In his paper "On Violence," Frantz Fanon argues that violence is necessary to the project of decolonization and asserts that the notion that decolonization can or should be accomplished through purely non-violent means benefits those who are interested in preserving the colonialist structure. In this paper, I defend Fanon's claim that the insistence on non-violent resistance as the only legitimate response to oppression is itself oppressive. For the purposes of this paper, I take "decolonization" to mean the return of land, resources, and political autonomy to the indigenous population, and I adopt a broad definition of "violence," which may include bodily harm and the destruction of property.

This paper consists of roughly three parts. In the first, I expound upon and defend two of Fanon's arguments for the necessity of violence in advancing decolonization: first, that as a regime established and maintained by violence, colonialism can only be dislodged by violence; and second, that violence restores a sense of agency to the colonized population, which is necessary for genuine decolonization (Fanon 1; 2; 4; 6; 22; 10; 21; 51). In the second part, I anticipate and respond to a popular historical objection, and argue for the crucial role of violence, both within and without Mohandas Gandhi's Quit India movement, in advancing India's independence from the British in 1947. The primary areas of focus in this section are the methods of resistance employed by the Indian working class and the critical role played by the Royal Indian Navy Mutiny of 1946. Finally, I explicitly argue that the notion of non-violent decolonization is a means of colonialist control of the colonized population, as it protects the colonial power's monopoly on violence and divests the colonized people of the means necessary to their liberation. Further, this ideal divests colonized people of potentially effective non-violent means whose success depends on a foreground of violence. Strategies such as negotiation, workers' strikes, and public demonstrations are effective when colonial powers know that the colonized people are willing to escalate and employ violence if their demands are not met.

Fanon argues that violence is a necessary condition for decolonization for two reasons. First, Fanon's argument rests on a metaphysical claim; he maintains that colonialism is established and maintained via violence, particularly through military conquest and police intervention, and as such, can only be expelled by violent means (2; 4; 6). He conceives of the colonial regime as "naked violence," which is incapable of reasoning, or of emotion, for that matter (23). It is thus impossible to accomplish decolonization by appealing to the reason or emotion of the colonialist, and the colonized are left only with the option of expelling the colonial powers through force.

Fanon goes on to argue that colonial subjects develop an "inferiority complex" as a result of witnessing the destruction and debasement of their society and culture, and as a result of witnessing the colonial state inflict violence upon them without consequence (Fanon 51; 6-7; 9). True decolonization, Fanon argues, requires that the colonized people exorcise from themselves their sense of inferiority (22; 10; 51). This must be accomplished through violence, because it is through violent action that the colonized recognize themselves as agents capable of transforming their environment, rather than as mere patients of violence (21; 51). Fanon warns that the colonial structure cannot be dislodged unless the colonized subjects regain this sense of agency; if they continue to view themselves as worth less than their colonizers, the leaving of the colonizer will mark not their liberation but a transfer of power to the colonized bourgeoisie and a retention of the old systems of oppression (24; 35).

The reader might object that there are historical examples of non-violent resistance succeeding against colonial rule, notably, Gandhi's efforts in the struggle for Indian liberation. If this is the case, and violence is not necessary for combatting colonialism, then is it not possible to categorically oppose violence *and* support decolonization? In response, I will briefly outline the role of violence in the Indian opposition to British rule, and argue that it was necessary to both Gandhi's Quit India movement and to the eventual expulsion of the British in 1947.

Gandhi's Quit India movement was most active during the summer of 1942 and was supported by many proletarian people who believed that ejecting the British would end capitalist exploitation (Reddy 278-288). Following Gandhi's arrest on August 9th 1942, a series of protests, led predominantly by the lower classes, broke out across India (278). The violent tactics that the protestors employed included the bombing of the Madras police station, setting fire to British owned businesses, removing railroad spikes and throwing rocks and acid at police (279-281). Although Gandhi himself denounced these demonstrations, the mass employment of violence in the name of decolonization lent a force and impact to Quit India that, if only temporarily, overwhelmed the British administration (278). Further, the use of violence cemented an "anti-colonial consciousness" amongst the Indian proletariat (288). The use of violence in Quit India, I argue, advanced decolonization as defined by Fanon by overwhelming the oppressive powers through force and in establishing a decidedly Indian and anti-British identity, especially among the proletariat (278).

The Royal Indian Navy Mutiny and related civilian demonstrations in 1946 are examples of violent resistance outside of Gandhi's movement that were critical to Indian liberation (Bhat; Meyer). The RIN Mutiny materialized after years of increasing frustration with the poor working conditions and racial discrimination in the military, and it involved 78 ships, 20 shore settlements and 20,000 sailors (Meyer; Bhat). The Mutiny primarily took the form of a strike, but also involved vandalism, theft and destruction of military equipment, and in one case, firing a salvo towards the Castle Barracks (Bhat). Civilians sympathetic to the RIN's cause staged violent demonstrations across India following the Mutiny, which involved armed conflict with police and the looting of British owned businesses (Meyer). Civilian riots persisted even after the RIN strike was suppressed, and the mass employment of violence within and without the Indian military threatened the colonial regime (Meyer; Bhat). Further, the anti-colonial violence coming from within the military signalled to the British that they could no longer rely on the military, which inhibited their ability to inflict regime-maintaining violence upon the colonized subjects (Bhat).

Evidence of the effectiveness of the RIN's methods comes from a letter written in March 1976 by P. V. Chuckraborty, the former Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court (Bhat). Chuckraborty alleges that Clement Attlee, the British Prime Minister at the time that India gained independence, had told him that the RIN Mutiny, as well as the activity of the Indian National Army, played a large role in Britain's decision to leave India, and that the effect of Gandhi's movements was relatively "minimal" (Bhat). To characterize the Indian revolution as non-violent is then historically inaccurate.

From this theoretical and historical background, I argue that upholding non-violent resistance as the only legitimate response to colonialist oppression is itself a colonialist means of controlling the subjugated population. Fanon argues that violence is necessary to advancing decolonization because colonialism itself is a violent process, and thus cannot be dislodged by appealing to the reason or compassion of the colonizer, and because violence instills a sense of agency in the colonized population. Insistence on non-violent resistance, then, is oppressive because it protects the colonial regime's monopoly on violence and robs the colonized population of the method that is necessary to their liberation (Benjamin 281; Fanon 22). Further, the notion of non-violent resistance or negotiation with colonial powers legitimizes colonialism as reasonable and masks its nature as fundamentally violent and antagonistic to the colonized (Fanon 3; 6). Rejecting the legitimacy of violent resistance also works to the benefit of the colonizers and the

colonized upper classes because it preserves an internalized sense of inferiority in the colonized proletariat (24).

A supporting argument for this claim comes from Eldridge Cleaver, who, in "On the Ideology of the Black Panther Party," points out that traditionally non-violent means of resistance preclude the participation of subjects, to whom I will from here on refer as the Lumpenproletariat, who are systematically excluded from employment and from other social institutions (Cleaver 10). The Lumpenproletariat do not have the option of resisting the colonial regime via workers' strikes because they lack a secure relationship to the society's modes of production (10). Nor do they have the option of participating in demonstrations which take place in universities and other social institutions, because they are similarly excluded from those institutions (10). Disavowing all violent resistance then not only robs the colonized subjects of a necessary method for decolonization, but it effectively silences the most oppressed sect of the colonized population by divesting them of the only form of resistance at their disposal.

The claim that violence is very effective, if not necessary, in achieving liberation from colonial rule is corroborated by historical documents indicating that violence played a critical role in the struggle for Indian independence, by pressuring the British administration to leave and by instilling a sense of agency and an anti-colonial consciousness in the Indian people. Pushing the narrative that Indian independence was attained through purely non-violent struggle not only erases the efforts of predominantly proletarian Indian people who risked their lives or perished resisting British rule, but also divests people currently struggling for liberation of effective, if not necessary, methods of resistance.

Further, the violent response from Indians in the wake of Gandhi's arrest in August 1942 overwhelmed the British administration and forced the British to pay attention to Quit India's demands. What impacts Gandhi's efforts did have were not accomplished purely non-violently, but were effective because Quit India was backed by masses who had shown their willingness to employ violence against the colonial regime. Delegitimizing violent resistance then also robs oppressed peoples of potentially effective methods of nonviolent resistance, whose success causally depends on a foreground of violence.

In this paper, I argued that the notion that only non-violent resistance is legitimate is an oppressive notion, from Fanon's writings on the necessity of violence to decolonization and an analysis of the critical role of violence in the struggle for Indian liberation. An important next step,

but beyond the scope of this paper, is to question whether India has accomplished “true” decolonization. I suggest this be done through an analysis of how race, class, and caste oppression has persisted in India after 1947, and how this may be tied to the National Congress’s insistence on non-violence and lack of support for proletarian movements (Singh 350).

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