to repeat the age-old laws of endogamy and faced with this stupidity, this imposture and this intellectual and spiritual poverty, we are left with a feeling of shame rather than anger. These heads of government are the true traitors of Africa, for they sell their continent to the worst of its enemies: stupidity. This tribalization of power results, much as one would expect, in regionalist thinking and separatism. Decentralizing trends surface and triumph, the nation disintegrates and is dismembered. The leader who once cried: "African unity!" and thought of his own little family awakes to find himself saddled with five tribes who also want their own ambassadors and ministers; and as irresponsible, oblivious, and pathetic as ever he cries "treason."

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We have many times indicated the very often detrimental role of the leader. This is because in certain regions the party is organized like a gang whose toughest member takes over the leadership. The leader's ancestry and powers are readily mentioned, and in a knowing and slightly admiring tone it is quickly pointed out that he inspires awe in his close collaborators. In order to avoid these many pitfalls a persistent battle has to be waged to prevent the party from becoming a compliant instrument in the hands of a leader. *Leader* comes from the English verb "to lead," meaning "to drive" in French.¹⁵ The driver of people no longer exists today. People are no longer a herd and do not need to be driven. If the leader drives me I want him to know that at the same time I am driving him. The nation should not be an affair run by a big boss. Hence the panic that grips government circles every time one of their leaders falls ill, because they are obsessed with the question of succession: What will happen to the country if the leader dies? The influential circles, who in their blind irresponsibility are more concerned with safeguarding their lifestyle, their cocktail parties, their paid travel and their profitable racketeering, have abdicated in favor of a leader and occasionally discover the spiritual void at the heart of the nation.

A country which really wants to answer to history, which wants to develop its towns and the minds of its inhabitants, must possess a genuine party. The party is not an instrument in the hands of the government. Very much to the contrary, the party is an instrument in the hands of the people. It is the party which decides on the policy enacted by the government. The party is not and never should be merely a political bureau where all the members of government and dignitaries of the regime feel free to

¹⁵ Translator's Note: In the original, Fanon uses the English word *leader* and compares it to the French verb *conduire*.

congregate. Alas all too often it is the party which makes up the entire political bureau and its members reside permanently in the capital. In an underdeveloped country the leading party members should flee the capital like the plague. With the exception of a few, they should reside in the rural areas. Centralizing everything in the capital should be avoided. No administrative pretext can justify the bustle of the capital already overpopulated and overdeveloped compared with nine tenths of the territory. The party must be decentralized to the limit. This is the only way to revive regions that are dead, the regions that have not yet woken up to life.

In practice there will be at least one member of the political bureau in each region and care should be taken not to appoint him regional head. He will not handle administrative responsibilities. The member of the regional political bureau is not obliged to hold the highest rank in the regional administration. He should not necessarily join forces with the authorities. For the people the party is not the authority but the organization whereby they, the people, exert their authority and will. The less confusion there is, the less duality of powers, the more the party can fulfill its role as guide and the more it will become a decisive guarantee for the people. If the party merges with the authorities, then this is the fastest way for the party militant to achieve his selfish ends, obtain a job in the administration, be promoted, change his rank, and make a career for himself.

In an underdeveloped country the creation of dynamic regional bureaus halts the process of urban macrocephaly and the chaotic exodus of the rural masses toward the towns. The establishment, during the very first days of independence, of regional bureaus with the power to stimulate, revive, and accelerate the citizens' consciousness is an inevitable prerequisite for any country that wants to progress. Otherwise, the party leaders and dignitaries of the regime congregate around the leader. The administration swells

out of all proportion, not because it is expanding or specializing, but because more cousins and more militants expect a position and hope to slip into the works. And the dream of every citizen is to reach the capital, to have his piece of the pie. The towns and villages are deserted, the unaided, uneducated, and untrained rural masses turn their backs on an unrewarding soil and set off for the urban periphery, swelling the lumpenproletariat out of all proportion.

Another national crisis is looming. We believe, on the contrary, that the interior, the back country, should be given priority. In the last resort, moreover, we see no drawback to the government convening elsewhere besides the capital. The myth of the capital must be debunked and the disinherited shown that the decision has been made to work in their interest. To a certain degree this is what the Brazilian government attempted to do with Brasília. The arrogance of Rio de Janeiro was an insult to the Brazilian people. But unfortunately, Brasília is still a new capital, as monstrous as the other one. Its only advantage is that today a road has been built through the forest. No, no serious objection can be made to the choice of a new capital, to relocating the entire government to one of the most destitute regions. The idea of a capital in underdeveloped countries is a commercial notion inherited from the colonial period. In the underdeveloped countries, however, we must increase our contacts with the rural masses. We must apply a national policy, i.e., a policy specifically aimed at the masses. We must never lose contact with the people who fought for their independence and a better life.

Instead of delving into their diagrams and statistics, indigenous civil servants and technicians should delve into the body of the population. They should not bristle every time there is mention of an assignment to the "interior." One should no longer hear their young wives threaten to divorce their husbands if they cannot manage to avoid a rural posting. Hence the party's political

bureau should give priority to the disinherited regions, and the artificial and superficial life of the capital, grafted onto the national reality like a foreign body, should occupy as small a place as possible in the life of the nation which, on the contrary, is fundamental and sacred.

In an underdeveloped country the party must be organized in such a way that it is not content merely to stay in touch with the masses. The party must be the direct expression of the masses. The party is not an administration with the mission of transmitting government orders. It is the vigorous spokesperson and the incorruptible defender of the masses. In order to arrive at this notion of party we must first and foremost rid ourselves of the very Western, very bourgeois, and hence very disparaging, idea that the masses are incapable of governing themselves. Experience has proven in fact that the masses fully understand the most complex issues. One of the greatest services the Algerian revolution has rendered to Algerian intellectuals was to put them in touch with the masses, to allow them to see the extreme, unspeakable poverty of the people and at the same time witness the awakening of their intelligence and the development of their consciousness. The Algerian people, that starved, illiterate mass of men and women who for centuries were plunged into incredible darkness, have resisted the tanks and planes, the napalm and the psychological warfare, but above all, the corruption and the brainwashing, the traitors and the "national" armies of General Bellounis. The Algerian people have stood firm in spite of the weak-minded, the fence-sitters, and the would-be dictators. The Algerian people have stood firm because their seven-year struggle has opened up spheres they never even dreamed of. Today arms factories operate deep in the *jebel* several meters underground; today people's tribunals function at every level and local planning commissions carve up the large agricultural estates and draw up the Algeria of tomorrow. An isolated individual can resist understanding an issue, but the group, the village, grasps it with disconcerting speed. Of course if we choose to use a language

comprehensible only to law and economics graduates it will be easy to prove that the masses need to have their life run for them. But if we speak in plain language, if we are not obsessed with a perverse determination to confuse the masses and exclude the people, then it will be clear that the masses comprehend all the finer points and every artifice. Resorting to technical language means you are determined to treat the masses as uninitiated. Such language is a poor front for the lecturer's intent to deceive the people and leave them on the sidelines. Language's endeavor to confuse is a mask behind which looms an even greater undertaking to dispossess. The intention is to strip the people of their possessions as well as their sovereignty. You can explain anything to the people provided you really want them to understand. And if you think they can be dispensed with, that on the contrary they would be more of a nuisance to the smooth running of the many private and limited companies whose aim is to push them further into misery, then there is no more to be said.

If you think you can perfectly govern a country without involving the people, if you think that by their very presence the people confuse the issue, that they are a hindrance or, through their inherent unconsciousness, an undermining factor, then there should be no hesitation: The people must be excluded. Yet when the people are asked to participate in the government, instead of being a hindrance they are a driving force. We Algerians during the course of this war have had the opportunity, the good fortune, of fully grasping the reality of a number of things. In some of the rural areas, the politico-military leaders of the revolution found themselves confronted with situations that required radical responses. We shall now address some of these situations.

In 1956 and 1957 French colonialism put certain zones off limits, and travel in these regions was strictly regulated. The peasants were no longer able to travel freely into town to buy fresh

provisions. During this period the local grocers made huge profits. Tea, coffee, sugar, tobacco, and salt reached exorbitant prices. The black market flourished and became particularly brazen. The peasants who could not pay cash mortgaged their crops, even their land, or else carved up the family property piece by piece; the next resort was to work solely to pay their bills at the local grocer's. As soon as the political commissioners realized the risks involved they reacted immediately. Consequently a rational system of supplies was established: In town the grocer was obliged to buy from the government wholesalers who gave him an invoice detailing the price of the goods. When the retailer arrived back in the *douar* he had first to report to the political commissioner who checked the invoice, fixed the profit margin, and set the selling price. The resale prices were displayed in the shop and a member of the *douar*, a kind of inspector, was on hand to inform the fellah of the exact price the goods had to be sold. The retailer, however, very quickly discovered a loophole and after three or four days declared he had run out of stock. He resumed his underhand dealings and continued selling on the black market. The reaction by the politico-military authorities was immediate. Large fines were charged and the money collected was paid into the village coffers to finance either charity works or works in the interest of the community. In some cases it was decided to close down the shop for a while. In the event of a second offense the business was immediately taken over and run by an elected management committee, on condition the former owner was paid a monthly allowance.

On the basis of this experience, it was explained to the people how the laws of economics functioned, taking concrete examples. The accumulation of capital turned from a theory into a very real and topical mode of behavior. The people understood how one can get rich from a business and expand it. It was only then that the peasants recounted how their grocer lent them money at usurious rates; others recalled how he had driven them from their land and how they had gone from being landowners to laborers.

The more the people understand, the more vigilant they become, the more they realize in fact that everything depends on them and that their salvation lies in their solidarity, in recognizing their interests and identifying their enemies. The people understand that wealth is not the fruit of labor but the spoils from an organized protection racket. The rich no longer seem respectable men but flesh-eating beasts, jackals and ravens who wallow in the blood of the people. Moreover the political commissioners had to rule that nobody would work for anyone else. The land belongs to those who work it. This is a principle which through an information campaign has become a fundamental law of the Algerian revolution. The peasants who employed agricultural laborers have been obliged to distribute land shares to their former employees.

The yield per acre was thus seen to triple, despite numerous raids and aerial bombardments by the French as well as the difficulty of getting fertilizers. The fellahs who were able to judge and see for themselves the produce they had harvested were eager to understand how it worked. They very quickly realized that work is not a simple notion, that slavery is the opposite of work, and that work presupposes freedom, responsibility, and consciousness.

In the regions where we were able to conduct these enlightening experiments, where we witnessed the edification of man through revolutionary teachings, the peasant clearly grasped the principle whereby the clearer the commitment, the better one works. We were able to convey to the masses that work is not a physical exercise or the working of certain muscles, but that one works more with one's brain and one's heart than with muscles and sweat. Likewise, in liberated regions, cut off from the former distribution channels, we had to modify production which previously was geared solely toward the towns and exports. We established production for consumption by the people and the units of the national liberation army. We quadrupled the production of

lentils and organized the making of charcoal. Green vegetables and charcoal were shipped from the northern regions to the south over the mountains, while the southern zones sent meat to the north. It was the FLN (Front de la Libération Nationale) who decided on this coordination and established the communication systems. We did not have technicians or experts from the leading universities of the West. But in the liberated regions, the daily ration reached the hitherto unheard of figure of 3,200 calories. The people were not content merely to celebrate their victory. They asked theoretical questions. For example, why did certain regions never see an orange before the war of liberation, whereas thousands of tons were shipped abroad annually; why had so many Algerians never seen grapes, whereas millions of grapes were dispatched for the enjoyment of Europeans? Today the people have a very clear notion of what belongs to them. The Algerian people now know they are the sole proprietor of their country's soil and subsoil. And if some cannot understand the FLN's relentless refusal to tolerate any infringement of this ownership and its fierce determination not to accept any compromise on principles, then everyone should remember that the Algerian people are now adult, responsible, and conscious. In short, the Algerian people are proprietors.

We have taken the Algerian example to clarify our discourse—not to glorify our own people, but quite simply to demonstrate the important part their struggle has played in achieving consciousness. Obviously other peoples have achieved the same results through other methods. We are now in a better position today to know that the confrontation in Algeria was inevitable, but other regions have led their people to the same results through political struggle and information campaigns by the party. In Algeria we understood that the masses were fully prepared for the problems with which they were confronted. In an underdeveloped country experience proves that the important point is not that three hundred people understand and decide but that

all understand and decide, even if it takes twice or three times as long. In fact the time taken to explain, the time "lost" humanizing the worker, will be made up in the execution. People must know where they are going and why. The politician should be aware that the future will remain bleak as long as the people's consciousness remains rudimentary, primary, and opaque. We, African politicians, must have very clear ideas about our peoples' situation. But this lucidity must remain deeply dialectical. The awakening of the people as a whole will not be achieved overnight; their rational commitment to the task of building the nation will be simple and straightforward; first of all, because the methods and channels of communication are still in the development stages; secondly, because the sense of time must no longer be that of the moment or the next harvest but rather that of the rest of the world; and finally, because the demoralization buried deep within the mind by colonization is still very much alive. But we should be aware that victory over the pockets of least resistance—the legacy of the material and spiritual domination of the country—is a requisite that no government can escape. Let us take the example of work under the colonial regime. The colonist never stopped complaining that the "native" was slow. Today in certain independent countries we hear leaders take up the same complaint. What the colonist really wanted was for the slave to be full of enthusiasm. Through a kind of mystification constituting the highest form of alienation, he sought to convince the slave that the land he was working belonged to him and the mines where he was losing his health were his property. The colonist forgot strangely enough that he was getting rich on the agony of the slave. In fact what the colonist was saying to the colonized subject was: "Work yourself to death, but let me get rich!" Today we should proceed differently. We must not say to the people: "Work yourself to death, but let the country get rich!" If we want to increase the gross national income, reduce the imports of certain useless, even harmful, products, improve agricultural production and fight illiteracy, we have

to conduct an information campaign. The people must understand what is at stake. Public business must be the business of the public. We arrive therefore at the need to increase the number of local cells among the rank and file. All too often we are content with establishing national bodies such as the Women's Union, the Youth Movement, and the Labor Unions at the top and never outside the capital. But if we venture to investigate behind the offices in the capital, if we go through to the backroom where the records are meant to be, we are aghast at the void, the emptiness, and the bluff. We need a foundation, cells that provide substance and dynamism. The masses must be able to meet, discuss, put forward suggestions and receive instructions. Citizens must have the opportunity to speak, to express themselves and innovate. The meeting of the local cell or the committee meeting is a liturgical act. It is a privileged opportunity for the individual to listen and speak. At every meeting the brain multiplies the association of ideas and the eye discovers a wider human panorama.

The high percentage of young people in the underdeveloped countries poses specific problems for the government that must be addressed lucidly. The idle and often illiterate urban youth is exposed to all kinds of disrupting influences. Youth in the underdeveloped countries is in most cases marketed entertainment from the industrialized countries. As a rule there is some correlation between the mental and material level of a society and the leisure activities it provides. In the underdeveloped countries, however, the young generation has access to entertainment devised for the youth of the capitalist countries: detective stories, slot machines, hard-core photos, pornographic literature, R-rated films and, above all, alcohol. In the West, the family environment, school, and the relatively high standard of living of the working masses, serve as a kind of bulwark against the harmful effects of this entertainment. But in an African country where intellectual development is unequal, where the violent clash of

two worlds has seriously shaken up the old traditions and disrupted ways of thinking, the affectivity and sensitivity of the young African are at the mercy of the aggression contained in Western culture. His family very often proves incapable of counteracting this violence with stability and homogeneity.

In this area the government must serve as filter and stabilizer. The commissioners for youth in the underdeveloped countries frequently make one mistake. They see their role as equivalent to that of commissioners for youth in the developed countries. They talk of fortifying the soul, developing the body, and encouraging talent in sports. In our opinion, they should be wary of such ideas. The youth of an underdeveloped country is often an idle youth. It must first of all be occupied. This is why the commissioner for youth must report to the Ministry for Labor. The Ministry for Labor, which is a requirement for an underdeveloped country, works in close collaboration with the Ministry for Planning, another requirement in an underdeveloped country. The youth of Africa should not be oriented toward the stadiums but toward the fields, the fields and the schools. The stadium is not an urban showpiece but a rural space that is cleared, worked, and offered to the nation. The capitalist notion of sports is fundamentally different from that which should exist in an underdeveloped country. The African politician should not be concerned with producing professional sportsmen, but conscious individuals who also practice sports. If sports are not incorporated into the life of the nation, i.e., in the building of the nation, if we produce national sportsmen instead of conscious individuals, then sports will quickly be ruined by professionalism and commercialism. A sport should not be a game or entertainment for the urban bourgeoisie. Our greatest task is to constantly understand what is happening in our own countries. We must not cultivate the spirit of the exceptional or look for the hero, another form of leader. We must elevate the people, expand their minds, equip them, differentiate them, and humanize them.

Once again we turn to the obsession that we would like to see shared by every African politician — the need to shed light on the people's effort, to rehabilitate work, and rid it of its historical opacity. To be responsible in an underdeveloped country is to know that everything finally rests on educating the masses, elevating their minds, and on what is all too quickly assumed to be political education.

It is commonly thought with criminal flippancy that to politicize the masses means from time to time haranguing them with a major political speech. It is thought that for a leader or head of state to speak on major current issues in a pedantic tone of voice is sufficient as obligation to politicize the masses. But political education means opening up the mind, awakening the mind, and introducing it to the world. It is as Césaire said: "To invent the souls of men." To politicize the masses is not and cannot be to make a political speech. It means driving home to the masses that everything depends on them, that if we stagnate the fault is theirs, and that if we progress, they too are responsible, that there is no demiurge, no illustrious man taking responsibility for everything, but that the demiurge is the people and the magic lies in their hands and their hands alone. In order to achieve such things, in order to actually embody them, we must, as we have already mentioned, decentralize to the utmost. The flow of ideas from the upper echelons to the rank and file and vice versa must be an unwavering principle, not for merely formal reasons but quite simply because adherence to this principle is the guarantee of salvation. It is the forces from the rank and file which rise up to energize the leadership and permit it dialectically to make a new leap forward. Once again we Algerians very quickly understood this, for no member of the upper echelons has been able to take precedence in any mission of salvation. It is the rank and file which fights in Algeria and they are fully aware that without their difficult and heroic daily struggle the upper echelons would collapse — just as they are aware that without the upper echelons and leadership the rank and file would disintegrate into chaos

and anarchy. The power structure draws its validity and strength solely from the existence of the people's struggle. In practice it is the people who choose a power structure of their own free will and not the power structure that suffers the people.

The masses must realize that the government and the party are at their service. A people worthy of esteem, i.e., conscious of their dignity, is a people who never forget this obvious fact. During the colonial occupation the people were told they had to sacrifice their lives for the sake of dignity. But the African peoples quickly realized that it was not only the occupier who threatened their dignity. The African peoples quickly realized that dignity and sovereignty were exact equivalents. In fact a free people living in dignity is a sovereign people. A people living in dignity is a responsible people. And there is no point "demonstrating" that the African peoples are infantile or retarded. A government and a party get the people they deserve. And in the more or less long term a people gets the government it deserves.

The above arguments are borne out by actual experience in certain regions. It sometimes occurs during a meeting that a militant's answer to a difficult problem is: "All we need do is . . ." This voluntary shortcut, which dangerously combines spontaneity, simplistic syncretism, and little intellectual elaboration, frequently wins the day. Every time we encounter this abdication of responsibility in a militant it is not enough to say he is wrong. He has to be made responsible, encouraged to follow through his chain of reasoning to its conclusion, and taught to grasp the often atrocious, inhuman, and finally sterile nature of this "All you need do is . . ." Nobody has a monopoly on truth, neither the leader nor the militant. The search for truth in local situations is the responsibility of the community. Some militants have a broader experience, are quicker to gather their thoughts, and in the past have succeeded in making a greater number of inferences. But they should avoid overshadowing the people, for the

successful outcome of any decision depends on the conscious, coordinated commitment of the people as a whole. We are all in the same boat. Everybody will be slaughtered or tortured, and within the context of the independent nation everyone will suffer the same hunger and marasmus. The collective struggle presupposes a collective responsibility from the rank and file and a collegial responsibility at the top. Yes, everyone must be involved in the struggle for the sake of the common salvation. There are no clean hands, no innocent bystanders. We are all in the process of dirtying our hands in the quagmire of our soil and the terrifying void of our minds. Any bystander is a coward or a traitor.

The duty of a leadership is to have the masses on their side. Any commitment, however, presupposes awareness and understanding of the mission to be accomplished, in short a rational analysis, no matter how embryonic. The people should not be mesmerized, swayed by emotion or confused. Only underdeveloped countries led by a revolutionary elite emanating from the people can today empower the masses to step onto the stage of history. But once again on the condition that we vigorously and decisively reject the formation of a national bourgeoisie, a caste of privileged individuals. To politicize the masses is to make the nation in its totality a reality for every citizen. To make the experience of the nation, the experience of every citizen. As President Sékou Touré so aptly reminded us in his address to the Second Congress of African Writers: "In the realm of thought, man can claim to be the brain of the world, but in reality, where every action affects spiritual and physical being, the world is still the brain of mankind for it is here that are concentrated the totalization of powers and elements of thought, the dynamic forces of development and improvement, and it is here too that energies are merged and the sum total of man's intellectual values is finally inscribed." Since individual experience is national, since it is a link in the national chain, it ceases to be individual, narrow and limited in scope, and can lead to the truth of the nation and the

world. Just as every fighter clung to the nation during the period of armed struggle, so during the period of nation building every citizen must continue in his daily purpose to embrace the nation as a whole, to embody the constantly dialectical truth of the nation, and to will here and now the triumph of man in his totality. If the building of a bridge does not enrich the consciousness of those working on it, then don't build the bridge, and let the citizens continue to swim across the river or use a ferry. The bridge must not be pitchforked or foisted upon the social landscape by a *deus ex machina*, but, on the contrary, must be the product of the citizens' brains and muscles. And there is no doubt architects and engineers, foreigners for the most part, will probably be needed, but the local party leaders must see to it that the techniques seep into the desert of the citizen's brain so that the bridge in its entirety and in every detail can be integrated, redesigned, and reappropriated. The citizen must appropriate the bridge. Then, and only then, is everything possible.

A government that proclaims itself national must take responsibility for the entire nation, and in underdeveloped countries the youth represents one of the most important sectors. The consciousness of the younger generation must be elevated and enlightened. It is this younger generation that will compose the national army. If they have been adequately informed, if the National Youth Movement has done its work of integrating the youth into the nation then the mistakes that have compromised, even undermined, the future of the Latin American republics, will have been avoided. The army is never a school for war, but a school for civics, a school for politics. The soldier in a mature nation is not a mercenary but a citizen who defends the nation by the use of arms. This is why it is paramount that the soldier knows he is at the service of his country and not of an officer, however illustrious he may be. Military and civilian national service must be used to raise the level of national consciousness, to detribalize and unify. In an underdeveloped country the mobilization of men and women should be undertaken as

quickly as possible. The underdeveloped country must take precautions not to perpetuate feudal traditions that give priority to men over women. Women shall be given equal importance to men, not in the articles of the constitution, but in daily life, at the factory, in the schools, and in assemblies. If the countries of the West station their soldiers in barracks, this does not mean this is the best solution. We are not obliged to militarize recruits. National service can be civilian or military, and in any case every able-bodied citizen should be able to join his fighting unit at a moment's notice to defend the freedom of the nation and its civil liberties.

The major public works projects of national interest should be carried out by the recruits. This is a highly effective way of stimulating stagnant regions and getting the greatest number of citizens to learn of the country's realities. We should avoid transforming the army into an autonomous body that sooner or later, idle and aimless, will "go into politics" and threaten the authorities. By dint of haunting the corridors of power, armchair generals dream of pronunciamientos. The only way of avoiding this is to politicize the army, i.e., nationalize it. Likewise there is an urgent need to strengthen the militia. In the event of war, it is the entire nation which fights or works. There should be no professional soldiers, and the number of career officers should be kept to a minimum; first of all, because very often the officers are selected from university graduates who would be much more useful elsewhere—an engineer is a thousand times more indispensable to the nation than an officer—and secondly, because any hint of a caste consciousness should be eliminated. We have seen in the preceding pages how nationalism, that magnificent hymn which roused the masses against the oppressor, disintegrates in the aftermath of independence. Nationalism is not a political doctrine, it is not a program. If we really want to safeguard our countries from regression, paralysis, or collapse, we must rapidly switch from a national consciousness to a social and political consciousness. The nation can only come into being

in a program elaborated by a revolutionary leadership and enthusiastically and lucidly appropriated by the masses. The national effort must be constantly situated in the general context of the underdeveloped countries. The front line against hunger and darkness, the front line against poverty and stunted consciousness, must be present in the minds and muscles of the men and women. The work of the masses, their determination to conquer the scourges that for centuries have excluded them from the history of the human mind, must be connected to the work and determination of all the underdeveloped peoples. There is a kind of collective endeavor, a common destiny among the underdeveloped masses. The peoples of the Third World are not interested in news about King Baudoin's wedding or the affairs of the Italian bourgeoisie. What we want to hear are case histories in Argentina or Burma about the fight against illiteracy or the dictatorial behavior of other leaders. This is the material that inspires us, educates us, and greatly increases our effectiveness. As we have seen, a government needs a program if it really wants to liberate the people politically and socially. Not only an economic program but also a policy on the distribution of wealth and social relations. In fact there must be a concept of man, a concept about the future of mankind. Which means that no sermon, no complicity with the former occupier can replace a program. The people, at first unenlightened and then increasingly lucid, will vehemently demand such a program. The Africans and the underdeveloped peoples, contrary to what is commonly believed, are quick to build a social and political consciousness. The danger is that very often they reach the stage of social consciousness before reaching the national phase. In this case the underdeveloped countries' violent calls for social justice are combined, paradoxically enough, with an often primitive tribalism. The underdeveloped peoples behave like a starving population—which means that the days of those who treat Africa as their playground are strictly numbered. In other words, their power cannot last forever. A bourgeoisie that has only nationalism to feed

the people fails in its mission and inevitably gets tangled up in a series of trials and tribulations. If nationalism is not explained, enriched, and deepened, if it does not very quickly turn into a social and political consciousness, into humanism, then it leads to a dead end. A bourgeois leadership of the underdeveloped countries confines the national consciousness to a sterile formalism. Only the massive commitment by men and women to judicious and productive tasks gives form and substance to this consciousness. It is then that flags and government buildings cease to be the symbols of the nation. The nation deserts the false glitter of the capital and takes refuge in the interior where it receives life and energy. The living expression of the nation is the collective consciousness in motion of the entire people. It is the enlightened and coherent praxis of the men and women. The collective forging of a destiny implies undertaking responsibility on a truly historical scale. Otherwise there is anarchy, repression, the emergence of tribalized parties and federalism, etc. If the national government wants to be national it must govern by the people and for the people, for the disinherited and by the disinherited. No leader, whatever his worth, can replace the will of the people, and the national government, before concerning itself with international prestige, must first restore dignity to all citizens, furnish their minds, fill their eyes with human things and develop a human landscape for the sake of its enlightened and sovereign inhabitants.

On National Culture

It is not enough to write a revolutionary hymn to be a part of the African revolution, one has to join with the people to make this revolution. Make it with the people and the hymns will automatically follow. For an act to be authentic, one has to be a vital part of Africa and its thinking, part of all that popular energy mobilized for the liberation, progress and happiness of Africa. Outside this single struggle there is no place for either the artist or the intellectual who is not committed and totally mobilized with the people in the great fight waged by Africa and suffering humanity.

Sékou Touré¹⁶

Each generation must discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it, in relative opacity. In the underdeveloped countries preceding generations have simultaneously resisted the insidious agenda of colonialism and paved the way for the emergence of the current struggles. Now that we are in the heat of combat, we must shed the habit of decrying the efforts of our forefathers or feigning incomprehension at their silence or passiveness. They fought as best they could with the weapons they possessed at the time, and if their struggle did not reverberate throughout the international arena, the reason should be attributed not so much to a

¹⁶ "The Political Leader as Representative of a Culture." Paper presented at the Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists, Rome, 1959.