

# Fanon, The Arab Spring and the Myth of Liberation

Aisha Birani  
*Western University*

## Introduction

Psychiatrist, philosopher, writer and revolutionary, Frantz Fanon has been the inspiration for anti-colonial liberation movements for more than four decades. In his two most famous and complex works, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (2004), Fanon traces the violent and psychologically deleterious conditions of existence under colonial rule. Situated in Algeria in the midst of its political and economic turmoil in the 1950s, Fanon quickly began to break down the assumptions of a “benevolent colonialism” and as such, served as one of the chief theoreticians of the Algerian struggle toward liberation (Gordon et al. 1996). At the basis of his works, Fanon offers us what he calls a “stretched” Marxist approach that incorporates an explanation for the racialized nature of capitalist exploitation. His prescription for the liberation of the colonies from exploitation can only be attained through the violent process of decolonization, to rid the colonized from feelings of inferiority that they develop on account of their skin colour. The end goal of decolonization, according to Fanon, is the formation of a unifying African culture.

In this paper I aim to highlight the complexity and contradiction inherent in colonial systems as put forth by Fanon by asking: what is the relationship between colonialism and racism? Is there an asso-

ciation between theories of racial stratification and theories of class exploitation? What is nationalism according to Fanon, and can it be an avenue to promote primordialism? Is Fanon’s “stretched Marxism” a necessary stretch? And lastly, in what ways can an engagement with Fanon’s body of work elicit insight into the nature of colonial exploitation in today’s societies? The answers that we can gain from a critical examination of Fanon’s works will begin as a useful starting point from which to understand a set of more recent revolutionary events that have occurred in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and other nations in the Arab speaking world, known as the Arab Spring. While these countries are not necessarily rebelling against a foreign colonial system, they at least see themselves as engaging in a decolonization process in pursuit of greater liberal-democratic ideals against what Fanon (2004) refers to as the “national bourgeoisie” (76).

I intend to demonstrate, however, that *both* Fanon’s appeal to the formation of a common African culture *and* the calls for democracy that have recently surfaced in the Arab world are embedded in mythical conceptions of “race,” “equality,” and “freedom.” In this respect, the primordialist assumptions that underlie Fanon’s work will be used to shed light on the yearning for liberal-democracy in the Arab-speaking world. Specifically, I will

argue that since both Fanon and the revolting citizens of the Arab Spring disregard any reference to exploitation and/or group cohesion rooted in a class solidarity *for itself*, they remain, as a consequence, in a state of false consciousness. Ultimately, until these revolutionary movements form a working-class consciousness, vast inequalities in the region are likely to be perpetuated.

### Marx, Surplus Labour and the Accumulation of Capital

In order to fully comprehend the crux of Fanon's arguments regarding the psychological implications of colonialism and the struggle for liberation, it is first necessary to begin with an understanding of the root cause of colonialism. For this, we must look to Karl Marx and his analysis of the exploitative, profit-driven system of capitalism. At the basis of Marx's theory of exploitation is an explicit assertion that society is broken into two main classes that are in constant opposition: those who hold the right of ownership to property and those who do not and who must sell their own labour power to subsist (Marx 1972). The diametric opposition between ownership and non-ownership classes today takes its form in the relationship between bourgeoisie and proletariat, but in the past has been constituted in different forms depending on the mode of production in that historical epoch (Marx and Engels 1988:67). It is important to note that for Marx it is the dominant class of that particular historical epoch whose interests are represented within the ideological superstructure, which further serves to solidify their power.

Under a capitalist mode of production, owners or capitalists are in the advanced position to accumulate capital from the exploited labour of their workers. This process is referred to as the extraction of a surplus value, and alludes to the new value created by the *unpaid* labour of workers. This value is freely appropriated by capitalists and is the basis of their profit: "surplus-value and the rate of surplus value are... the invisible essence to be investigated, whereas the rate of profit and hence the form of surplus-value as profit are visible surface phenomena" (Marx 1972:441). For Marx, the enormous increase in wealth and population from the 19th century and onwards were

primarily due to the competitive striving to obtain the maximum surplus value from the labour power of workers. To the extent that the primary motive of capitalists is the maximum accumulation of capital, the system necessarily requires cheap labour to increase the surplus value of work, resulting in the amassment of wealth on a larger and larger scale.

For labourers who naturally find the value of life inherent in the processes of their labour and consider their work to be what separates them from animals, then "how does production, based on the determination of exchange value by labor-time only lead to the result that the exchange value of labor is less than the exchange value of its product?" (Marx 1918:72). Since the exchange of labour for wages between workers and owners occurs by people who are *legally free* to choose to work or not, coercion and exploitation may *appear* to be absent in a capitalist mode of production. The propertyless workers must, however, sell their labour indefinitely in order to avoid starvation, ultimately deeming capitalism a highly exploitative system of production.

The competition between millions of small-scale producers preceding the introduction of large factories and enormously efficient machines rapidly transformed into the monopoly of resources and the concentration of capital in the hands of just a few after the establishment of large-scale production. The ongoing pursuit of cheap labour for the maximum accumulation of capital has intensified the search for raw materials and new investment opportunities among capitalists. In an economic system based on the competition of cheap labour, "one of the surest means of gaining the upper hand in the competition is for owners to be able to secure a cheap labour force, [by utilizing] race as a reliable means of cheapening labour" (Allahar 2011:3; Allahar and Côté 1998). Imperialism, the colonization of less developed geographical territories, and the subsequent racialization of labour can be understood in the complementary sense that the ideological manipulation of race serves as a means by which to solidify control of the labour force in the most effective and profitable manner. It is in this context that Frantz Fanon's work becomes especially instructive.

## Race, Racism and Class as the Organizing Principles of Colonialism

In his classic works *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon powerfully delineates the psychological implications and subsequent struggle against the oppressive system of colonialism. Colonialism, for Fanon (2004) refers to a violent system of exploitation and oppression produced through the creation of two conflicting societies: the society of the colonizer, which “displays and demonstrates [oppression] with the clear conscience of the law enforcer, and brings violence into the homes and minds of the colonized subject” and the sector of the colonized “that crouches and cowers, a sector on its knees, a sector that is prostrate” (Fanon 2004:4-5). What, then, differentiates and forms specific spatial barriers between the colonized and the colonizer? The borders within colonized regions, argues Fanon, segregate not only the poor from the wealthy, but also produces clearly demarcated racial formations. Therefore, the colonized sector is not only a world whose “belly is permanently full of good things” but also a society of “white folks” (Fanon 2004:4). On the opposite side of this degenerate border is a “sector of niggers, a sector of towelheads” that is “hungry for bread, meat, shoes, coal and light” (Fanon 2004:4-5). Racial inferiority in the colonial world is felt and realized economically. Thus, Fanon writes:

Looking at the immediacies of the colonial context, it is clear what divides this world is first and foremost what species, what race one belongs to. In the colonies the economic infrastructure is also a superstructure. The cause is effect: you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich... [Accordingly,] it is not the factories, the estates, or the bank account which primarily characterize the “ruling class.” The ruling species is first and foremost the outsider from elsewhere, different from the indigenous population, “the others.” [Fanon 2004:4-5]

In this extension, or “stretching,” of Marxism, Fanon is asserting that racism, the “practice of including and excluding individuals and groups from participating fully in the social economy on the basis of some imputed racial similarities or differences,” is

not merely a superstructural effect of a determinant economic base, but rather, an organizing principle in society (Allahar 1993:39).

We can trace the genealogy of racial domination back to the period of the Atlantic slave trade and the advent of chattel slavery, where slave-owners successfully captured and “othered” Africans for the purposes of economic expansion (Davidson 1992; Williams 1966). Colonialism, too, required and continues to require the complete “racial,” cultural and ethnic subjugation of an entire group of people. Grounded in the economic imperative of capitalist profit-making, the system of colonialism in the Americas represented a new era of human degradation reinforced by the ideology and practice of white supremacy and black inferiority (Gordon et al. 1996). We need not look further for evidence of this process of racialization than in our own beloved nation. The intense racialization of Canada’s First Nations peoples as hostile “red men,” for example, has enabled Canada’s dominant classes to promote their own interests, economically and politically up until the present day (Allahar and Côté 1998:62). Similarly, the migration of Indian indentured workers, or “coolies,” into Trinidad between 1845 and 1917 provided colonizers with cheap and temporary plantation labour (Singh 1974:43). Strategically defined against the uncivilized African labourer in Trinidad, the absence of Afro-Indian solidarity allowed the colonizers to perpetuate and maintain their dominance (Samaroo 1974:96). Racism, therefore “had not [only] to do with the color of the laborer, but [also] with the cheapness of the labour” (Williams 1966:19; Bonacich 1972).

Most importantly, the racial significations aligning black with “the uncivilized savage” are transferred and internalized into the psyches and structures of the colonial society (Fanon 1967: 164). Like the slave owner who demanded from the slave unconditional submission and who impressed upon the slave a sense of innate inferiority and fear of white people, the strategies of degradation, depersonalization and dehumanization are also quintessential features of the colonial project. As a consequence, the psychological roots of African or “black” inferiority have come out of the soil of both slavery and colonialism. For “not only must the black man be black; he must be black in

relation to the white man... his inferiority comes into being through the other” (Fanon 1967:110). Again, in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) Fanon writes that the colonized “identifies his self with the explorer, the bringer of civilization, the white who carries truth to the savages – an all-white truth. There is identification, that is, the young Negro subjectively adopts a white attitude” (147).

Indeed, for Fanon, the unintended reaction to colonial oppression by the colonized subject is to internalize the white negrophobe’s gaze and to engage in a process of self-objectification or what he calls the epidermalization of inferiority:

It is apparent to me that the effective disalienation of the black man entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities. If there is an inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process: primarily, economic: subsequently, the internalization – or better, the epidermalization – of this inferiority. [Fanon 1967:10-11]

The black man, according to Fanon, wants to be white.

Accordingly, for Fanon, race is not a biological trait. Rather, it is an historically constructed phenomenon and culturally mediated artifact. Culture, argues Fanon, operates as the instrument through which the normalization of the social construction of race as a system of hierarchal power relations occurs. The dominant colonial culture maintains and legitimates this racialized hierarchy by replacing indigenous histories and cultures with newly constructed racial ideologies. Racial domination in the colonies, therefore, is legitimated through the imposition of the colonizer’s language, racist propaganda and religious institutions that equate darkness with evil and inhumanity (Fanon 1967:6-7, 69). We can see echoes of this logic in the work of Roger Bastide (1968) and his discussion of colour symbolism in Christianity:

The Christian symbolism of color is very rich... The color yellow, or at least a dull shade of yellow, has come to signify treason... But the greatest Christian two-part division is that of white and black. White is used to express the *pure*, while black expresses the *diabolical*. The conflict between Christ and Satan,

the spiritual and the carnal, good and evil came finally to be expressed by the conflict between white and black, which underlines and synthesizes all the others. [36-7, emphasis added]

Religious and cultural justifications, such as the Christian colour symbolism illustrated above, served further to legitimate and rationalize the exploitative conditions in the colonies. Gradually, the overt mechanisms of domination have become hegemonic and embedded in different institutional sites – the government, criminal justice system, and schools – all operating to mediate the polarized racialized economic systems of the colonial worlds.

### **Violence, Decolonization and the Call for an African Culture**

In the very same space that Fanon conceptualizes the psycho-affective internalization of inferiority, he also attributes to the colonized a capacity for emancipation and disalienation. In the *Wretched of the Earth* Fanon exclaims that because colonialism is an inherently violent phenomenon, decolonization must also exist as a violent process. Thus, in reaction to the violence of the colonizer, Fanon prescribes counter-violence as the initial pathway for establishing the basis for reciprocal recognition between the colonized and the colonizer. In contrast to non-violent attempts for liberation by the national bourgeoisie (members of the colonized class who merely appropriate “the old traditions of colonialism [and] flex its military and police muscle”), Fanon (2004) looks to the lumpen-proletariat to create revolutionary change (76). He asserts that the unemployed and starving peasants “do not lay claim to the truth but are the truth” because they understand most clearly how things really work in the colonial world (Fanon 2004:13).

To the extent that the colonized have internalized their inferiority, “the logical end of this will to struggle is the total liberation of the national territory. In order to achieve this liberation, the inferiorized man brings all his resources to play, all his acquisitions, the old and the new, his own and those of the occupant” (Fanon 1967:43). Because of the preoccupation with their racial inferiority, the colonized must unite, first, on the basis of their common



African consciousness. No one, Fanon (2004) argues, “can truly wish for the spread of African culture if he does not give practical support to the creation of the conditions necessary to the existence of that culture; in other words to the liberation of the whole continent” (235). To effectively challenge colonialism, thus, culture must become national and specific. The formation of a national culture, argues Fanon (2004), “must lie at the very heart of the liberation struggles these [colonized] countries are waging” (168):

The culture which has been retrieved from the past to be displayed in all its splendor is not his national culture. Colonialism, little troubled by nuances, has always claimed that the “nigger” was a savage, not an Angolan or a Nigerian, but a “nigger.” ... The colonial’s endeavors to rehabilitate himself and escape the sting of colonialism obey the same rules of logic... the culture proclaimed is *African culture*.  
[Fanon 2004:150, emphasis added]

### **Ethnic Nationalism as False Consciousness**

It is at this point that I wish to argue that Fanon’s extension or “stretched Marxism” is extremely useful insofar as it accounts for the racialized nature of labour under capitalism, and subsequently, the very real experiences of the colonized. However, I would also like to argue that, like nationalism, race and ethnicity constitute ideological distractions that prevent any real solidarity based in class consciousness from occurring. Decolonization along the lines of race and the successive call for an African culture serves to essentialize the dignity, glory and solemnity of all Africans and all past African civilizations. In this respect, decolonization based upon racial solidarity roots itself in myths and fabrications, rather than in material emancipation. Fanon’s contention that a critical, progressive negritude can lead to a genuine national culture raises serious implications regarding the effectiveness and success of a violent decolonization movement within the colonies. If we can agree, for instance, that the colonists’ concern with race is ideological and serves to maintain the structure of class dominance, why is Fanon’s ultimate resolution for the liberation of the colonized rooted in a primordialist unity based in a common African

culture? To this extent, Fanon is describing what Anthony Smith (1988) has termed *ethnic nationalism* – a nationalism that is culturally or ethnically defined (11). In contrast to the civic or territorial nation which is defined by a common economy, territory, educational culture and citizenship, ethnic nationalism rests upon a “myth of common descent, common historical memories, elements of a shared culture, an association with a particular territory, and a sense of solidarity” (Smith 1988:9). The key to Smith’s definition of ethnic nationalism is, of course, that it is supplanted in myth. In the same way that Fanon, and also to a degree Bastide (1968), suggest that the racialization of particular groups of people for the purposes of extracting cheap labour is justified and rationalized in a myth of racial inferiority (i.e. through religion), ethnic nationalism is also based in the myth of primordial unity and assumes the existence of an imagined community.

To the degree that ethnic nationalism invokes such mythical or mystical bonds – and thereby abstracts social relations from their *real, material* basis – it is best regarded as false consciousness. False consciousness, a concept alluded to by Marx, describes a situation whereby individuals who share a common class position are unaware of the fact. Class consciousness, on the other hand, refers to a situation whereby members of a similar social class are aware of their positions, and as a consequence, share, promote and defend the common interests of that group (Bottomore 1991). Enabled by the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie classes, “ethnic entrepreneurs” further promote forms of cultural nationalism rooted in primordial notions of racial belonging. These entrepreneurs produce and perpetuate myths associated with belonging and sameness and redirect the consciousness of the colonized toward, not economic, but racial injustice. In this sense, ethnic entrepreneurs seek to promote a non-class consciousness, or a *false consciousness*, among the popular masses in the colonial world. The false consciousness facilitated by ethnic entrepreneurs enables the continual exploitation of the colonial subject insofar as they force the colonized mind to value racial solidarity over solidarity rooted in a working-class consciousness.

## The Arab Spring and the Myth of Liberalism

In the foreword to *The Wretched of the Earth*, Homi Bhabha asserts that Fanon's work and his vision for decolonization provide a blueprint for the conceptualization of social inequalities that have proliferated under global aspirations and impositions in the 21st century. Placing Fanon's work in conversation with the experiences of "popular masses" distinct from the colonial setting which he was passionately assessing, his theory provides a starting point for analyzing and critiquing the recent revolutionary events in the Arab-speaking world. These events, coupled with the issues of colonialism, post-colonialism, neo-colonialism and ethnicity give us cause to analyze the work of Fanon so as to gain insight into the strengths and pitfalls of his work.

What is currently being referred to as the Arab Spring is in fact a revolutionary wave of protests and demonstrations occurring in the "Arab world" (the Middle East and North Africa) that began in the last few weeks of 2010. Thus far, revolutions that have successfully overthrown tyrannical officials and governments have occurred in Tunisia, with the flight of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Egypt and the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak, and most recently, in Libya with the death of Muammar Ghaddafi. Civil uprisings have also surfaced in Yemen, Syria and Bahrain in addition to major protests in Jordan, Morocco and Algeria (Pollack 2011:213). The demonstrators in the region have shared many similarities including techniques of civil resistance in their campaign efforts such as strikes, marches, sit-ins as well as the use of social media to organize and communicate. Although, the uprisings that have surfaced in the Arab-speaking world over the course of this past year have not followed the exact same trajectories nor have the fruits of their dissent resulted in similar or exact outcomes, they do, however, share common motivations and features that allow for, at least, a partial analysis.

The economic, political and social situation characteristic of the colonies described by Fanon beginning in the 1950s certainly differs from the situation of the countries impacted by the Arab Spring. For example, while almost or all of these Arab

countries have done away with the colonial rulers of the imperial conquest, the remnants of tyrannical leaders remain. In order to perpetuate and support the colonial order, the puppet native ruling class has been Anglicized, but are emphatically not English. Thus, although these countries no longer define their existence in relation to a colonial ruler in the way that Fanon describes, the protests and revolts launched by the citizens of these countries do resemble the previous attempts for decolonization originally targeted against their former imperial authorities. Accordingly, these citizens see themselves as engaging in a decolonization process against what Fanon (2004) refers to as the "national bourgeoisie" - members of the native population who seek to remain on good terms with the colonial authorities (in our current neo-colonial context, *the West*) and who, as a consequence, necessarily "reject these upstarts, these anarchists" (76-7). As such, the native rulers are not exactly like the colonizer but mimic the colonizer - they become almost the same, but not quite. For, "once colonialism ended... and the Europeans withdrew from the colonies, new opportunities were created for the formerly colonized to come to the fore and to assert a new political identity" (Allahaar 2005b:237). The epitome of these new political identities can be found in the representation of leaders such as Ben Ali, Mubarak and Ghaddafi who have come to be both agents and objects of colonial surveillance.

However, the sustained prevalence of tyrannical, bourgeois-nationalist leaders indicates that a truly liberating process of decolonization, as described by Fanon, has yet to occur for these countries. To the extent that these leaders have not the best interests of their citizens in mind, but rather their own political and economic interests, these tyrants merely serve to protect and reproduce the bourgeoisie's control over the conditions of capitalist production. Take, for example, Hosni Mubarak's support of the eviction of Iraqi forces from Kuwait:

When America was hunting for a military alliance to force Iraq out of Kuwait, Egypt's president joined without hesitation. His reward, after the 1991 Gulf war, was that America, Gulf states and Europe forgave Egypt around \$20 billion-worth of debt. [Economist 1999]

Insofar as the ultimate goal of the national bourgeoisie (as well as the leaders of the West that they are serving) is the maximization of capital, both Fanon's and Marx's descriptions of the exploitation necessary to secure assets are undoubtedly applicable to the relationship between ruler and oppressed in the Arab speaking world.

Extreme poverty, the unequal distribution of wealth, and an overall economic decline describe the realities of nearly all of the countries in the Middle Eastern and North African regions (with the exception, of course, of U.S. puppets, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, among others) (Pollack 2011). Let us look again to Egypt for a more specific example of the exploitative relationship between the rulers and the ruled. Egypt, a former British colony, sought independence at the end of the nineteenth century with the creation of an Egyptian nationalist movement. A revolution in 1919, which rooted itself in the foundations of socialist thought, resulted, instead, in the emergence of the national bourgeoisie (Ginat 1997). Accordingly, the emergence of an Egyptian working class was the direct result of the acceleration and the development of industrialization in order to satisfy the material interests of the bourgeoisie (Ginat 1997). Therefore, instead of placing the mode and means of production in the hands of the working class, the Egyptian nationalist revolution resulted in the entrenchment of bourgeois domination and proletarian exploitation. Presumably, the espoused goals and perceived outcomes of the recent Egyptian revolution center, not upon the original socialist agenda of the Egyptian nationalist party, but rather, on a yearning for democratic rule, equal human rights, meritocracy and fair and free elections in the country (Pollack 2011).

Similar sentiments regarding the democratization and overall celebration of the call to adopt liberal-democratic ideals in Egypt can be found among citizens in the rest of the Arab-speaking world who have regarded these revolutions as truly liberating. However, the touted features of a liberal society – equality, freedom, constitutionalism and free and fair elections – are still *ideals* that remain a long way from being actualized; in reality, they serve instead to distract us from the realization of our class

positions and concomitant exploitation (Allahar and Côté 1998). It is in this way that the ideology of liberalism, its promotion of the free pursuit of individual goals and the drive to acquire material possessions, has seeped into the wants and desires of the materially underprivileged citizens of the Arab world. Of course, to the degree that it is ideological and widely believed, the notion of liberal-democracy is itself mythical because it endorses the view that all individuals are free and equal, while simultaneously reinforces capitalism's unequal distribution of wealth.

In Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and other countries that we shall characterize as neo-colonial, the myth of liberalism promotes arbitrary ideals of “human flourishing” and “conceptions of the good” in its claims to liberate citizens from the despotic rule and oppressive culture imposed upon them by their rulers. In this way, liberalism is less a means of promoting political emancipation, but instead serves as an ideological tool that endorses the assimilation of a native culture into the West through the imposition of “democracy.” To the extent that the revolutions of the Arab Spring have sought and continue to seek out liberalist notions of freedom, justice and equality, they are conforming to the West's individualist democratic system, and by default, free enterprise capitalism that assumes that all economic actors are free and equal in the marketplace.

We know, however, that “although the political system is portrayed as a free contest among equals, each having one vote to cast, the economic system is driven by competition and inequality of access to material resources” (Allahar and Côté 1998:13). Thus, while race was, for Fanon, the most salient notion along which to derive solidarity, it is, in our time, democratic, progressive liberalism that has shaped the great rallying call. I argue that this is due largely to the globalization of liberal ideologies (and their attendant conceptions of freedom and political economy) that have accompanied the *material* hegemony of capitalism in general (and the United States more specifically) over the past century. Ultimately, the myth of liberalism, like the myth of ethnic nationalism and the belief in the existence of primordial ties between members of “our kind,” allow the ruling class

to persist unimpeded in pursuit of its fundamental goal: the accumulation of capital. Just as Fanon's call for solidarity rooted in a mythical and imagined African culture is, in the end, solidarity based in false consciousness, the myth of liberalism too distracts citizens of the Arab-speaking world from the true source of their exploitation – advanced industrial capitalism – and in this way, are also falsely conscious.

### **Conclusion: Toward a Socialist Future**

The revolutionary events that have recently taken place in the Middle East provide for us a unique natural experiment through which we can address the applicability and relevance of Fanon's work in both *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*. These events inform us that, firstly, Fanon's arguments concerning the use of race as a tool for the extraction of capital must include the realities and myths associated with post- and neo-colonial situations; and secondly, that *both* the exploitation of natives in the colonies described by Fanon and the exploitation endured by the citizens of the Arab-speaking world are ultimately the result of a capitalist economic system rooted in an inherent antagonism between the interests of those who own property, and those who do not.

In essence, the ethnic nationalism that Fanon calls for as the end result of the violent decolonization process in the colonies disregards almost entirely the revolutionary power of a decolonization movement

based in a common class consciousness. The call for democracy by the citizens of the Arab Spring may similarly be understood as falsely conscious because it is coloured by liberal ideologies that do not sufficiently attend to the realities of the exploitative conditions being experienced under modern-day capitalism. Accordingly, Fanon's extension of Marxism to include the racial subordination of natives in the colonial world does encourage us to be increasingly attuned to and critical of increasing *global* economic disparities; however, we must also bear in mind that the exploitative system of capitalism, whether in the guise of colonialism or liberalism, and its ultimate pursuit of capital "has no race, color, sex or nationality" (Allahar 2005a:136).

Rather than extend or stretch Marxism, then, it is necessary to revert back to traditional Marxist assertions for the formation of a working class-consciousness. The formation of a class consciousness and a subsequent working class nationalism (first) and internationalism (later) looks beyond myths of race, ethnicity and liberal-democracy toward a socialist alternative and "the triumph of humanism and communalism over materialism, consumerism and individualism" (Allahar 2004:120). In both the case of Fanon and the Arab Spring, therefore, it is only through revolutionary action oriented toward the eradication of economic exploitation and ideological hegemony that true liberation may be achieved.



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