

The wretched of the earth

Government, Colonialism



The Wretched of the Earth Colonialism is an integral part of the history of the planet. It is the reason why so many nations have stark cultural similarities with others. Colonialism is responsible for many people being able to understand each other through speaking the same language. Colonialism was the start of the recent phenomenon called globalization. This earth has seen colonialism for many centuries as far back as ancient Greek and Egyptian civilization. Colonialism, as we know it today however is the domination, acquisition, exploitation, or expansion, of one territory by another territory.

This usually means the colonist and the colony are in two separate regions or even two separate continents. It typically includes the subjugation of the people of the land being colonized. This colonizing behavior dates back to the early 1400's with its roots in Europe which began with the Portuguese and the Spanish. Although colonization was the early globalization, it did not have such a positive impact on everyone as globalization has today. Colonization only benefitted the colonists which are the nations seeking and dominating other lands.

Successful colonization meant colonist control of the government, the economy, the labor force, and essentially the lives of the colonized. Unfortunately, not everyone benefitted from this colonization. Those colonized were forced often enslaved and exploited for their nation's resources. If their military forces were not as powerful as the colonists, they had no chance of keeping their rights as free people. Frantz Fanon was born in 1925 in French-ruled Martinique, a small Caribbean island.

He was raised in a family that was the equivalence of the bourgeoisie social class. The people in this social class were advocates for White- French assimilation. After being taught the philosophy of negritude, he did not wish to remain a part of this social class. He left Martinique in 1943 to help the Free French fight World War II. After this war, Fanon studied Psychiatry at Lyons University in France where he experienced extreme volumes of racism. Fanon accepted a position as ' Chief of Staff' in a psychiatric ward of a French hospital.

He was responsible for treating distressed officers and soldiers who had been affected psychologically by the Algerian conflict. By 1956, Frantz discontinued his work for the French government in Algeria because of the negative effects their colonization had on the people. He could no longer treat the French in the hospital he worked when they knowingly inflicted torture on the people of Algeria. Once he officially stopped working for the French government, Fanon joined the fight for Algerian independence.

During this time, he traveled different nations in Africa to help build their resources. It during this time he published a series of works that were in favor of national rights and anti-colonialism. He wrote the Wretched of the Earth within the last year of his life. The purpose of this piece was to expose the savagery and the atrocity of colonialism. It explored the psychological effect of colonization and racism as well as a movement to decolonization. In this book, he argues that violence is necessary for independence.

The very first chapter of the book, ' Concerning Violence', explores several topics. In the first sentence Fanon states, " National liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth:

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whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon. " He is not endorsing violence; he is just letting us know that it is inevitable with liberation as the cause. Fanon teaches us that decolonization sets out to change the order of the world.

It is the substitution of one species for another and brings new men, new language and a new humanity. Fanon identifies the different parties of the natives who are involved in decolonization. These parties are the politicians, the bourgeoisie, and the peasant. The politicians only want to reform colonization not remove it while peasant are the most revolutionary being that they have nothing to lose and the most to gain. According to Fanon, decolonization is the physically removing the control of territory from the colonist back to the people.

When Frantz Fanon discusses violence, he means force or aggression. By violence he means something that causes injury whether it is physical or psychological. In all of his descriptions of decolonization, he maintains that violence is a component in achieving them. In our society violence is something that should be avoided by all means necessary. We believe today that violence terminates basic human rights. Fanon openly accepted violence as an ingredient in successful decolonization while others try to reach that conclusion peacefully.

For his open and honest opinion on his take on violence, Fanon is viewed as controversial. There are many that strongly disagree with his opinion and there are some that believe that his thesis is true but for extreme cases only. The final chapter of the book, ' Colonial War and Mental Disorders', Fanon
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describes his studies in the psychiatric ward of the Algerian hospital. In this chapter he notes how the nature of colonialism affects mental health by describing some of the patients he came in contact with.

He used the cases to show the scope of disorders between the colonists and the colonized. He provides multiple series of cases, series A through D. Series A has five cases that all display Algerian or European people who had clear symptoms of the reactionary type of mental disorder. Series B displayed cases that rose while Algeria was in total war. The first case in series B is particularly interesting. It deals with 2 Algerians boys that murdered their European friend. Their reasoning for this was simply because Europeans killed arabs.

It is clear from these cases why Fanon believes that violence is necessary to overthrow foreign government and for a nation to be independent. The revolutionaries will always meet opposition by the perpetrators of colonialism when fighting for freedom. It is very rare that colonist will give up their colony without a fight. Due to their military strength and technology, colonist can easily stop the freedom fighters but they will not give up without a fight. Without returning the violence, the revolutionaries would not be able to gain and maintain power of their land.

When violence occurs in the struggle for freedom, revolutionaries become united. With the continuous build up of tension and advantaged treatment, I believe that violence is inevitable as well. Though this book was a little difficult to get through, the benefit of taking the time to understand is large. I enjoyed learning about world history especially colonialism from a psychological point of view. I would recommend this book to anyone that is

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completing studies in anything from psychology, politics, sociology, rhetoric and certainly history.