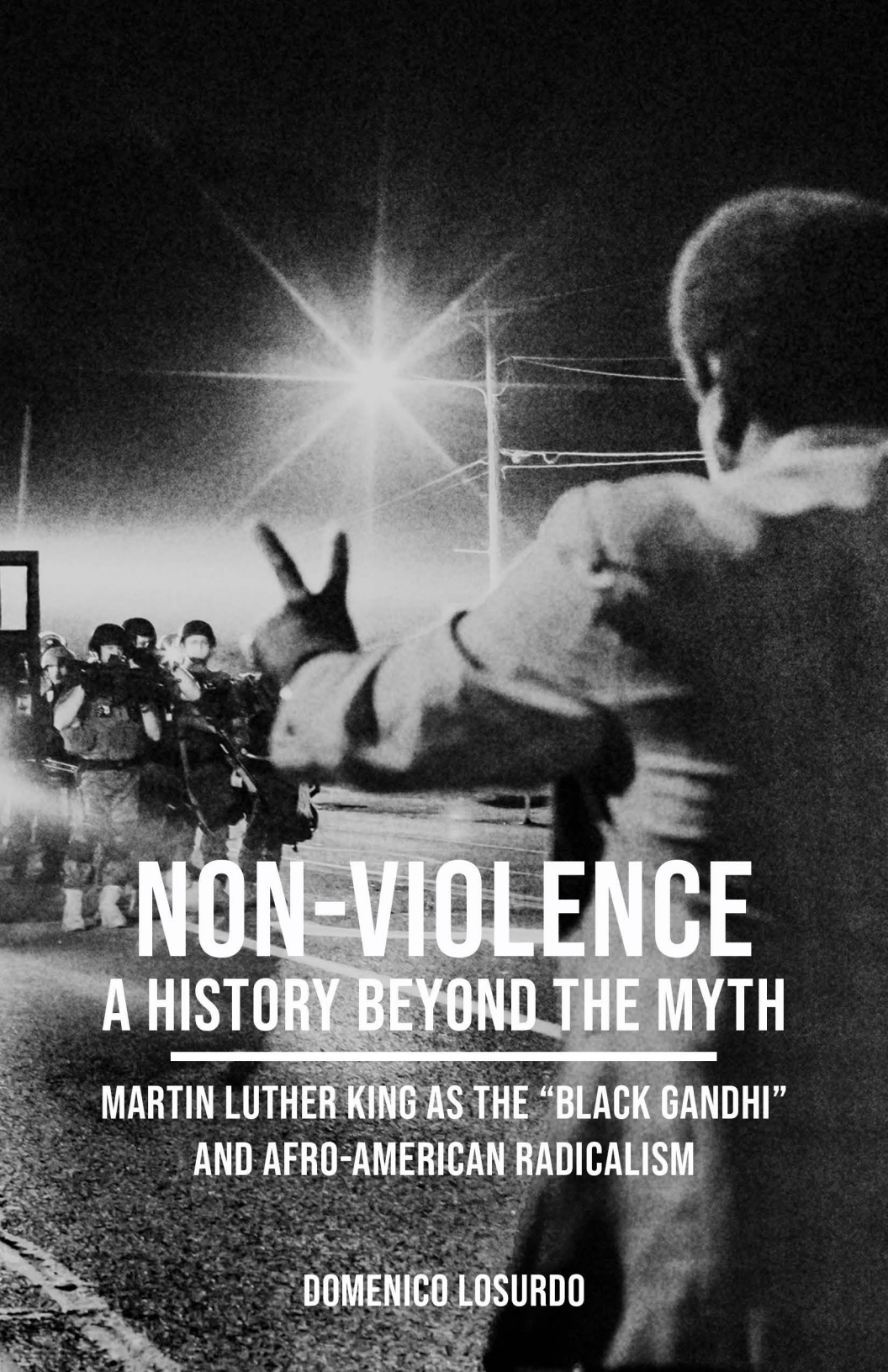

NON-VIOLENCE

A HISTORY BEYOND THE MYTH

MARTIN LUTHER KING AS THE "BLACK GANDHI" AND AFRO-AMERICAN RADICALISM

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NON-VIOLENCE FROM SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED STATES

As well as South Africa and India, where he emerged and acted as leader, Gandhi had a significant influence in the United States. There is nothing surprising about this. Historically, the regime of racial segregation established in South Africa had as its model the white supremacy imposed in the United States after the dashing of the hopes aroused by the abolition of slavery and the passage (between 1868 and 1870) of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, which were to have formalized the end of racial discrimination. Arriving in South Africa in 1893, Gandhi faced humiliations and tribulations similar to those that marked the life of blacks in the South of the United States. He was pushed off the sidewalk and removed from the train wagon reserved for whites; and was forced to observe that members of inferior races "might not move out of doors after 9 p.m. without a permit" and that hotels too contained areas from which they were excluded.[1] Having returned to India in 1896 for a period of time, Gandhi referred to his compatriots:

> The man in the street hates him [the Indian], curses him, spits upon him, and often pushes him off the foot-path . . . The tramcars are not for the Indians. The railway officials may treat the Indians as beasts. No matter how clean, his very sight is such an offence to every White man in the colony that he would object to sit, even for a short time, in the same compartment with the Indian. The hotels shut their doors against them. Even the public baths are not for the Indians no matter who they are....[2]

This report might very well have been describing the condition of blacks in the South of the United States. Meanwhile, we have seen that especially after the "sepoys," mutiny Indians had been equated with "niggers" by the British rulers; and Gandhi was received and treated as a "man of color" in South Africa. There was even a moment when, accused of having defamed Natal's whites, he risked being lynched, in line once again with the traditions of the regime of white supremacy obtaining in the southern United States.

This is the context in which to situate Martin Luther King's tendency to present himself as the "black Gandhi" invoked by the Afro-American community, which for some time had looked with admiration on "the little

brown man" who was the protagonist of an epic struggle against British white supremacy in South Africa and India.[3]

MARTIN LUTHER KING'S "REALISTIC PACIFISM"

Over and above analogies, we must not lose sight of the difference in situations and ideological platforms. Objectively, as African-Americans ceased to be concentrated in a confined area of the national territory, the aspiration to form an independent national state, nursed for a while by some circles in the black community, ceased to make any sense. The task was to win freedom in a country where a large majority of the population was white.

Subjectively, unlike in Gandhi, non-violence in King was not a "national" religion to be recovered; and it did not presuppose the cult and practice of vegetarianism, understood as a form of unconditional respect for every living being. Still less was it bound up with the ideal of chastity: while the Indian leader exposed himself to criticism by his followers for his experiments in complete control of the senses despite sharing a bed with some disciple or other, the African-American leader exposed himself to FBI blackmail as a result of his rich and not always orthodox sex life. Even if we focus exclusively on the issue of violence against human beings, the differences are no less clear. In King it is impossible to read declarations like those in which Gandhi exhorted Jews (and other victims of the Third Reich) not to put up any armed resistance to Hitler's genocidal violence; or called on his followers to face the atomic bomb unperturbed and without even seeking safety in a shelter. Here are the terms in which the African-American leader referred to his formation at a seminary:

> I felt that while war could never be a positive or absolute good, it could serve as a negative good in the sense of preventing the spread and Martin Luther King as the "Black Gandhi" and Afro-American Radicalism growth of an evil force. War, horrible as it is, might be preferable to surrender to a totalitarian system—Nazi, Fascist, or Communist.[4]

Here we have a candid legitimation of a certain kind of war, which Gandhi by contrast evaded, notwithstanding his readiness to provide support for the British empire's wars.

King clarified the sense of his subsequent evolution as follows: "After reading Niebuhr, I tried to arrive at a realistic pacifism."[5] Thus his reference to the Protestant theologian who, as early as the early 1930s, had criticized the prophet of ahimsa is explicit. In the phrase used here, the

adjective intimates distance from the pacifism in principle of the Indian leader. If the violence used by an army during a war can be legitimate in specific circumstances, the action taken domestically by the police (and the army) for the purposes, for example, of suppressing racist gangs can be all the more legitimate: "I believe firmly in nonviolence, but, at the same time, I am not an anarchist. I believe in the intelligent use of police force." [6]

The Civil War had been justified by many militants of the American Peace Society as a massive police operation against secessionist, slave-owning malefactors. King went further: identifying with Lincoln, and paying tribute to the soldiers who had fought against the South, he adopted the battle hymn of the Union army with its celebration of the "fateful lightning" of the Lord's "terrible swift sword."[7] Here violence has a theological consecration: we are led back to the wars of the Lord of the Old Testament which, as we saw, had met with Simone Weil's abhorrence.

Before reading Gandhi, King refers to having read *Civil Disobedience* as a student and "made my first contact with the theory of nonviolent resistance."[8] In fact, Thoreau did not unconditionally reject the use of violence. We have seen him regard John Brown, author of the tragic attempt to provoke an armed rebellion by southern slaves, as a model. And in his turn the African-American leader did confine himself to legitimating the Union's violence from above during the Civil War. There were cases where violence from below could also be justified—for example, in apartheid South Africa. Here, King observed in 1964, the racist power completely repressed "even the mildest form of non-violent resistance"; "[w]e can understand how in that situation people felt so desperate that they turned to other methods, such as sabotage."[9]

As regards the struggle in the United States fought and led by him, King recommended civil disobedience in the name of "realistic pacifism" and a realistic assessment of the balance of forces, rather than unconditional rejection of recourse to violence:

> The plain, inexorable fact was that any attempt of the American Negro to overthrow his oppressor with violence would not work. We did not need President Johnson to tell us this by reminding Negro rioters that they were outnumbered ten to one. The courageous efforts of our own insurrectionist brothers, such as Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner, should be eternal reminders to us that violent rebellion is doomed from the start. Anyone leading a violent rebellion must be willing to make an honest assessment regarding the possible casualties to a minority population confronting a well-armed, wealthy majority with a fanatical right wing that would delight in exterminating thousands of black men, women, and children.[10]

As we can see, the option of non-violence did not preclude homage to "our own insurrectionist brothers," to the black slaves who had sought to break their chains. This was a position adopted in the framework of a philosophy of history. This explains the declaration that, had God given him the chance to choose the historical period in which he lived, King would have chosen "the second half of the twentieth century"—the historical period when (stressed the black leader) "I see God working."[11] The decades when colonialism and the regime of white supremacy on a global scale suffered decisive blows (often quite the reverse of non-violent in kind) represented a kind of *plenitudo temporum* in the eyes of King, who seems never to have lost sight of the concrete configuration of the balance of forces and the concrete modality of great political upheavals: "no internal revolution has ever succeeded in overthrowing a government by violence unless the government had already lost the allegiance and effective control of its armed forces. Anyone in his right mind knows that this will not happen in the United States."[12] Furthermore, not even a patent disproportion in the balance of forces afforded an absolute guarantee of the struggle developing peacefully: "Negroes can still march down the path of nonviolence and interracial amity if white America will meet them with honest determination to rid society of its inequality and inhumanity." [13]

In the light of all this, we can understand the interpretation by some students of King's tendency to cast himself as the "black Gandhi," long hoped for and invoked by the African-American community, as a shrewd public relations exercise.[14] It should be added that, strictly speaking, even in Gandhi sincere homage to *ahimsa* is not unconnected to political calculation.

SEGREGATION, STATE INTERVENTION, AND VIOLENCE

It remains the case that in King denunciation of the "appalling condition" of blacks, and "the unspeakable horrors of police brutality" which they continued to be subject to, went hand in hand with a passionate profession of faith in non-violence: "We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force."[15] The final

Martin Luther King as the "Black Gandhi" and Afro-American Radicalism phrase ("soul force") recalls the *Satyagraha* of Gandhi, to which it implicitly refers.

However, charges of inconsistency against King, made from opposite viewpoints, are not wanting. Let us begin with critics from the "right." In the first place, what targets should African-Americans' struggle aim at, and

what objectives should it pursue, if it genuinely sought to be non-violent? Intervening in the debate, Arendt was concerned to set parameters. It was necessary to fight for the principle of political equality to be respected and for blacks' active or passive electoral rights not to be infringed in any way. As regards social context, however, an essential distinction must not be lost sight of: "[w]hile the government has no right to interfere with the prejudices and discriminatory practices of society, it has not only the right but the duty to make sure that these practices are not legally enforced."[16] Hence legislation (still in force in numerous states) prohibiting miscegenation (contamination deriving from inter-racial sexual and matrimonial relations) must be abolished, as must legal norms imposing racial segregation in particular contexts. But it was not legitimate to intervene where such segregation was an expression of the choices, orientations, and customs of civil society. Here political power had no right to interfere. In short, "enforced desegregation is no better than enforced segregation."[17] The integration of schools in the South imposed by law, and secured by the intervention of federal troops, was no less violent than the segregation that had been imposed by the legal norms promulgated by the southern states for decades. Blacks should have been content with the abolition of such legislation. Going further than this provoked a legitimate reaction: "the present massive resistance throughout the South is an outcome of enforced desegregation, and not of legal enforcement of the Negroes' right to vote."[18]

In a sense, the civil rights movement was called upon to be content with the transition from a segregation legally sanctioned by individual states to a segregation sponsored (or imposed) by a civil society that was white or hegemonized by whites. But did this not entail endorsing the continuation, albeit in a different form, of racist violence? This was not the opinion of Hannah Arendt, according to whom, in demanding and imposing (federal) legislation of the opposite tendency, African-Americans were suffocating the free expression of civil society, in exactly the same way as white racists had hitherto done. The civil rights movement was already being accused or suspected of being inclined to abuse of power and violence—the more so in that intervention by the federal government and army, demanded and encouraged by the blacks led by King, ended up infringing "states' rights," an essential element of the constitutional order and American freedom.

DIRECT ACTION AS SYNONYMOUS WITH VIOLENCE?

As well as political objectives, debate and criticism also involved the forms of struggle. On 12 April 1963, the white religious minsters of Birmingham asked King to end mass demonstrations against segregation, which they

deemed "unwise" and "untimely." On the opposite side the police force was praised "for keeping 'order' and 'preventing violence.'"[19] King responded from prison: "In your statement you assert that our actions, even though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence. But is this a logical assertion? Isn't this like condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery?"[20] The comparison was inapt: the robbed man has not committed any offense; still less does he call for mass civil disobedience. The white ministers' argument is readily intelligible: violation of existing legal norms, carried out on a large scale and sponsored by any means, hence representing a public challenge and even a provocation to the authorities, was bound to prompt the intervention of the forces of order. It was illegitimate for the organizers of the Birmingham demonstrations to ignore the consequences of the direct action of civil disobedience sponsored by them; and they must therefore be regarded as jointly responsible for the violence attendant on them.

However, from King's point of view, the criticism addressed to him made the mistake of requiring superstitious respect for every law, even the most unjust: "there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. . . . Conversely one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that 'an unjust law is no law at all.'"[21] Consequently, far from being morally illicit, violation of the multipronged legislation that continued to discriminate against, oppress, and humiliate blacks was right and proper. The level of the challenge to existing legislation, and to the duly constituted authority charged with seeing that it was respected, was further increased. In the view of the white religious ministers, this served to confirm that direct action in some way entailed violence. On the other side, in support of his thesis that laws were not always to be respected, King asserted: "In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience. We should never forget that . . . everything the [anti-Communist] Hungarian freedom fighters did was 'illegal.'"[22] The US champion of non-violence thus ended up appealing to two insurrections—the American and the Hungarian—that certainly could not be characterized as peaceful.

In fact, in King the summons to direct action sometimes assumes accents that might be termed revolutionary:

> . . . not even the marching of mighty armies can halt us. . . . Let us march on segregated housing until every ghetto of social and economic Martin Luther King as the "Black Gandhi" and Afro-American Radicalism depression dissolves and Negroes and whites live side by side in decent, safe, and sanitary housing.

> Let us march on segregated schools until every vestige of segregated and inferior education becomes a thing of the past and Negroes and whites study side by side in the socially healing context of the classroom.
>
> Let us march on poverty until no American parent has to skip a meal so that their children may eat. March on poverty until no starved man walks the streets of our cities and towns in search of jobs that do not exist.
>
> Let us march on ballot boxes, march on ballot boxes until race baiters disappear from the political arena. Let us march on ballot boxes until the Wallaces of our nation tremble away in silence.[23]

What we have here is an at least twofold invocation of violence. In the first instance, it is necessary to silence racists like George Wallace (one of the main champions of the segregationist South), and even force them to withdraw "trembling" from the electoral contest and, ultimately, political life. Furthermore, as well as unjust laws, direct action targets unjust social relations—for example, "segregated housing"—and hence involves an invasion of the "private" sphere. Existing property relations, condemned as inherently discriminatory and violent, are not exempt from direct action.

Moderates who reject direct action as violent, or potentially violent, are refuted in harsh terms, branding them as more dangerous enemies than the racists themselves: "the white moderate, who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice," and who "constantly advises the Negro to wait for a 'more convenient season' is possibly worse than the 'Ku Klux Klanner.'"[24] The line of demarcation drawn here does not counterpose violence and non-violence. On one side of it are professed racists and those who encourage a basically passive wait for reform from above by a dominant class which, in some unspecified future, will have been miraculously converted, if not to a sense of justice, then at least to benevolence. On the other side, we find arrayed the militants engaged in direct action (which is not always strictly peaceful).

Who is summoned to participate in direct action? King was concerned to give the movement the broadest possible base, allowing or encouraging participation in demonstrations by young boys and girls. But "many deplored our 'using' our children in this fashion."[25] In fact, as we have seen, in condemning the "enforced desegregation" of schools, Arendt had some years earlier used the argument that to send black children to schools hitherto reserved for whites meant compelling them to face the hostility of the dominant public opinion and the shouts of derision and intimidation by supporters of the regime of white supremacy: "[h]ave we now come to the

point where it is the children who are being asked to change or improve the world?"[26] Adults were guilty of imposing a harsh sacrifice on their children and therewith tainted with violence. Unimpressed, in a declaration of 5 May 1963 King called upon parents to demonstrate courage: "Don't worry about your children, they're gonna be all right. Don't hold them back if they want to go to jail. For they are doing a job not only for themselves, but for all of America and for all mankind." It was a question of "put[ting] into effect the Gandhian principle: 'Fill up the jails,'"[27] not even excluding young children. This was an attitude that could only reinforce Arendt's objections.

More generally, we encounter the ethical problem already examined in connection with the Indian leader: the problem of a non-violence liable to induce, more or less directly, violence by the adversary against innocent, defenseless victims and thus generate the moral indignation required to discredit and isolate the adversary. While he was much more cautious than Gandhi and some demonstrators on the Salt March, who had directly exposed young children to the blows of the forces of repression (cf. chapter 4 §3), King was nevertheless pleased to report the enormous impression made by newspapers that published images "of children marching up to the bared fangs of police dogs" or "pictures of prostrate women, and police bending over them with raised clubs."[28]

NON-VIOLENCE AS RENUNCIATION OF SELF-DEFENSE?

But what position should be taken by male adult activists of the movement, who personally experienced these dramatic scenes? Should they try to defend the victims? The problem was all the more serious given that the violence was unleashed not only by police forces, but also by racist gangs. As a contemporary historian observes, "the brutal beatings and killings of civil rights workers who had followed King's rules for nonviolent engagement and whose pleas for federal protection had gone unanswered had created a deep reservoir of frustration and anger."[29]

Let us take a look at the instructions issued by King:

> I contended that the debate over the question of self-defense was unnecessary since few people suggested that Negroes should not defend themselves as individuals when attacked. The question was not whether one should use his gun when his home was attacked, but whether it was tactically wise to use a gun while participating in an organized demonstration. [30]

Once again, we are dealing not with a condemnation in principle of any

form of violence, but with a political argument, which distinguishes between violent self-defense exercised by private individuals and regarded as permissible, and self-defense in the course of a public demonstration.

In the second case, the demonstrators "were to be called upon to protect women and children on the march, with no other weapon than their own bodies."[31] Even in this regard King was less radical than Gandhi, who on the occasion of the Salt March had recommended to his militants that they should expose themselves to police blows without even protecting themselves with their hands or arms.

The doubts of the African-American leader's followers were not thereby stilled: how should they behave when faced with the action of squadist gangs that prevented children from entering schools which were in the process of being desegregated? And how should they behave when these gangs sought to prevent black voters from registering as voters and voting? Should they call upon the federal army (whose intervention was perceived as an intolerable act of violence by white civil society), and wait for it to restore order, in the interim suffering violence against themselves and their children, and surrendering an essential right? Or should they organize from below to contain the racist violence, therewith risking crossing the boundaries of non-violent resistance?

Independently of the fluidity of the boundaries between permissible private recourse to self-defense, which could even be armed, and public recourse, which was illicit in any eventuality, African-Americans confronted difficult dilemmas. Was it morally acceptable to send children to take part in demonstrations and the desegregation of schools, and then interpose only one's body against the violence unleashed by the police and racist gangs? Were activists who took this position not jointly responsible for the violence suffered by African-American children?

This was a problem also posed by Arendt, albeit in accents that were sometimes arrogant toward civil rights activists. Commenting on a photograph that had appeared in *Life* of a black girl leaving a recently desegregated school, accompanied and protected by a white friend of her father, while all around raged the verbal violence and physical intimidation organized by a racist rabble, the philosopher wrote: "the girl, obviously was asked to be a hero—that is, something neither her absent father nor the equally absent representatives of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples] felt called upon to be."[32] The comment on the father is particularly odious: should he have given up his job or actually denied his daughter the right to attend a better school that could ensure her a better future? In the event, shortly afterwards, Arendt distanced herself from her previous position. [33]

Adopting the standpoint of the ethic of responsibility, the philosopher maintained that to avoid being complicit in the racists' moral or physical violence, African-Americans should give up sending their children to schools where they were not welcome. The more radical African-Americans—the militants of Black Power—likewise argued on the basis of the ethic of responsibility. However, rather than sacrificing the rights of their children to attend better schools, or participate in public demonstrations with their parents, they were ready as and when necessary to cross the boundaries of passive resistance in defense of such rights.

SITES OF VIOLENCE: THE UNITED STATES AND VIETNAM

What rendered the boundaries between violence and non-violence especially fluid and problematic was the advent of another problem. In 1966, Stokely Carmichael recounted the death of a civil rights activist in Vietnam to Martin Luther King in these terms: "You told him to be not violent in Mississippi. He didn't get shot there. But he got shot in Vietnam. You should have told him to be not violent in Vietnam. That's what your problem is. You didn't carry your stuff like you say you're supposed to carry it."[34] In other words, how could the commitment to non-violence be rendered consistent in a situation where conscription threatened, where people were forced to fight in a far-off country and to kill and be killed? Arendt, articulating the basic orientation of white liberals, vainly lamented the waning influence of the slogan of non-violence and insisted on the fact that, in spite of everything, the United States continued to be a democratic country: "Up until now there has been no torture here, nor do concentration camps exist, nor terror."[35] This line of argument completely avoided the key question: while they had not made their appearance in the United States, "torture," "concentration camps," and "terror" had exploded in Vietnam. Did those who were committed to not exceeding the limits of non-violence in their struggle against the regime of white supremacy, and yet accepted becoming participants in the violence and terror unleashed by that regime against another people of color thousands of miles away, really demonstrate political consistency and moral rigor? Were Black Power activists, who encouraged refusal of the draft and were ready to clash with the duly constituted power over this,[36] champions of violence or non-violence?

At the outset, the protest movement against the Vietnam War did not involve King. In 1965, he still believed US President Lyndon Johnson's promise that he wanted talks. It was therefore necessary to render the delicate transition "from the battlefield to the peace table" as easy and

painless as possible; and hence "the issues of culpability and morality, while important, had to be subordinated lest they divert or divide."[37] The government was still trusted: even as it unleashed brutal violence, it professed its desire to pursue negotiations. When regarded as temporary, violence seemed tolerable.

The subsequent progressive intensification of military operations and bombing introduced a new element into the situation. The bloodier the war became, and the more terroristic the US bombing campaigns, the more difficult it proved to confine the profession of faith in non-violence to the metropolitan territory: "as the hopeful days became disappointing months, I began the agonizing measurement of government promising words against the baneful, escalating deeds of war. Doubts gnawed at my conscience."[38] Following this phase of hesitation, the turn finally came: "one night I picked up an article entitled 'The Children of Vietnam,' and I read it. And after reading that article, I said to myself, 'Never again will I be silent on an issue that is destroying the soul of our nation and destroying thousands and thousands of little children in Vietnam.'" It was no longer possible to remain silent and in fact the silence maintained hitherto was revealed to be unjustifiable:

> I saw an orderly buildup of evil, an accumulation of inhumanities, each of which alone was sufficient to make men hide in shame. . . . I now stood naked with shame and guilt, as indeed every German should have [under the Third Reich] when his government was using its military power to overwhelm other nations. Whether right or wrong, I had for too long allowed myself to be a silent onlooker. [39]

A radical break with this attitude was now required:

> Had I not, again and again, said that the silent onlooker must bear the responsibility for the brutalities committed by the Bull Connors [champions of white racism], or by the murderers of the innocent children in a Birmingham church? Had I not committed myself to the principle that looking away from evil is, in effect, a condoning of it? Those who lynch, pull the trigger, point the cattle prod, or open the fire hoses act in the name of the silent. I had to therefore speak out if I was to erase my name from the bombs which fall over North or South Vietnam, from the canisters of napalm. The time had come—indeed it was past due—when I had to disavow and dissociate myself from those who in the name of peace burn, maim, and kill.[40]

Consistency in the commitment to non-violence demanded public, unequivocal condemnation of the war in Vietnam. A fact must be registered:

"Today, young men of America are fighting, dying, and killing in Asian jungles." Moreover, "this war played havoc with the destiny of the entire world. It tore up the Geneva Agreement, seriously impaired the United Nations, exacerbated the hatreds between continents and, worse still, between races." In sum: "I tell you this morning, I would not fight in the war in Vietnam."[41]

But not all of King's collaborators were prepared to follow him on this path: did it not risk a breach with the Johnson administration, which had shown itself inclined to accept some of the civil rights movement's demands? Rather than concerning themselves with problems that were bigger than them, thereby antagonizing the only circles in a position to help them, African-Americans should focus exclusively on their condition and the improvements that could be made to it.

BETWEEN THE ASPIRATION TO CO-OPTION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR RECOGNITION

On closer examination, the dilemma faced by the civil rights movement and African-American militants did not primarily concern attitudes toward violence: what, at least for the foreseeable future, rendered any revolutionary hypothesis meaningless in the United States was the small percentage of blacks in the population and the existing balance of forces.

In Malcolm X, the most mature representative of African-American radicalism, accents that might be characterized as "Gandhian" could sometimes be heard. He celebrated the "bloodless revolution" that had put an end to British colonialism's puppet monarchy in Egypt; and paid tribute to the "self-control" of blacks who, although armed, did not fall into the trap set by police "brutality." No, it was not a question of "fighting the white man with cudgels: the truth sufficed." Hence it was necessary to engage ideologically and politically, also organizing to exercise the right to vote, despite the violence and intimidation of the racist gangs, and to exert influence electorally.[42] Malcolm X's insistence on the right to self-defense, proper to any free man, did not in fact entail a summons to armed rebellion and, still less, a superstitious cult of violence: "I am not an advocate of violence, but the violence that exists in the United States is violence whose victim is the negro." When the forces of order stood to one side, it was necessary somehow to defend oneself against "the violent acts carried out by organized groups like the Ku Klux Klan."[43] And let us not forget that the right to self-defense was recognized, at least on a strictly "private" level, by King as well.

Malcolm X's political line was marked by the attempt and stated intention to remove the black question "from the national or domestic context, from the jurisdiction of the US government" in order to "internation-

alize" it. Rather than appealing to the goodwill of America's rulers, they should be denounced in every international venue and, above all, before the countries and peoples of the Third World.[44] King's orientation was different. He concluded his most famous speech, delivered on 28 August 1963, as follows: "in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal.'"[45]

Although extraordinarily effective rhetorically, this declaration is highly debatable historically (and philologically). The country that emerged from the Declaration of Independence cited here had for decades had presidents who were nearly always slave owners; and had developed racial chattel slavery and the dehumanization and reification of slaves to the utmost. At the end of the Civil War, it had (much later than many other countries and territories in the Western hemisphere) abolished the institution of slavery, but only to impose a regime of terroristic white supremacy, which had no points of comparison in Latin America and which continued in a way to survive two centuries on from the Declaration of Independence. Did this solemn document theorize the equality of human beings regardless of color? Or did it refer exclusively to the white community? In fact, it was written by a slave owner—Thomas Jefferson—who was convinced of the intellectual inferiority of blacks and never sought to free his own slaves.

Scarcely credible at the level of historical reconstruction, King's speech betrays a clear political orientation: it was an appeal to the liberal sectors of the US ruling class not a *priori* to exclude the black community from the "American dream," imparting greater credibility to the latter internationally as well. This was the sense in which, again in 1963, King criticized his left-wing critics for having "lost faith in America."[46] In effect, not all African-Americans recognized themselves in the "American dream" and "faith in America." On the contrary, the ex-slaves often engaged in constructing a very different identity from that of the ex–slave owners, rediscovered their roots, which took them back ideally to Africa, and, turning their attention to the struggles under way globally against colonial or semi-colonial domination, felt themselves to be an integral part of this gigantic liberation movement. They were thus led to solidarize with peoples and political movements that often had to confront US hostility.

The dispute between these two tendencies had been ongoing for decades among African-Americans. But it became significantly more acute with the outbreak of the Cold War, when to solidarize with the anti-colonial movement and Third World struggles exposed people to the accu-

sation of complicity with the Communist movement and betrayal of their country. The more moderate currents, more inclined to appeal to the benevolence of the dominant class and sharing the "American dream" with it, were not in fact more consistently non-violent. The introduction of conscription in 1948 was the occasion for A. Philip Randolph, a prestigious black leader who was now a fervent anti-Communist, to underscore the advantages to be derived from desegregation of the military as follows: the credibility of American democracy would be strengthened among blacks and they would furnish stauncher support to the rulers in Washington during the Cold (and, if came to it, hot) War.[47]

The true line of demarcation begins to emerge. The inception of the civil rights movement in the United States coincided with a powerful development of the struggle of blacks in South Africa, who pursued the same ends (desegregation) and often employed the same means as those adopted by African-Americans. However, little attention was paid to this struggle by King and his collaborators, who were careful not to denounce the diplomatic support extended by the US government to the architects of the apartheid regime. The fear of being stigmatized and persecuted as Communists was strong;[48] and there was a clear realization that Washington was disposed to look with indulgence or benevolence on a movement for co-option, but certainly not on a struggle that linked the emancipation of a people of colonial origin in the United States (African-Americans) with general recognition and emancipation of peoples in colonial or semi-colonial conditions in the rest of the world.

It was King himself who later drew attention to what happened as soon as he began to criticize the war in Vietnam, which witnessed a maximum deployment of violence in particularly brutal forms: "I was chided, even by fellow civil rights leaders, members of Congress, and brothers of the cloth for 'not sticking to the business of civil rights' for American blacks." Those who aspired to co-option considered it misleading and counterproductive also to apply the rule of non-violence to international relations and Washington's foreign policy. Very different was the attitude of the more mature King, who expressed regret for the tardiness of his condemnation of the war in Vietnam: "As I moved to break the betrayal of my own silences and to speak from the burnings of my own heart—as I called for radical departures from the destruction of Vietnam—many persons questioned me about the wisdom of my path."[49] The sponsors of co-option were obviously supported by the dominant powers and ideologies: "When I first took my position against the war in Vietnam, almost every newspaper in the country criticized me." [50]

However, the quest for co-option appeared all the less persuasive as the desired concessions from above faltered. In fact, contrary signals were not wanting. The African-Americans' civil rights movement had already begun some time ago, but in Alabama hundreds of blacks infected with syphilis, rather than being treated, were used as human guinea pigs by the government, which engaged in studying the effects of the disease.[51] Was this a problem exclusively in the South? In a letter to Jaspers dated 3 January 1960, Arendt reported an emblematic episode: "The New York schools gave their upper level students an essay topic—to consider how Hitler should be punished. About this a Negro girl suggested: he should be made to put on a black skin and compelled to live in the United States."[52] In a fresh, naïve way, a sort of *lex talionis* was envisaged whereby those responsible for the Third Reich's racist violence were forced to endure the racist violence of the North American republic (above all, its southern states) as blacks! The champions of white supremacy seemed to respond to the frank black girl. In King's words, in the summer of 1966 "swastikas bloomed in Chicago parks like misbegotten weeds."[53] The brandishing of the banner adopted by the regime which more than any other represented the horror of the racial state taught African-Americans a bitter truth: even in the presence of real concessions by the dominant power, any symbolic reparation was denied to them.

Black Power and the more radical currents formulated the problem of winning self-esteem and group recognition. The slogan resounded: "Black is beautiful." This was a cry of salvation that did not in itself contain any incitement to violence. Instead, it sought to appeal to members of the black community to cast off the auto-phobia imposed by their oppressors and reaffirm their own identity without inferiority complexes, recovering their own history and rediscovering their own roots. Constitution as a group was also the precondition for being in a position to really count in society and in this regard—stressed some sectors of the movement—the behavior of Jews could be taken as a model.[54]

King ended up agreeing with the exigency expressed by Black Power: "There are points at which I see the necessity for temporary segregation in order to get to the integrated society. . . . Often when they merge, the Negro is integrated without power." In this connection, the African-American leader recounted an experience that was at once painful and instructive. In 1965, he was invited with his wife to attend a concert organized by a school that had just been integrated and which was attended by his chil-

dren: "We were certain that the program would end with the most original of all American music, the Negro spiritual. But we were mistaken. Instead, all the students, including our children, ended the program by singing 'Dixie'"—the music that had become the hymn of the southern and slaveholders' army during the Civil War.[55] Integration thus turned out to involve absorption by a section of blacks, including sometimes civil rights activists, of the culture that had sealed their oppression and humiliation.

That concert was not an isolated occurrence. Let us listen to King: "The history books, which had almost completely ignored the contribution of the Negro in American history, only served to intensify the Negroes' sense of worthlessness and to augment the anachronistic doctrine of white supremacy." In even more insidious fashion, this "doctrine" was daily reiterated by the language, which constantly associated the color black with a negative value judgment and the color white with a positive value judgment.[56] Hence the need African-Americans felt to define an identity that did not legitimize, and historically and culturally perpetuate, the subjection they had endured for decades.

Self-organization by blacks also proved necessary in another respect. In King's words, "Black Power was also a call for the pooling of black financial resources to achieve economic security,"[57] to help save people from degradation, relying not only on concessions from above, but also on autonomous initiatives from below.

This exigency was widely misunderstood by white liberals. In 1959, when she began to reflect on the black question, Arendt stated that "the colonialism and imperialism of European nations" was "the one great crime in which America was never involved."[58] Yet in the anti-British revolt of the American colonists an important role was played by the desire to rid themselves of the limits set by the London government on their (colonial) expansion westward. In any event, the history of the United States turns out to be intimately bound up with two of the most horrible chapters in the history of colonialism: the deportation, decimation, and destruction of the "redskins"; and the enslavement of blacks and their oppression and humiliation even after formal abolition of the institution of slavery. Arendt's reading of the history of the United States consigns the colonial tragedy of the "redskins" and blacks to insignificance and hence denies them both symbolic compensation.

It is true that Arendt later acknowledged the "original crime" (attributable to the history of colonialism), which was expressed in the very Constitution of the United States, characterized by its refusal "to include the slave people in the original compact."[59] But this openness was immediately negated by her sharp polemic against the national liberation movements,

which met with a sympathetic echo among African-Americans. In her essay *On Violence*, Arendt was categorical: very little was to be expected of the victory of the "national liberation movements." It sufficed to take a glance at history: "The rarity of slave rebellions and uprisings among the disinherited and downtrodden is notorious; on the few occasions when they occurred it was precisely 'mad fury' that turned dreams into nightmares for everybody."[60] Completely repressed here was the epic revolution of the black slaves led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, which gave birth to the first country on the American continent (Santo Domingo-Haiti) to be free of slavery, and which made a crucial contribution to the abolition of that institution in Latin America as a whole. Likewise repressed is the great revolutionary wave in the twentieth century that saw the "disinherited and downtrodden" of the colonies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America deliver decisive blows to colonial domination and the planetary regime of white supremacy, causing that regime to appear obsolete and intolerable within the United States as well. Unsustainable historically, Arendt's peremptory assertion exacerbates the problem of the conquest of self-esteem painfully experienced by blacks, who now proved to be without a history or to have the history only of their oppressors.

But Arendt presses the point: "it was never the oppressed and degraded themselves who led the way, but those who were not oppressed and not degraded but who could not bear it that others were."[61] Although professing non-violence, and although taking his cue from the (harshly repressed) rebellions of black slaves to reiterate that in the United States the balance of forces did not permit any other solution than a non-violent one, King nevertheless paid tribute, as we know, to "the courageous efforts of our own insurrectionist brothers, such as Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner." There is no trace of any of this in the picture drawn by Arendt, just as there is no trace of the fact that after the Second World War the challenge to the regime of white supremacy was launched primarily by African-Americans, who personally paid the price. The latter are, as it were, invited by Arendt to cede leadership of the civil rights movement to whites of a liberal persuasion, given that it can never be "the degraded and oppressed themselves" who "lead the way" (and lead).

Forced to kill and die in Vietnam for a cause that was not theirs, and dispossessed of their history, African-Americans felt like the black soldiers who at Wounded Knee had begun to shake off (or hoped to shake off) white oppression and contempt by participating in the massacre of "redskins." Compared with 1890, there was an aggravating factor: seventy years later, African-Americans were forced to fight a people with whom they tended to sympathize.

In this connection too, the gulf that had now opened between African-Americans engaged in a liberation struggle, on the one hand, and white liberals, on the other, became evident. Despite Arendt's representation of them, the former were not in fact more inclined to violence than the latter. In fact, in contrast to Black Power and King, among white liberals (including Arendt) criticism of US intervention in Vietnam was formulated on the basis not of condemnation of violence and colonial wars in principle, but of a realization of the costs and profound damage that a massive military commitment, extended and without any great prospect of success, entailed in the imperialist metropolis itself. In April 1965, Arendt wrote to Mary McCarthy that she was not "too interested" in the war. Blücher, the philosopher's husband, who was bound to her in a partnership that was also spiritual and political, "was not at all opposed to the early American involvement in Vietnam and he refused to sign petitions protesting the war until after 1965." Ten years later, shortly after the withdrawal effected by the Nixon administration, Arendt expressed her profound concern at "the swift decline in the power of the USA."[62] These were not expressions of sympathy for the people who had proved capable of standing up to the greatest power in the world, despite the barbaric violence deployed by it.

FROM THE "AMERICAN DREAM" TO THE THIRD WORLD DREAM

Becoming conscious of the gulf that now separated them from white liberals, African-Americans of a more radical persuasion read Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* with growing attention. In this book by the great intellectual of color, and passionate theorist of the revolution and emancipation of colonial peoples, they sought (and found) aid in confronting and resolving the problem of achieving self-esteem. This involved opening a new front in the struggle against colonialism, which "turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it" and thus, in addition to political oppression and economic exploitation, also visits "cultural alienation" on them. Fanon's book helped African-Americans overcome auto-phobia: the "wretched of the earth," "the black, brown and yellow masses" viewed with contempt and anxiety by the West, and regarded by Arendt as incapable of achieving real emancipation, were the protagonists of an enormous process of "decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world."[63]

Lacking any credibility as a result of the tenacious resistance mounted by the regime of white supremacy, the "American dream" increasingly tended to be replaced by the Third World dream. This was a process, which

albeit with fluctuations, can be observed in King himself, who emphatically underlined the close links between "the shirtless and barefoot people of the land," who were "rising up as never before." Far from being alone, "the American Negro" was engaged "with his black brothers of Africa and his brown and yellow brothers of Asia, South America, and the Caribbean" in reaching "the promised land of racial justice," and rejecting "the Western arrogance of feeling that it has everything to teach others and nothing to learn from them."[64]

This identity construction, which led blacks to align themselves with the anti-colonial movement and engage in dialogue with Communists (who were a significant presence in that movement), was bound to provoke alarmed reactions in large sections of US public opinion. Adopting a standpoint seemingly far removed from the most immediate political conflicts, Arendt declared: "The Third World is not a reality but an ideology."[65] The author of so peremptory an assertion might be reminded that Jefferson, who proposed to send African-Americans back to Africa once they had been freed from the chains of slavery, and Lincoln, who hoped to deport them to Latin America, started from the presupposition of the unity of peoples of color and what would later be called the Third World. The links once invoked to justify the projected deportation of blacks from the "land of the whites" were perceived and claimed by the victims with a sense of pride and defiance, at a time when the revolt against white supremacy was blazing on a world scale. However, committed as she was to destroying the Third World identity and dream, in an interview Arendt reiterated the following year the thesis formulated in 1969 in On Violence: "I am truly of the opinion that the third world is exactly what I said, an ideology or an illusion. Africa, Asia, South America—those are realities . . . Try telling a Chinese sometime that he belongs to exactly the same world as an African Bantu tribesman and, believe me, you'll get the surprise of your life."[66]

Africa and the African-American world were reduced to the "Bantu tribe" and, on the basis of this reduction,—which was not without its disturbing aspects—African-Americans and Chinese were counterposed. There is a clear contrast with King, who referred to "brown and yellow brothers." It is worth recalling that in the late nineteenth century, while the sign "No dogs or Niggers" was to be found outside some public parks in the South of the United States, in Shanghai the French concession defended its purity by prominently displaying the sign "No dogs or Chinese." Theorists of racial inequality, from Gobineau to Rosenberg (the principal ideologist of the Third Reich), had long equated "blacks" and "yellow men," both of which were targeted globally and in the North American republic by the regime of white supremacy.[67]

According to Arendt, whereas the Third World was an ideological abstraction, Asia was a "reality." Why? At the time of this claim, the disparity in income between Japan and the less developed countries of Asia was enormous and the memory of the horrors, which the latter had inflicted primarily on its Asian neighbors, was still fresh. Having decided to join the exclusive club of colonial great powers, which had hitherto only contained Western countries, the Empire of the Rising Sun had sought its Africa or Far West a short distance from its own borders, and had here identified the inferior races to be subjugated and decimated in accordance with the classical model of the colonial tradition. We can now understand why, regardless of the geographical location and ethnic identity of their oppressors, the victims of colonialism felt themselves to be members of a single reality: the Third World. Clearly, any general category subsumes individual realities that are more or less different from one another (such is precisely the function of concepts, without which it is not possible to argue or to think). But there is no doubt that, comparatively speaking, the category of "Asia" turns out to be much more generic and much poorer than that of the "Third World." However, Arendt's main concern was political in character: destruction of the Third World dream.

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SELF-ESTEEM: GANDHI, KING, AND FANON

In the philosopher's view, it was a dream imbued with a cult of violence. African-Americans, who recognized themselves in Fanon, saluted the military successes achieved by national liberation movements, and rebelled against the Vietnam War, were accused of forgetting Gandhi's lesson and "the enormous power of nonviolence."[68] In reality, African-Americans were being invited to take their cue from the dominant power, not the later Gandhi, who included the Indian people's liberation struggle in the general framework of the world anti-colonialist revolution and the salvation of "the suppressed races of the earth"[69]—that is, the Third World declared nonexistent by Arendt. In the name of "non-violence," black Americans were called upon by the dominant power to be complicit with colonial violence in Vietnam and to follow the example of the early Gandhi, who hoped to achieve co-option for his compatriots by having them participate in repression of the Zulus and the British empire's other military ventures.

Furthermore, Arendt's criticism of Black Power ignores the fact that throughout the course of his development the Indian leader constantly summoned his people to demonstrate "virile," warrior courage, so as to achieve self-esteem and win recognition and emancipation. On this point

we can proceed to a comparison between Gandhi and Fanon. The juxtaposition might seem paradoxical and even provocative. But on closer examination the points in common between the two emerge clearly. In the former we read: "The British have the great vice of depriving a subject nation of its self-respect"; they have "robbed us of our self-respect," proceeding to the "humiliation of a whole nation."[70] In his turn, the second observed: "the native . . . did not take up arms simply because he was dying of hunger and because he saw his own social forms disintegrating before his eyes, but also because the settler considered him to be an animal, and treated him as such"; the oppressor "create[s] around the exploited person an atmosphere of submission and inhibition which lightens the task of policing considerably."[71]

In more strictly military terms, the colonized are branded as cowardly by their oppressors. Hence, in order to win recognition, they are also compelled to shake off this charge, which has been internalized and in some sense become an obstacle to the restoration of self-esteem. Gandhi argued as follows: "Only equals can be partners. There can be no partnership between the cat and the mouse, between the ant and the elephant . . . With this cowardly fear in us, how can we be the equals of the British?" Indeed, "as long as we are not free from the fear of the military, so long we cannot be regarded as equal partners with Englishmen."[72] That is why, at the time of the repression of the Zulu "rebellion," or the "manhunt" unleashed against them, the Indian leader committed himself to getting his compatriots to take an active part in the enterprise. They could thus liberate themselves from the stereotype, which had it that they were cowards, or, at any rate, lacking when it came to war: "We cannot meet this charge with a written rejoinder. There is but one way of disproving it—the way of action"[73]—that is, direct engagement in military operations. In accordance with the same logic, following the outbreak of the First World War, Gandhi called on his compatriots to press to be enlisted in the imperial army, even in the event of the London government obstructing it (as occurred at the time of the expedition against the Zulus). The key point was this: "The British are a nation of heroes. They will recognize heroism"[74]—the heroism of a people which, as we know, was called on by Gandhi to divest itself of its "effeminacy" once and for all and exhibit masculine courage and "virility." In a different terminology, Fanon referred to the revolutionary "violence" of the colonized as "absolute praxis."[75]

Active, even heroic participation in armed struggle was a precondition for achieving recognition: this applied to Fanon and Gandhi alike. But for the former it was a matter of striking the colonial power, whereas for the latter violence targeted the enemies of the empire from which he

hoped to win recognition. In the mature Gandhi, virile, warrior courage played a dual role: given the willingness to assist Britain militarily in the Second World War in the event of independence being promised, the independence movement had to incessantly press (and provoke) the colonial power, practicing "non-violence" but reckoning on bloody, large-scale repression and being ready in that eventuality to defy death.

The problem confronting African-Americans was not very different from that faced by Indians and Fanon's Algerians. For centuries their oppression had proceeded in tandem with their racialization as timid and cowardly. As we know, this odious, insulting stereotype still weighed on the Indian population. Gandhi struggled tirelessly against it, writing as late as 1941: "The Negroes are physically robust, their chests are worth admiration but the British have filled them with fear, so much so that a sturdy Negro trembles at the sight of a white child."[76]

Let us now adopt the viewpoint of African-Americans engaged in the liberation struggle. In avoiding countering the violence unleashed even against women and children by squadist gangs with a minimum of effectiveness, did they not risk reinforcing the ideology of the champions of white supremacy? Furthermore, in a country like the United States, where the right to self-defense and to bear arms were sanctioned constitutionally, did not an unconditional commitment to non-violence ultimately signify renouncing citizenship and the status of free citizen? For centuries in America even blacks who were theoretically free were denied the right to carry arms granted to whites. Once again, in the view of Black Power militants, the line of unconditional non-violence in principle risked reinforcing the exclusivist, contemptuous self-consciousness of the champions and followers of white supremacy, on the one hand, while exacerbating the auto-phobia of blacks, thereby making the achievement of self-esteem even more difficult, on the other.

The position African-Americans found themselves in was very different from that faced by the second Gandhi. The latter did not want to make himself complicit with the British empire's colonial violence, as he had during the repression unleashed against the Zulus. However, in the years of the Second World War he always hoped that the London government would concede independence and allow the Indian people to demonstrate their "virile" courage in a war not against a colonial people, but against a more barbaric and ferocious imperialism. At the same time, the non-violent but radical struggle against the London government had revealed the latter's impotence when compelled to confront a whole people who were courageously prepared to risk death (the racist stereotype of the cowardice of peoples of color was therewith refuted). Both these conditions were

absent from the United States. African-Americans were a minority and could not hope to shut down the whole country. And what certainly did not help strengthen their self-esteem was a political line (shared by the black community's more moderate sectors) that indicated non-resistance to racist violence at home and demonstration of military courage in Vietnam, in a colonial war against a people from the Third World of which more radical African-Americans (and sometimes King himself) felt themselves to be an integral part.

King paid a good deal of attention to the problem raised by Black Power:

> To the young victims of the slums, this society has so limited the alternatives of his life that the expression of his manhood is reduced to the ability to defend himself physically. No wonder it appears logical to him to strike out, resorting to violence against oppression. That is the only way he thinks he gets recognition.[77]

The sympathetic subtlety with which the "black Gandhi" analyzed the reasons for the attitude adopted by the more radical African-Americans is worthy of note:

> Black Power was a psychological reaction to the psychological indoctrination that led to the creation of the perfect slave. While this reaction often led to negative and unrealistic responses and frequently brought about intemperate words and actions, one must not overlook the positive value in calling the Negro to a new sense of manhood, to a deep feeling of racial pride, and to an audacious appreciation of his heritage. The Negro had to be grasped by a new realization of his dignity and worth. He had to stand up amid a system that still oppresses him and develop an unassailable and majestic sense of his own value. He could no longer be ashamed of being black.
>
> The job of arousing manhood within a people that had been taught for so many centuries that they were nobody is not easy. [78]

King felt obliged to demarcate himself from "two opposing forces." Even more important than distancing himself from Black Power was demarcation from "Negroes who, as a result of long years of repression, are so drained of self-respect and a sense of 'somebodiness' that they have adjusted to segregation"; or those who so enjoyed their material comforts that they were utterly "insensitive to the problems of the masses."[79] By comparison with those who sought to resolve the problem of winning "recognition" and self-esteem with mistaken (violent) methods, those who were completely oblivious of the problem were worse.

THE STRUGGLE FOR RECOGNITION AND VIOLENCE: ARENDT AND FANON

We can now appreciate how one-sided Arendt's interpretation of Fanon as a devotee of a blind cult of violence is. In reality, for the author of *The Wretched of the Earth*, a national liberation movement must, if it wishes to be genuinely victorious, not only clearly restrict the target of revolutionary violence, but at a certain point must know how to make the transition from the military to the politico-economic phase of the struggle. To render the independence won militarily concrete and robust, the newly independent country must escape underdevelopment. Commitment to work and production thus take over from courage in battle; the figure of the more or less skilled worker replaces that of the guerrilla. When it feels compelled to give in, the colonial power seems to say to the revolutionaries: "Since you want independence, take it and starve"; in this way, "the apotheosis of independence is turned into the curse of independence." This was the new challenge, no longer military in character, which had to be met: "capital of all kinds, technicians, engineers, skilled mechanics" were required.[80] In a way, Fanon foresaw both the deadlock of so many African countries that did not succeed in making the transition from the military to the economic phase of the revolution, and the turn that occurred in anti-colonial revolutions like the Chinese or Vietnamese. We are far removed from an indiscriminate celebration of violence as such. The catharsis implicit in the theory of revolution derived from Marx and Engels has not vanished in the author of *The Wretched of the Earth*: "Racialism and hatred and resentment—a 'legitimate desire for revenge'—cannot sustain a war of liberation . . . hatred alone cannot draw up a program." Not coincidentally, violence did not indiscriminately target the colonists, who could and must be attracted to the cause of the anti-colonial revolution: "Many members of the mass of colonialists reveal themselves to be much, much nearer to the national struggle than certain sons of the nation."[81]

It remains the case that in Fanon we can read: "At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the colonized from his inferiority complex."[82] How are we to explain this crude, debatable, and, at first blush, even repugnant formulation? At work here is the experience of the prolonged, interminable period of colonial rule and its dehumanizing practices. Thanks to overwhelming military superiority and total control of the ideological apparatuses, the oppressors had succeeded in inculcating in their victims a sense of irremediable inferiority and impotence: the white supermen seemed surrounded by an aura of invincibility. Precisely for this reason, rather than attempting a revolt doomed to failure from the outset,

black male and female slaves had long preferred to turn violence against themselves: the practice of suicide or infanticide is a chapter in the ordeal suffered by blacks for centuries. At other times, the victims imagined that a merciful deity could render them invulnerable to the firearms of the invaders and white masters. On the basis of such illusions, Native Americans now condemned to destruction mounted a last show of resistance in the United States between 1889 and 1890. And it was on the basis of the same illusion that about ten years later, thousands of miles away, the Boxers in China confronted their ultrapowerful, irresistible enemy, who invaded, oppressed, and humiliated their country. We are dealing with phenomena which, in ways that barely differ, are still on display today, as indicated by the recourse above all in Palestine and the Middle East to suicide attacks (a practice that is historically well-attested among slaves) and the expectation of immortality and paradise on the part of "martyrs" (a variation on the invulnerability the Native Americans and Boxers believed they had procured through magic).[83] This is the historical and anthropological context in which to situate Fanon's assertion that violence "frees the colonized from his inferiority complex."

On the other hand, a comparison with Arendt's position on the Jewish people's liberation struggle against Hitlerite Germany might be useful. In the years preceding the Second World War, we find the philosopher—a Jewish refugee from the Third Reich—actively participating in the campaign in France which provided legal aid and moral support for the Jewish authors of attacks that cost the lives of two functionaries of the Nazi party and state in 1936 and 1938. This aid and support was all the more resolute because Arendt shared the view of Jewish circles that, with its anti-Semitic measures and frenzy, Hitler's Germany had *de facto* "declared war upon the Jews."[84] This had to be registered in some way.

The war proper then intervened. Arendt described the tormented experience of the Jewish community in Eastern Europe with profound sympathy. Having abandoned traditional non-resistance, a majority of it decided to take up arms to win "freedom for a people who through their struggle have shown that they prefer death to slavery."[85] This was a turning point—a glorious one—in the history of the Jewish people. For a long time—too long—"the Jewish attachment to life" had been "notorious," in the sense that it betokened "the desire to survive at any cost" and "proclaimed existence as such, without any national or, moreover, religious content, to be a value in itself."[86] However, the infamies committed by the Third Reich had prompted a positive switch in the victims' attitude. Having let themselves be led like lambs to the slaughter for so long, the Jewish people had begun to understand that "armed resistance will inevitably be the only moral and

political way out."[87] I have highlighted the key word in italics. Rather than being legitimized by a desperate attempt to escape death, the use of arms possessed a moral value in and of itself. One thinks of the battle engaged by the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto:

> Everyone knew that the impending war was bound to end in military defeat and would lead to physical destruction. Everyone knew (in the words of an underground Polish paper) that "the passive death of the Jews had not created any new value and was meaningless, whereas death with arms in hand can create new values in the life of the Jewish people." [88]

It was necessary to break once and for all with a tradition whereby, rather than "heroes," those who chose "to be victims, innocent victims," or "martyrs," were celebrated.[89] For it lost sight of the fact that the hero, not the martyr, represented the highest moral value. In fact, to be precise, the victim who renounced any resistance, thereby encouraging the oppressor, represented an anti-value. Let us now observe the figure selected and saluted by Arendt as a symbol of the renascent Jewish heroism:

> "Young Jewish girls, with an assault rifle on their backs and hand grenades in their belt, march proudly through the streets of Vilnius, for whose liberation they have fought for three years": thus, according to an AP dispatch, reports the correspondent from Moscow (Mikhailov). One of the girls, the seventeen-year-old Betty, told the correspondent her story as follows:
>
> "A German came and took my family into the ghetto: we were so incapable of resisting and so yielding in 1941! The German regime in fact taught us a lesson. Those who have lived in the ghetto have become real avengers. I have only killed 6 Germans, but in our contingent there are Jews who have killed dozens of them."

The lesson is very simple and Betty has summarized its essential content in a few propositions. She is ashamed when she thinks of how a single German was able with impunity to lead sixty Jews into slavery and probably to their deaths. With six shots of her firearm, Betty has erased the shame of the victims, of unarmed, yielding victims.[90]

The violence regarded as legitimate and, in fact, morally bounden targeted not only Nazis or Germans. It was also necessary to strike collaborators, including those of Jewish origin:

> Like the struggles of the *maquis*, the battle of the Warsaw Ghetto began with an uprising against the internal enemy—i.e., the dreaded Jewish police—with an attack on the commander of these troops and with a not exactly peaceful act, which extorted one million zlotys from the Jewish Council controlled by the Nazis for acquiring weapons. [91]

The article celebrating the heroine Betty concludes with a highly eloquent passage: those who genuinely wished to solve the Jewish question were prayed to "never to lose the memory of her gunshots and to recap as often as possible, in the manner of the old spiritual exercises, the phases of the battle in the Warsaw Ghetto."[92]

Hence the stages of a battle that had no real military significance (the insurgents' defeat and death *en masse* were taken for granted), but only a moral one, should be regularly commemorated in the fashion of "spiritual exercises." A whole people, including women and children, had rediscovered pride in their own identity by taking up arms and striking the enemy. In Fanon's words, violence was a "cleansing force," in the sense that it rejected and radically challenged the humiliation, degradation, and dehumanization imposed by the oppressor and butcher. The figure chosen by Arendt as a symbol of the Jewish resistance is a woman—in fact, a girl who had not yet attained her majority and who was proud of having finally learned to shoot and kill, and who regretted having liquidated only six Germans. Likewise eloquent is the title of the article in which this figure is celebrated: "A Doctrine in Six Gunshots." In underscoring the cleansing efficacy of violence in specific circumstances, Arendt did not lag behind Fanon (or Black Power). A subsequent article, published by the same author in July 1944, is thought provoking: "[i]n our case, we have been at war for twelve years . . . and no one knows if and how the German people will survive the end of the 'Aryan' racial setup. By contrast, the Jewish people will survive this war."[93] Fanon did not invoke the disappearance of the French people in the wake of the overthrow of the colonialist and racist regime that had oppressed and decimated the Algerian people for more than a century. Nor did Black Power evoke the disappearance of the white community that had oppressed blacks for centuries.

It might be said that Nazi Germany can (obviously) not be placed on the same level as the French Fourth Republic or the United States. But *The Wretched of the Earth* answered this objection in advance: how have the most democratic countries behaved toward colonial peoples or peoples of colonial origin? Having drawn attention to the crimes ("deportations, massacres, forced labor, and slavery") with which colonialism had stained itself "for centuries," Fanon added: "Nazism transformed the whole of Europe into a veritable colony."[94] In other words, a direct thread connected colonialism and Nazism: the victims of both were forced in different conditions to face similar problems, from resisting oppression to recovering their own negated, crushed identity.

Let us take stock. Arendt looked with sympathy on Jewish "terrorists" who, even before the outbreak of the Second World War, carried out attacks

on representatives of the Third Reich. Subsequently, she celebrated armed resistance by the Jewish community in emphatic fashion. On the other hand, the philosopher expressed her horror not only at the revolutions of the colonial peoples (and Fanon's thesis), but also at the hesitant attempts by African-Americans to defend themselves against racist violence and to oppose conscription for the terroristic war against the Vietnamese people. The fact is that Arendt conceived the "Jewish question" in terms of real emancipation, but the "black question" solely in terms of co-option.

KING'S RADICAL TURN AND ASSASSINATION

We have seen King make an effort to understand the problems raised by Black Power, despite disagreeing with it. In these years, the African-American leader's thinking underwent comprehensive radicalization. The concept of violence tended to expand. Segregation, racial discrimination, and the violence implicit in them were not only manifested at a legal level. It was also necessary to achieve "the elimination of de facto school segregation, the wiping out of housing and job discrimination."[95] Violence could also nestle in social relations as such. Hence the warning against "the violence of poverty and humiliation"—that is, against "the daily violence that our society inflicts upon many of its members," against the "continuous violence" implicit in the extreme polarization of wealth and poverty.[96] At this level, little or nothing had changed in the century since the Lincoln presidency and the abolition of slavery: "One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land."[97] Blacks were in fact forced to live in "ghettos" where "exploitation" and "repression" persisted. And all this was not confined to the South of the country: "the Northern ghetto daily victimize[s] its inhabitants."[98]

In addition, the further the Vietnam War escalated, the more self-evident became the relationship between the violence unleashed in Asia and the violence that continued to variously impact on blacks in the United States. Expansion of the military budget occurred at the expense of the social expenditure required to remedy the "appalling condition" of blacks denounced in the speech of August 1963. In other words, the escalation of military violence in Vietnam rendered ever more problematic the prospect of an end to the violence contained in the social relations that condemned African-Americans to unemployment, or relegated them to the bottom segments of the labor market, or consigned them to pack prisons and death row.

In the last months of his life, King repeatedly drew attention to the intertwining of these two types of violence, ignoring appeals for caution from some of his collaborators: "it's inevitable that we've got to bring out the question of the tragic mix up in priorities. We are spending all of this money for death and destruction, and not nearly enough money for life and constructive development . . . when the guns of war become a national obsession, social needs inevitably suffer."[99] And again: "the movement must address itself to restructuring the whole of American society. The problems that we are dealing with . . . are not going to be solved until there is a radical redistribution of economic and political power."[100] The war in Vietnam frustrated any attempt to construct a welfare state. And hence: "I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such."[101] Such denunciation proved all the more imperative because the war in Asia involved an especially high number of casualties among the African-Americans whom it condemned to poverty at home:

> It was sending their sons and their brothers and their husbands to fight and to die in extraordinarily high proportions relative to the rest of the population. We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem.[102]

In this context, we can well understand the tribute King paid shortly before his death to William E. B. Du Bois, the great African-American intellectual who, on the basis of his anti-racist and anti-colonialist engagement, became a Communist: "history cannot ignore W.E.B. Du Bois . . . We cannot talk of Dr. Du Bois without recognizing that he was a communist in his later years. . . . It is time to stop muting the fact that Dr. Du Bois was a genius that chose to be a communist."[103] King's commitment to non-violence remained firm and yet to the dominant class and ideology the radicalism of these positions sounded like a declaration of war.

In any event, J. Edgar Hoover's FBI had not waited for King's radical turn before spying on him, tailing him, discrediting him, persecuting him, frightening him with "a false fire alarm," in an attempt to debilitate him, even inviting him to commit suicide in an anonymous letter: "Edgar's effort to ruin King was in high gear in the spring of 1964."[104] The further the process of radicalization went, the more the African-American leader was conscious of the dangers confronting him. Here is he is underscoring in a speech of 5 November 1967 the need for those fighting for a noble cause to risk death:

> I say to you this morning, that if you have never found something so dear and so precious to you that you will die for it, then you aren't fit to live. You may be thirty-eight years old, as I happen to be, and one day, some great opportunity stands before you and calls upon you to stand up for some great principle, some great issue, some great cause. And you refuse to do it because you are afraid. You refuse to do it because you want to live longer. . . . You died when you refused to stand up for right. [105]

King was well aware that a vacuum was being created around him and that it made the danger threatening him even more serious. This is what emerges from an intervention of March 1968:

> Having to live under the threat of death every day, sometimes I feel discouraged. Having to take so much abuse and criticism, sometimes from my own people, sometimes I feel discouraged. Having to go to bed so often frustrated with the chilly winds of adversity about to stagger me, sometimes I feel discouraged and feel my work's in vain. [106]

A month later, the black leader was assassinated: "Even if Edgar and the FBI had no part in the actual crime, they must surely bear some of the blame." We can thus endorse the judgment formulated in 1975 by Walter Mondale, former US vice president: "The way Martin Luther King was hounded and harassed is a disgrace to every American."[107] On a larger scale, repression rained down on Black Power and African-American radicalism.

THE WORLD ANTI-COLONIAL REVOLUTION AND THE END OF "WHITE SUPREMACY

In the mid-twentieth century, there were still thirty states in the United States that prohibited "inter-racial marriage," sometimes treating it as a "felony"—in other words, a particularly serious crime.[108] Along with the ban on "miscegenation," often sanctioned by law, went segregation of schools, public places, and transport. All this has now disappeared. The social marginalization of African-Americans certainly persists, but there is no longer room for the legislation peculiar to the racial state.

In this turn, a leading role was played by King and the non-violent movement led by him. But it would be one-sided and misleading to ignore other factors. One episode is especially revealing. In December 1952, the US Justice Secretary sent the Supreme Court, which was engaged in discussing the issue of the integration of public schools, a letter: "[r]acial

discrimination furnishes grist for the Communist propaganda mills, and it raises doubt even among friendly nations as to the intensity of our devotion to the democratic faith." Washington (observes the American historian who has reconstructed the episode) ran the danger of alienating the "colored races" not only in the East and the Third World, but in the very heart of the United States. Here too Communist propaganda met with considerable success in its attempt to win blacks to the "revolutionary cause" by undermining their "faith in American institutions." [109]

The paradox of a country that claimed to represent and lead the "free world," but where the racial state survived the fall of the Third Reich, could not endure for long. Political parties of the most varied persuasion gradually realized this. In 1948, A. Philip Randolph, leader of the line of co-option within the African movement, warned that racial segregation was "the greatest single propaganda and political weapon in the hands of Russia and international communism today."[110] Eleven years later, Arendt identified the race question as "a major stumbling block to American foreign policy."[111] Even conservative circles were forced to take note. In 1958, King observed of Nixon (at the time US vice president): "His travels have revealed to him how the race problem is hurting America in international relations."[112] John F. Kennedy subsequently arrived in the White House. "Kennedy personally felt no great discomfort with racial segregation." However, the revolution of peoples of color spread: "in the early 1960s . . . communist forces were winning in Laos and Vietnam; Castro was in power in Havana; a bloody civil war raged in the Congo," where the figure of Lumumba emerged. In geopolitics, "the image of battered and bloody black children in the streets of the American South" was disastrous. Hence the desegregation initiatives undertaken by the new president (and his successors) "were directly influenced more by cold geopolitical facts than by warm idealism."[113]

In the Cold War years, the key role played by the anti-colonial revolution the world over made itself felt not only in the North American republic as a whole, but also in its army. According to an article published in *Time* on 19 September 1969, a considerable proportion of black soldiers in Vietnam not only identified with the radical Black Power movement, but branded the war they were compelled to fight in thousands of miles from home as "a white man's war" and "white man's folly." Here we have "a new generation of black soldiers" who, although paying homage to King, the leader assassinated a year earlier, declared that his lesson had to be revised and updated: as and when necessary, for a just liberation struggle, use could be made at home of the weapons employed in Vietnam for a mad, unjust war. In the words of the author of the article cited here, "the vio-

lence at home and in 'the Nam' leaves the black man with radically divided loyalties."[114] In other words, for how long could Washington count on the obedience of soldiers of color?

Just as Indian independence cannot be separated from the Second World War and the anti-colonial movement set in train by the defeat of the Third Reich, so the process of desegregation and the liquidation of the racial state in the United States cannot be separated from an international context that saw the West's leading country challenged on the subject of racial equality by the USSR and the blazing of the anti-colonial revolution the world over.

THE EMANCIPATION OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS: AN UNFINISHED PROCESS

Notwithstanding the rise of a man of color to the US presidency in 2009, dark shadows continue to hang over the everyday conditions of African-Americans. Let us examine some figures that date from the late twentieth century, but which are still deplorably pertinent. In the poorest areas, average male life expectancy was ten to fifteen years lower than in rich districts and this social polarization primarily affected African-Americans: "[a] thirty-year-old black man living in Harlem is likely to die younger than a thirty-year-old Bangladeshi, and he will most likely die of stroke, heart disease, cancer or diabetes, not as one might assume, from homicide or the complications of drug addiction."[115] Again: "African-Americans make up an eighth of the population, but they occupy about half the places in American prisons." Inequality also extends to the death penalty: "people convicted of killing whites were eleven times more likely to get the death penalty than people convicted of killing blacks."[116]

The dramatic character of the situation can best be grasped at a different level. The observation of an eminent US historian must be borne in mind: "the South, despite its military defeat, had long been winning the ideological war."[117] Certainly, the circles that even today refuse to acknowledge the infamies blacks were long subjected to are not insignificant. During the Olympic Games in Atlanta in 1996, passengers were greeted at the airport by an "enormous confederate flag": a symbol that to blacks recalled the years of slavery and white supremacy, when those who brandished it were the squadists of the Ku Klux Klan and the perpetrators of dreadful lynching. This sparked protests which, at least according to accusations by anti-racist activists, were repressed by imposing a kind of "martial law" in the ghettos.[118] The lack of symbolic recognition exacerbates the violence of the repression.

The debate that has developed since the inauguration in the United States of a mausoleum dedicated to the Holocaust is extremely significant. Like the surviving Native Americans, African-Americans are asking why a similar mausoleum has not been built to commemorate the monstrous crimes committed on American soil; why similar symbolic recognition has not been granted to victims of what Native Americans and African-Americans respectively characterize as the American Holocaust and the Black Holocaust. The fact is that in the dominant ideology African-Americans remain a kind of *quantité négligeable*. It is enough to think of the public speeches that regularly celebrate the United States as the oldest democracy in the world: the fate of blacks (and "redskins") is largely irrelevant. Overall, in the view of not a few African-Americans, "physical enslavement" has been succeeded by "psychological enslavement," without abolishing the relationship of domination that continues to manifest itself culturally.[119]

A politics geared toward co-option rather than emancipation, which continues to subject African-Americans to oppressive social relations and deprives them even of symbolic recognition, does not in fact abolish violence, but renders it more irrational. It is not only a question of the violence implicit in oppressive social relations. When protest against the latter emerges, it tends to take the form of a kind of urban jacquerie, a sort of frenzied, destructive rebellion, which in no wise alters the existing state of affairs. What is worse, the victims of these social, political and ideological relations tend to direct the violence with which society is imbued against themselves. This is a phenomenon of which King left a subtle, incisive analysis:

> This type of daily frustration was violence visited upon the slum inhabitants. Our society was only concerned that the aggressions thus generated did not burst outward. Therefore, our larger society had encouraged the hostility it created within slum dwellers to turn inward—to manifest itself in aggression toward one another or in self-destruction and apathy. The larger society was willing to let the frustrations born of racism's violence become internalized and consume its victims. [120]

This analysis confirms Fanon's point of view. The pursuit of co-option has not liberated African-Americans from auto-phobia, frustration, and resentment; and all this generates a self-destructive violence. In connection with this phenomenon, which ravages the black ghettos, a US author has even referred to "a self-inflicted genocide."[121]

NOTES

1. See Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1969–2001, Vol. 44, 173–74, 186–87.
2. Ibid., Vol. 1, 360.
3. See Sudarshan Kapur, *Raising up a Prophet: The African-American Encounter with Gandhi*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1992, 158–59.
4. Martin Luther King, *The Autobiography*, ed. Clayborne Carson, London: Abacus, 2000, 22–23.
5. Ibid., 27.
6. Ibid., 109.
7. See ibid., 359, 286, 289.
8. Ibid., 14.
9. Quoted in George M. Fredrickson, *Black Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, 275.
10. King, *Autobiography*, 329.
11. Ibid., 359–60.
12. Ibid., 330.
13. Ibid., 314.
14. This interpretation is critically discussed in Fredrickson, *Black Liberation*, 256–57.
15. Quoted in Richard Hofstadter, *Great Issues in American History*, New York: Vintage Books, 1982, Vol. 3, 450–51.
16. Hannah Arendt, "Reflections on Little Rock," *Dissent*, Winter 1959, 53.
17. Ibid., 49.
18. Ibid., 48.
19. King, *Autobiography*, 188, 202.
20. Ibid., 195.
21. Ibid., 193.
22. Ibid., 194.
23. Ibid., 285.
24. Ibid., 195.
25. Ibid., 206.
26. Arendt, "Reflections on Little Rock," 50.
27. King, *Autobiography*, 211, 207.
28. Ibid., 208–9.
29. Fredrickson, *Black Liberation*, 293.
30. King, *Autobiography*, 317.
31. Ibid., 313.
32. Arendt, "Reflections on Little Rock," 50.
33. See Elizabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*, New Haven, Conn., and London: Yale University Press, 1982, 316–17.
34. Quoted in Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer, *Voices of Freedom: An Oral*

History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s, New York and Toronto: Bantam Books, 1990, 340.

35. Quoted in Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, 415.

36. See Roberto Giammanco, *Black Power. Potere Negro*, Bari: Laterza, 1967, 202.

37. King, *Autobiography*, 334.

38. Ibid., 334.

39. Ibid., 335.

40. Ibid., 335–36.

41. Ibid., 333, 344–45.

42. See Gimmanco, *Black Power*, 70, 84, 96, 106–7.

43. Ibid., 112.

44. See ibid., 78, 81–82, 131.

45. Quoted in Hofstadter, *Great Issues in American History*, Vol. 3, 452.

46. King, *Autobiography*, 147.

47. See Fredrickson, *Black Liberation*, 235–36.

48. See ibid., 252, 265, 267.

49. King, *Autobiography*, 337.

50. Ibid., 342.

51. See Domenico Losurdo, *Il linguaggio dell'Impero. Lessico dell'ideologia americana*, Rome and Bari: Laterza, 2007, chapter 4 §1.

52. Quoted in Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, 315.

53. King, *Autobiography*, 305.

54. See Fredrickson, *Black Liberation*, 294-7, 313.

55. King, *Autobiography*, 325, 327.

56. Ibid., 326–27.

57. Ibid., 325.

58. Arendt, "Reflections on Little Rock," 46.

59. Hannah Arendt, "Civil Disobedience," in *Crises of the Republic*, San Diego, New York, and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972, 90.

60. Hannah Arendt, "On Violence," in *Crises of the Republic*, 123.

61. Hannah Arendt, "Thoughts on Politics and Revolution," in *Crises of the Republic*, 204.

62. Quoted in Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, 383, 527, n. 1, 385.

63. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington, London: Penguin, 1990, 169, 39, 27.

64. King, *Autobiography*, 197, 340–41.

65. Arendt, "On Violence," in Crises of the Republic, 123.

66. Hannah Arendt, "Thoughts on Politics and Revolution," in *Crises of the Republic*, 209–10.

67. See Domenico Losurdo, *Liberalism: A Counter-History*, trans. Gregory Elliott, London and New York: Verso, 2011, chapter 10 §3, and *Il linguaggio dell'Impero*, chapter 3 §4.

68. Arendt, "On Violence," in *Crises of the Republic*, 114–17; Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, 414.

69. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 83, 176.
70. Ibid., Vol. 17, 86; Vol. 22, 235, 195.
71. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 111, 29.
72. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 17, 80, 83.
73. Ibid., Vol. 5, 269.
74. Ibid., Vol. 17, 85, 82.
75. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 67 (trs. modified).
76. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 81, 231.
77. King, *Autobiography*, 303–4.
78. Ibid., 326.
79. Ibid., 196–97.
80. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 76, 79.
81. Ibid., 111, 116
82. Ibid., 74 (trs. modified).
83. Cf. Losurdo, *Il linguaggio dell'Impero*, chapter 1 §11.
84. Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, 146–47.
85. Hannah Arendt, *Essays und Kommentare*, ed. E. Geisel and K. Bittermann, Berlin: Tiamat, 1989, Vol. 2, 174.
86. Ibid., Vol. 2, 167–68.
87. Ibid., Vol. 1, 156–57.
88. Ibid., Vol. 1, 158.
89. Ibid., Vol. 1, 161.
90. Ibid., Vol. 1, 160.
91. Ibid., Vol. 1, 165.
92. Ibid., Vol. 1, 163.
93. Ibid., Vol. 1, 154.
94. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 80.
95. King, *Autobiography*, 219.
96. Ibid., 295, 301.
97. Ibid., 224.
98. Ibid., 301.
99. Quoted in Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States from 1492 to the Present*, New York: HarperCollins, 2005, 462.
100. Quoted in D. J. Garrow, "The Man Who Was King," in *New York Review of Books*, 13 April 2000, 42.
101. King, *Autobiography*, 337.
102. Ibid., 337.
103. Quoted in Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986, 5.
104. Anthony Summers, *Official and Confidential: The Secret Life of J. Edgar Hoover*, London: Ebury Press, 2011, 421–26.
105. King, *Autobiography*, 344.
106. Ibid., 354.
107. Summers, *Official and Confidential*, 435, 417.

108. See Losurdo, *Liberalism*, chapter 10 § 5.

109. See C. V. Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, London, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1966, 131–34.

110. Quoted in Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945–2006*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007, 20.

111. Arendt, "Reflections on Little Rock," 46.

112. King, *Autobiography*, 149.

113. Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion*, 71.

114. See Wallace Terry, "Black Power in Vietnam," in *Reporting Vietnam. Part One: American Journalism 1959–1969*, New York: Library of American, 1998, 704–8.

115. Helen Epstein, "Life & Death on the Social Ladder," *New York Review of Books*, 16 July 1998, 27.

116. Nicholas Lemann, "Justice for Blacks?," *New York Review of Books*, 5 March 1998, 25, 28.

117. David B. Davis, "C. Vann Woodward (1908–1999)," *New York Review of Books*, 10 February 2000, 13.

118. See Roberto Perrone, "Atlanta, l'incubo della rivolta nera," *Corriere della Sera*, 14 July 1996, 9.

119. Arthur Schlesinger Jr., *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*, New York and London: Norton, 1992, 62.

120. King, *Autobiography*, 301–2.

121. Andrew Hacker, *Two Nations, Black and White: Separate, Hostile, Unequal*, New York and Toronto: Scribner and Sons/Macmillan, 1992, 218.