

Che in Spain, Fanon in France: The European Co-Optation of Non-Western National Liberationism, 1960-1980

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Abstract: This paper investigates European ethno-nationalist groups' engagements with Global South national liberation and other non-European revolutionary ideologies and tactics in their quest to form new nation-states in the period between 1960 and 1980. Within these two decades, the leaders of several violent separatist groups in Spain, France, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland collaborated and claimed each other as comrades as each attempted to break away from their governing states and constitute Europe as a continent of small nation-states. One particularly fascinating facet of these revolutionary campaigns was a professed heavy reliance upon non-European or Global South liberation praxis. By interrogating manifestos, letters, interviews, and additional propaganda, as well as subsequent reflections written by these leaders in the form of memoirs, this article will consider when and how the leading thinkers of European violent separatist groups expressed their admiration for overseas revolutionaries and revolutions. Moreover, it will demonstrate through the contrasting of these professed commitments with the actual utilisation of non-European or Global South philosophies that European separatist groups' engagement with foreign revolutionary thinking was shallow at best. Rather, it will argue, references to non-European liberationism was part of a broader anarchic rhetorical strategy to undermine the established authorities, recruit members, and project success for their own revolutionary campaigns.

I.

According to anarcho-nihilist revolutionary Sergey Nechayev's *Catechism of a revolutionary*,

'It is superfluous to speak of solidarity among revolutionaries. The whole strength of revolutionary work

lies in this.' All attempts to unify those with 'the same revolutionary passion and understanding,'

meanwhile, were to be deemed venerable.¹ Written in defiance of the Russian authorities in 1869, the

Catechism's messages glorifying revolutionary destruction and extreme self-sacrifice endured, finding

¹ Sergey Nechayev, in *Last Stop, Paris: the assassination of Mario Bachand and the death of the FLQ*, Michael McLoughlin (Toronto: Viking, 1998), 7.

devotees throughout the twentieth century. There was, however, a more abstract embrace of this philosophy in the ideologies of European violent separatist groups around the centenary of the work's publication. Between 1960 and 1980, the leaders of an array of militant, ethno-nationalist organisations in Europe professed a universal comparability and comradery between their groups and non-European, particularly Global South, anti-establishment organisations throughout the world. The leaderships of separatist movements in Spain, France, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland, all invoked the names and rhetorical styles of non-European freedom fighters in their advocacy, claiming them as sources of inspiration, comrades-in-arms, and fonts of knowledge about tactics for their own fights for independence. While fervent in their professions of brotherhood with non-European nationalists, the merits of these claims warrant investigation. This article explores the utilisation of non-European liberation ideologies and figures in the works of European separatists in this period, noting the diverse assortment of references made to non-European thinkers and tactics and interrogating the degree to which these ideas were actually incorporated into European separatist ideologies. It will argue that references to Global South thinkers or their revolutionary praxis were the result of an embrace of anarchic rhetorical strategies by European separatists and indicative of superficial or selective readings, rather than critical examinations and employments of these strategies from outside Europe.

While the post-war period undoubtedly saw the emergence of many independence campaigns in Europe, this article takes as its focus a cohort of violent ethno-nationalist separatist campaigns transpiring concurrently in the 1960s and 1970s, working in coordination with each other in

their struggles for independence. In this period, separatist organisations bent on violent revolution emerged in Wales (Free Wales Army [FWA] and *Mudiad Amddiffyn Cymru* [MAC]), Brittany (*Front de Libération de la Bretagne* [FLB] and *Armée Révolutionnaire Bretonne* [ARB]), and the Basque Region (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* [ETA]), or re-emerged with new leadership and new priorities on the island of Ireland (the Irish Republican Army [IRA]). Elemental to their ideology was an aspiration for a Europe of small nation-states, and as such the leaders of these separatist organisations communicated with one another, provided each other with material aid, trained together, and publicly endorsed each other's activities.² Aside from claims of camaraderie, the paramilitary organisations in question also adopted similar ideologies (for example: endorsing democratic socialism; pledging to aid the revival of indigenous cultures and languages; criticising their governments for economically, politically, and culturally oppressing the people; promoting the centrality of violence to their mission) and carried out similar campaigns (bombings; kidnappings; militaristic parades). Another universal element of these groups was their attention to non-European liberation movements; in these places and in this period, the leadership of these separatist groups consistently and carefully claimed decolonisation and socialist revolutions outside of Europe as their inspiration, and that the methods of said revolutionaries were source material for their own, European revolutions. Although initially confident, and promising swift success, this class of comrades-in-arms either ceased their campaigns, as was the case in

² While there are too many examples to fully explicate the relationship here, provided are a sampling: Roy Clews, *To Dream of Freedom: The Story of the MAC and Free Wales Army* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2013) 83; John Jenkins, 'Letter to Audrey White, Summer 1971,' (H.M. Prison Wormwood Scrubs), in *Prison Letters*, Rhodri Williams [ed.], 25-27, (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1981), 26; FLB, 'Manifeste politique fondamental du Front de Libération de la Bretagne,' in *Documentos Y*, vol 12, 471; Unknown, 'Manifeste de Soutien a la Révolution Irlandaise,' *Documentos Y*, vol 12, 468.

Wales, or had entirely ousted their leadership within two decades so as to adopt new principles and praxis, as occurred in Ireland, Brittany, and the Basque Region. Thus, the period between 1960 and 1980 provides a discrete series of case studies with which to consider the relationship of Global South and non-European thinkers and tactics to European separatism. These groups' engagement with non-domestic liberation ideologies and icons, moreover, is particularly worth querying due to their ethno-nationalist beliefs; veneration of those outside the ethnic group to which they professed ultimate loyalty was not a natural decision, nor one, it will be contended, without its consequences.

It should be noted that this work chooses to focus on the motivations behind the references to non-European revolutions and revolutionaries as made by European separatists. As such, the central actors in this story will be the European separatists, not the men and movements they cited. This article will not consider in detail the reception of such claims by those being referenced, and issues of audience will be noted mostly with regards to fellow nationalists and authority figures. There are assuredly merits to considering both sides of the relationship between referrer and referent, but, as will be shown, in these cases there is a lack of serious consideration for the feelings of the subjects cited by European separatists, and a great deal can be gleaned from allowing their activities and aims to be exposed in isolation.

II.

As an analysis of the intellectual maturation of European separatism in light of non-European liberation ideologies in the post-war era, this article will add to the prevailing narratives of specific revolutionary organisations, and to theoretical studies of revolutionary praxis. By interrogating the

occasions and motives of their referencing non-European revolutionary ideologies, this work will enrich the understanding of how each of these groups operated and of transnational intellectualism in the Cold War era. Moreover, expanding upon theories of anarchism, its exposure of these movements as engaging in anarchic rhetorical campaigns will further enliven studies of anarchism and ground them in historic moments.

To date, a wide array of the available histories of any of the groups in question from Spain, France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland readily acknowledge the referencing of non-native thinkers in revolutionary campaigns. Notable examples of this include Richard English's work on the Irish Republican Army, which documents the place of revolutionary literature in the republican movement, particularly within the prison system,³ and Daniele Conversi's discussion of the 'fascination' Basque separatists had with 'Third World' liberation ideologies in the late-Franco era.⁴ Nevertheless, the current literature remains trained on considering references to or alleged uses of non-European liberationist texts and tactics in relative isolation based on region or separatist group. In contrast, by noting the popularity of such references in a transcontinental context and acknowledging the shared strategies of European separatist groups in this period, this article will demonstrate that this was in fact a common strategy embraced by this cohort of violent separatist groups in Europe. It will likewise advance the scholarship on this issue by investigating the specific instances in which references such

³ Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA* (London: Pan Books, 2004), 233-234.

⁴ Daniele Conversi, 'Domino Effect or Internal Developments? The Influences of International Events and Political Ideologies on Catalan and Basque Nationalism,' *West European Politics* 16:3 (1993), 254-257.

as these were made, in order to offer probable motivations for this organisational culture of citing and referencing.

In *Revolutionaries: Contemporary Essays*, Eric Hobsbawm discusses the evolution of global revolutionary thinking, as well as the mounting popularity of Marxist and Communist ideologies in Western Europe in the twentieth century.⁵ While this article will show that the behaviour and intellectual output of this cohort of European separatists does not comport with his claim that, ‘Until the ultimate phase of guerrilla war, when the guerrilla force becomes an army, and many actually face and defeat its adversaries in open battle, as Dienbienphu, there is nothing in the purely military pages of Mao, Vo Nguyen, Che Guevara or other manuals of guerrilla warfare, which a traditional *guerrilla* or band leader would regard as other than simple common sense,’⁶ the evidence presented will nevertheless affirm Hobsbawm’s observations about the adaptability of revolutionaries, as well as his claim that concurrent appeals to anarchism in this period were constructed along emotional, rather than rational, lines.⁷ Beyond merely noting a basic evolution of revolutionary ideology and illusions to shared beliefs across the globe, the findings of this article are in accordance with the theory of revolutions espoused by Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein in the introduction to their work *Scripting Revolution: A Historical Approach to the Comparative Study of Revolutions*, in which they speak to the performativity of revolutionary praxis. Their claim that revolutionary activism is partly performative or a re-enactment of revolutions past is not revelatory—similar arguments, for example, have been

⁵ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Revolutionaries: contemporary essays* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973), 25 & 90.

⁶ Hobsbawm, *Revolutionaries*, 165.

⁷ Hobsbawm, *Revolutionaries*, 83 & 89-90.

advanced notably by Charles Tilly,⁸ Pheroze Unwalla⁹ and even Baker in an earlier work¹⁰—but the book's claims about the nature of the performance prove particularly illustrative of the point to be made in this article. In *Scripting Revolution*, it is noted that 'at least one feature of revolutions transcends...cultural differences—and this is the notion of a revolutionary "script." Revolutions do not occur ex nihilo. Revolutionaries are extremely self-conscious of (and often highly knowledgeable about) how previous revolutions unfolded. These revolutionary scripts offer frameworks for political action. Whether they serve as models or counterexamples, they provide the outlines on which revolutionary actors can improvise.'¹¹ Like Edelstein and Baker's work, this article views the frequent references to Global South thinkers and tactics made by this cohort of violent separatists in Europe as performative, and that these separatist specifically selected *this* script for strategic reasons. In marshalling such an argument, this article will contribute to concretising the theoretical framework advanced here, applying it to a transnational phenomenon.

Finally, this article will present the informal scheme of citation and referencing employed by this coterie of European separatist groups in relation to the Global South as an expression of an anarchic streak in their policies, expounding upon existing theories of anarchism. Although the violent separatist groups did not aspire to anarchism in relation to the political order they planned to implement upon independence, the argument employed here is related to their use of anarchic

⁸ Charles Tilly, *Contentious Performances* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁹ Pheroze Unwalla, 'Nationalism and revolution,' *Nations and Nationalism* 21 (2015), 579-588.

¹⁰ Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution, Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹¹ Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein, 'Introduction,' in *Scripting Revolution: A Historical Approach to the Comparative Study of Revolutions*, Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein [eds.], 1-21, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 2.

methodology in the realm of rhetoric. As will be shown, European separatists tapped into strains of the anarchist schools of thought regarding the primacy of self-government and voluntary association, methods for exposing an established authority as violating its own core tenets and thereby forfeiting its right to govern, and the endorsement of all arguments and methods available to project the movement as a viable alternative to the status quo. Echoes of the arguments of anarchist-theorists including Max Stirner,¹² Pierre-Joseph Proudhon,¹³ Peter Kropotkin,¹⁴ and Robert Paul Wolff,¹⁵ can be found in the motivations of these European separatists. In particular, Emma Goldman's *Anarchism and Other Essays* has informed this article's understanding of the rhetorical strategy of this cohort of violent separation in Europe. Goldman clearly describes anarchism as a political philosophy without 'an iron-clad program,' one concerned not with 'uniformity,' but rather supporting 'the spirit of revolt, in whatever form, against everything that hinders growth.'¹⁶ The endorsement of an extremely flexible methodology, designed to allow for the activist's fundamental aims to flourish unencumbered, as well as the emphasis placed on undermining systems of authority rather than on alternative structures by which to govern, are embraced in the arguments of violent European separatists between 1960 and

¹² Max Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, in *No Gods, No Masters: An Anthology of Anarchism*, Daniel Guérin [ed.], 21-26, (Oakland: AK Press, 2005).

¹³ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, 'Property is Theft', in *No Gods, No Masters: An Anthology of Anarchism*, Daniel Guérin [ed.], 48-54, (Oakland: AK Press, 2005); Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, 'The System of Economic Contradictions,' in *No Gods, No Masters: An Anthology of Anarchism*, Daniel Guérin [ed.], 55-57, (Oakland: AK Press, 2005); Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, 'Peoples' Election Manifesto,' in *No Gods, No Masters: An Anthology of Anarchism*, Daniel Guérin [ed.], 71-80, (Oakland: AK Press, 2005).

¹⁴ Peter Kropotkin, 'The Conquest of Bread' and Other Writings, Marshall S. Shatz [ed.], (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹⁵ Robert Paul Wolff, *In Defense of Anarchism* (London: Harper Torchbooks, 1970).

¹⁶ Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1969), 69.

1980. While they did not claim to be anarchists, this work will expose their engagement with revolutionary ideologies as running along anarchist lines.

III.

While locked in Wormwood Scrubs prison for crimes connected to his separatist activism, *Mudiad Amddiffyn Cymru* leader John Jenkins admitted 'Even fanatics need inspiration and a place to lick their wounds.'¹⁷ This question of inspiration is what is at issue in this article. Despite being ethno-nationalist organisations and often declaring their loyalty to and employment of the revolutionary traditions of their own people, the separatist groups forming and fomenting violence in Spain, France, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland claimed to be drawing inspiration from overseas sources. What follows will be an examination of the various non-European and Global South thinkers and movements that were cited with marked frequency by the coterie of European separatists of the period, organised around each foreign thinker or movement, as well as a discussion of the numerous occasions in which these separatists invoked generic statements about colonialism and imperial oppression to characterise their own status as a governed people.

For the leaders of European separatist groups, there may have been no more inspirational figure than the man who advised that, 'The guerrilla is supported by the peasant and worker masses of the region and of the whole territory in which it acts. Without these prerequisites, guerrilla warfare is

¹⁷ John Jenkins, 'Letter to Cyril Hodges, 22 December 1971,' (H.M. Prison Wormwood Scrubs), in *Prison Letters*, Rhodri Williams [ed.], 42-44, (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1981), 44.

not possible.¹⁸ European separatists in the 1960s and 1970s lionised Cuban revolutionaries, particularly Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara, claiming the Cuban Revolution as an inspiration for their revolutionary strategies in Europe. As historians of the Irish Republican Army have noted, Guevara’s work, particularly *Guerrilla Warfare*, found its way onto the shelves of numerous IRA leaders, including IRA Chief of Staff Cathal Goulding and famous Provisionals member and hunger strike leader Bobby Sands.¹⁹ Séan MacStiofáin, the leader of the Provisionals in the early 1970s also discusses the utility of Guevara to his understanding of revolutions in his 1975 memoir.²⁰ Likewise, as Liam Cullinane has noted, ‘Volunteers were encouraged to read writings by guerrilla leaders like Che Guevara.’²¹ More broadly, the IRA expressed admiration for the Cuban Revolution through a range of propaganda articles in magazines such as *An tOglach*, *An Phoblacht*, and *The United Irishman*, including one that said that ‘Cuba may yet provide a new form of political democracy which may act as a bridge between the two opposing ideological camps in the modern world.’²² In the Basque Region, separatists wove quotations by Guevara into their propaganda outlet, *Zutik!*²³ The group also felt that a fitting way to honour their first member killed in action, a man they called a ‘martyr,’ was to compare him to

¹⁸ Che Guevara, *Guerrilla warfare, a method*, Ronaldo E. Bonachea and Nelson P. Valdés [eds.] (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 143.

¹⁹ English, *Armed Struggle*, 197.

²⁰ Séan MacStiofáin, *Memoirs of a revolutionary* (London: Gordon Cremonesi, 1975), 47.

²¹ Liam Cullinane, “‘A happy blend’? Irish Republicanism, political violence and social agitation 1962-69,” *Saothar: Journal of the Irish Labour History Society* 35 (2010), 56.

²² ‘CUBA: Communism and the future,’ *The United Irishman* (February 1965), 4. For further evidence of the Cuban Revolution in IRA propaganda, see: *An tOglach*, June 1965, in Brian Hanley, “Agitate, Educate, Organise”: The IRA’s *An tOglach*, 1965-68,’ *Saothar: Journal of the Irish Labour History Society* 32 (2007), 53; ‘Untitled,’ *The United Irishman* (February 1965), 4; ‘Guerilla War a legitimate political tactic,’ *An Phoblacht* (5 July 1974), 7.

²³ *Zutik!* 38 (1966), in *Documentos Y*, vol 4, 265-272.

Guevara.²⁴ When Breton separatists, meanwhile, sought the assistance of the Cuban government in their independence campaign in the mid-1970s, they did so because they felt it was a like-minded, revolutionary state.²⁵ The level of valorisation and desire to imitate the Cubans was born out even on a sartorial level for some separatists; the Free Wales Army designed its uniform specifically to include what was called a ‘Castro type hat,’ which court depositions of witnesses to their activities show was intentionally included in publicity of the organisation in order to project the FWA’s desired image.²⁶

Although references to Guevara and the Cuban Revolution can be found peppered throughout European separatist propaganda, it is notable that the most frequent deployment of these citations occur in arguments pertaining to the centrality of socialism in revolutionary doctrine, the need for considerable public outreach so as to guarantee community support, and *Guerrilla Warfare*’s idea that ‘It is not always necessary to wait until all the revolutionary conditions exist’ to initiate a successful revolution.²⁷

The Chinese Revolution, again with a fixation on the figure of Mao Zedong, proved to be yet another oft-cited source of alleged inspiration for the leaders of these European separatist groups in the Cold War era. According to one Breton revolutionary, among the ‘preferred readings’ of the FLB in this period was Mao’s *The People’s War*.²⁸ In Wales, Jenkins argued against the critics of a ‘Mao-type’

²⁴ ‘El Primer Martir De La Revolucion,’ (Undated), in *Documentos Y*, vol 7, 484.

²⁵ Lionel Henry and Annick Lagadec, *FLB-ARB: L’Histoire (1966-2005)* (Fouesnant: Yoran Embanner, 2006), 252.

²⁶ The National Archives, Kew, Folder ASSI 84:558, ‘Deposition of George Ernest Hickley, 10 March 1969, examined by Mr Tasker Watkins,’ 1; ‘Deposition of Elfyn Cadwaladr Thomas,’ 1.

²⁷ Ernesto Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare: Authorized Edition* (Melbourne: Ocean Press, 2006), 13.

²⁸ Henry and Lagadec, *FLB-ARB*, 256-257.

revolution,²⁹ and said that frustrations he had with Chinese communists at times were the result of his belief in their failure to live out admirable aims, rather than a break with his support of Chinese revolutionary ideology.³⁰ In the Irish context, multiple explicit references to the Chinese Revolution and its tactics can be found in *An tOglach*,³¹ in *An Phoblacht*, meanwhile, one IRA contributor notes how he aligns ‘with modern theorists in the strategy of modern guerilla [sic] warfare like, Mao Tse Tung.’³² Moreover, in his first interview following the split of the republican movement in December 1969, Goulding makes an oblique, though still discernible, reference to Mao through his recitation of the saying ‘a guerrilla must move through his people like a fish moves through water.’³³ Historian Richard English, meanwhile, has found that Mao’s *Four Essays on Philosophy* was also popular with IRA prisoners.³⁴ Among the Basques, ETA members wrote statements arguing that the group needed to emulate Mao, particularly in his fight against the Japanese,³⁵ as well as additional articles in its foundational years explaining how it hoped to replicate parts of the activism and anti-capitalist praxis of China.³⁶ Their engagement with Mao and the Chinese, moreover, may be tied again to Guevara, as his work *Guerrilla Warfare* also dissects the Chinese Revolution. References to Mao and the Chinese by European separatists fell into two categories, either in justifications or affirmations of socialist or

²⁹ John Jenkins, ‘Letter to Sara Erskine , 29 December 1973,’ (H.M. Prison Albany), in *Prison Letters*, Rhodri Williams [ed.], 79-81, (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1981), 81.

³⁰ John Jenkins, ‘Letter to Cyril Hodges, 3 October 1973,’ (H.M. Prison Albany), in *Prison Letters*, Rhodri Williams [ed.], 75-77, (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1981), 75-76.

³¹ *An tOglach*, June 1965, in Brian Hanley, “Agitate, Educate, Organise”: The IRA’s *An tOglach, 1965-68*,³¹ *Saothar: Journal of the Irish Labour History Society* 32 (2007), 53.

³² ‘Guerilla War a legitimate political tactic,’ *An Phoblacht* (5 July 1974), 7.

³³ ‘The New Strategy of the IRA: Interview with Cathal Goulding,’ *New Left Review* (November/ December 1970), 57.

³⁴ English, *Armed Struggle*, 232.

³⁵ Txillardegi, ‘A Todos Los Militantes,’ (March 1966), in *Documentos Y*, vol 4, 466.

³⁶ ETA, ‘Cuadernos ETA: Comunismo,’ (1962) in *Documentos Y*, vol 2, 210-215.

communist beliefs, or in their beliefs that his revolution's military strategy could be applied in their contexts.

The Algerian struggle for independence also captivated European separatist onlookers and references to it were scattered throughout their explications of their tactics and theories of revolution. Again, a central figure emerged to represent this campaign, that of Frantz Fanon, with Fanon being particularly venerated for his book *The Wretched of the Earth*. In addition to Fanon's writings, separatists in Europe had auxiliary exposure to Algerian strategies and rhetoric through their readership of Guevara, as he explicitly discusses the Algerian campaign in his work.³⁷ According to English, IRA prison shelves, 'housed many copies of the writings of Frantz Fanon, who had influenced key republicans (including Bobby Sands) since the 1970s,'³⁸ and Fanon played a particularly important and well-known role in the ideology of Sands.³⁹ In addition to references to the Algerian revolution in *An tOglach*,⁴⁰ other propagandists explicitly claimed parallels between the Algerians and the Irish, with statements including: 'In Oct. 1961, Algerian people demonstrating in Paris were massacred...just like in Derry';⁴¹ 'Algerian leader Krim Belcacem recalled the position of the FLN, which is similar to that of Oglaigh na hEireann today';⁴² and, in reference to European immigrant communities in Algeria, 'Like the Orange community in the north-east of Ireland, despite conflicting interests within this white community, they stuck together as they realised they had a privileged

³⁷ Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 18 & 31.

³⁸ English, *Armed Struggle*, 234.

³⁹ English, *Armed Struggle*, 197.

⁴⁰ *An tOglach*, June 1965, in Hanley, "Agitate, Educate, Organise",' 53.

⁴¹ Róisín Ni Dhómhnaill, 'Crisis in Algeria,' *An Phoblacht* (19 July 1974), 4.

⁴² Ni Dhómhnaill, 'Crisis in Algeria,' 4.

position vis-à-vis the native.⁴³ Another IRA writer observed, 'For people of my generation the Algerian revolution has had a tremendous effect throughout the world and people identify themselves more with Algeria than with any other country,' before noting a series of exploitative or harmful decisions made by the French authorities that prompted the violent activities of Algerian revolutionaries, instances that made the author conclude 'The parallels with Ireland are there.'⁴⁴ As the IRA said in relation to the Algerian campaign and its public explication of its failings and successes: 'In Ireland too, their word will not be lost...'⁴⁵ ETA's leaders likewise claimed that they experienced similar repression to the Algerians who had struggled for independence, and that they were incorporating Algerian tactics into their Basque separatist campaign. For example, in 1962, ETA wrote 'the case of the Basque Country is similar to that of Algeria...From this premise it is evidence that the path we must follow is similar to that of Algeria.'⁴⁶ Throughout this period, they used the words of Fanon in their explication of their campaign in *Zutik!* while claiming it would comport itself as Algerians had.⁴⁷ In Wales, meanwhile, Jenkins claimed to align 'with Fanon that the fight to achieve freedom from imperialist colonialism was what really made men feel free.'⁴⁸ Finally, as historians of the Breton separatist campaigns have noted, Algerian combatants and the Algerian struggle for independence was elemental to the separatist campaign, even down to the choice of the most prominent group's name, the *Front de Libération de la Bretagne*, which evoked the name of the Algerian force's name, *Front de Libération Nationale*. FLB

⁴³ Roisin Ni Dhomhnaill, 'Algeria against an empire,' *An Phoblacht* (12 July 1974), 4-5.

⁴⁴ Kader Asmal, '1916 and 20th Century Freedom Movements,' *The United Irishman* (July 1966), 7.

⁴⁵ Róisín Ni Dhómhnaill, 'Algeria,' *An Phoblacht* (26 July 1974), 6. [Ellipsis original to the text.]

⁴⁶ ETA, 'Untitled,' *Documentos Y*, vol 1, 420.

⁴⁷ For example: *Zutik!* 38 (1966), in *Documentos Y*, vol 4, 265-272.

⁴⁸ John Jenkins, 'Letter to Ned Thomas and Sara Erskine, 23 January 1973,' (H.M. Prison Albany), in *Prison Letters*, Rhodri Williams [ed.], 59-61, (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1981), 60.

leader Yann Fouéré's autobiography, *In Prison for the F.L.B.*, includes numerous instances in which Breton separatists invoke the Algerian struggle, even admitting to taking comfort in the reality that attempts to repress Algerian fighters through imprisonment had failed and thereby could fail in the case of Breton separatists.⁴⁹ Another FLB member has subsequently written about how his 'vision of Breton militancy was very international' and how he was 'very connected with the international struggles' before naming the Algerian struggle for independence.⁵⁰ Historians M.C. Boomgaard and Heather Williams affirm the use Breton separatist groups, among other left-wing groups, made of the Algerian example, noting how they worked to convert public outrage over the conflict and the treatment of Algerians to acknowledgement of the alleged colonisation of Brittany, and thereby its need to fight for independence.⁵¹ Throughout, European separatists' references to Algeria occurred most frequently in debates about the necessity of violence, with numerous references to the theories Fanon advances about the centrality and personal and political implications of violence in a nationalist campaign.

The Cypriot independence campaign as waged by *Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston* (EOKA) proved to be another point of alleged inspiration for the cohort of separatists, with references most often occurring in the context of separatist leaders instructing foot-soldiers on what to read in

⁴⁹ Yann Fouéré, *En Prison pour le FLB, Front de Libération de la Bretagne* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines 2008).

⁵⁰ Alain Cabon and Erwan Chartier, *Le dossier FLB: Plongée chez les clandestins bretons* (Spézet: Cool Breizh, 2007), 113, as published in Kyle Thomas McCleanor, "Constructing the 'Third Europe'? The International Connections of Radical Nationalist Organizations in Western Europe, 1960-1980," (Thesis), University of Victoria (2017), 17.

⁵¹ M.C. Boomgaard, 'The rise of militant Bretonité,' *National Identities* 10 (2008), 286; Heather Williams, "Séparisianisme", or internal colonialism,' in *Francophone Postcolonial Studies, a critical introduction*, Charles Frodick and David Murphy [eds.], 102-111, (London: Hodder Headline Group, 2003), 104-105.

order to understand the style of campaign they would be fighting. For example, in Wales, FWA leaders would reference the conflict in Cyprus,⁵² and were likewise seen by law enforcement as seeking to wage a Cypriot-style campaign in Wales.⁵³ In their writings in *Zutik!*, meanwhile, ETA told followers that they were seeking to emulate EOKA and its ability to effect serious change despite a small number of members; additional references to Cypriot campaign's utility in the Basque Region occurred in relation to reminding readers that Cyprus had been able to successfully gain freedom without the assistance of outside forces.⁵⁴ The relationship seeking to be established between EOKA and the IRA proved particularly strong, as several of the leaders of the group in this period had been incarcerated alongside Cypriot rebels in the years prior to their ascendancy to influence in the IRA.⁵⁵ Not only did Provisionals leader MacStiofáin study Greek in order to read about EOKA's tactics in their original language—tactics he later claimed to use in the Irish context—he also participated in hunger strikes they organised, setting new precedent for hunger strike campaigns in Irish separatism.⁵⁶ More generally, as historian Ian Wood has noted, 'the IRA had plans...to use E.O.K.A. expertise in guerrilla war.'⁵⁷ In standard form, moreover, IRA propagandists wrote about the alignment 'with modern theorists in the strategy of modern guerilla [sic] warfare like...[EOKA leader General Georgios]

⁵² John Jenkins, 'Letter to Raymond Edwards, 4 January 1976,' (H.M. Prison Albany), in *Prison Letters*, Rhodri Williams [ed.], 122-127, (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1981), 122-123.

⁵³ Owain Williams, *Tryweryn: A Nation Awakes, the Story of a Welsh Freedom Fighter* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2016), 240.

⁵⁴ For example, ETA, *La Insurrección en Euzkadi*, Bayonne: Gotitztiri, 1964, in *Documentos Y*, vol 3, 37.

⁵⁵ MacStiofáin, *Memoirs of a revolutionary*, 74-79.

⁵⁶ MacStiofáin, *Memoirs of a revolutionary*, 74-79.

⁵⁷ Ian S. Wood, 'The IRA's border campaign 1956-1962,' *The Irish border: history, politics, culture*, Malcolm Anderson and Eberhard Bort [eds.], 113-125, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 119.

Grivas,⁵⁸ included Cyprus in examples of what was to be learned from successful revolutions overseas, and generally seemed to help foster an idea among volunteers that they should be studying the Cypriot revolution in order to understand their own.⁵⁹

Perhaps a perfect summation of the utilisation of these foreign thinkers and praxis in the European context are two statements by the IRA. First, Goulding defended his attention to socialism and community outreach by arguing: ‘without a solid and real basis in and among the people our efforts will again come to nothing...to those who doubt the value of this social work I can only urge the reading of any history of a modern revolutionary movement. Read of Cuba, of Algeria, of Cyprus.’⁶⁰ Then, when the Provisionals sought to justify their violence against the Special Air Service, they told followers ‘Remember...Cyprus [and] Algeria.’⁶¹

As an ongoing war for much of the period, the case of Vietnam likewise captivated the imagination of many of the leaders of separatist movements in Europe, first as an alleged comrade-in-arms and then, after 1975, as yet another example of a successful revolution to emulate. When Fanon’s work was studied by European separatists, for example, they also learned about and heard the praises of the North Vietnamese, as Fanon discusses them. Indicative of this is the observation in *The Wretched of the Earth*: ‘Colonized peoples are not alone...The great victory of the Vietnamese people at Dien Bien Phu is no longer strictly speaking a Vietnamese victory. From July 1954 onward

⁵⁸ ‘Guerilla War a legitimate political tactic,’ *An Phoblacht* (5 July 1974), 7.

⁵⁹ Examples include: *An tOglach*, June 1965, in Hanley, “Agitate, Educate, Organise”, 53; Cullinane, “A happy blend”?, 56; Wood, ‘The IRA’s border campaign 1956-1962,’ 119.

⁶⁰ Hanley, “Agitate, Educate, Organise”, 52.

⁶¹ ‘Dublin-Run S.A.S.,’ *An Phoblacht* (29 March 1974), 8.

the colonial peoples have been asking themselves: “What must we do to achieve a Dien Bien Phu? How should we go about it?” A Dien Bien Phu was now within reach of every colonized subject. The problem was mustering forces, organizing them and setting a date for action.⁶² In Brittany, separatists at times claimed to esteem and learn from the North Vietnamese, and at others attempted to parlay the anti-state sentiment created by the war into pro-separatist activism,⁶³ and even non-violent nationalists referenced the Vietnam War, likening it to the oppression they felt from the French government.⁶⁴ However, the Basque and Irish separatists were the most prone to claiming the North Vietnamese as an inspiration. For example, at a mass assembly in 1964, ETA’s leadership claimed solidarity with the Vietnamese (as well as the Algerians), and two years later, one of the leading figures of ETA, Federico Krutwig penned a work in which he discusses the Vietnam War and its utility to Basque separatists, considering ETA as related not only to the stances taken by Cubans and the Chinese, but also the Vietnamese.⁶⁵ In addition to articles about the conflict that stated an alignment with North Vietnam,⁶⁶ and an encouragement to read about the Vietnamese struggle,⁶⁷ Irish separatists of this period made statements characterising General Giap as a ‘master strategist,’ his methods as extremely effective in

⁶² Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Richard Philcox [trans.], (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 30-31.

⁶³ Annie Loring Peters, ‘Activism Rekindled: Breton Activism from May, 1968 to The Present,’ in ‘The Breton Case for Regional Autonomy: Centuries of Struggle in Brittany, France,’ Master’s Thesis (1986), University of Nebraska at Omaha, 94-127.

⁶⁴ René Galand, ‘Poets and Politics: The Revival of Nationalism in Breton Poetry since World War II,’ *World Literature Today* 54 (1980), 221.

⁶⁵ Federico Krutwig, ‘Por una izquierda socialista revolucionaria vasca,’ (1966), 3; Petxo Idoiaga, ‘The End of ETA,’ *Jacobin*, 20 August 2018, accessed 31 March 2019, <https://jacobinmag.com/2018/08/basque-eta-spain>.

⁶⁶ For examples: *An tOglach*, June 1965, in Hanley, “Agitate, Educate, Organise”, 53; ‘Guerilla War a legitimate political tactic,’ *An Phoblacht* (5 July 1974), 7.

⁶⁷ Cullinane, “A happy blend?”, 56.

expelling foreign powers,⁶⁸ and arguing that his ‘victory gave hope to many other oppressed peoples suffering under the yoke of European imperialism,’ including the Irish.⁶⁹

In addition to naming these Global South revolutions and revolutionaries as inspirations for their campaigns, this cohort of European separatists also made occasional references to other, notable non-European revolutions and activist groups. For example, Welsh and Irish separatists claimed to be working in solidarity with or to see parallels between themselves and ‘American Indians’ in the United States, particularly in light of activism relating to Wounded Knee.⁷⁰ In other instances, Irish republicans would claim to admire Father Camilo Torres, a Colombian Catholic priest-turned-revolutionary killed in 1866, and Amílcar Cabral, a leading figure in the nationalist movements in Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau.⁷¹ The group would draw the situation of black South Africans and the African National Congress’ campaign in relation to their own fight for independence,⁷² while also making statements such as ‘The cartels of Europe care as little for us, the Irish people, as they do for the Black people of Africa who were sold into slavery in America.’⁷³ Meanwhile, members of ETA publicly debated the utility of Gandhi’s theories on revolution, though the Indian revolutionary faced largely harsh criticism because of his platform of non-violence.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Special Correspondent, ‘Giap: master strategist,’ *An Phoblacht* (29 March 1974), 8.

⁶⁹ Ni Dhomhnaill, ‘Algeria against an empire,’ 4.

⁷⁰ John Jenkins, ‘Letter to Cyril Hodges, 26 June 1972,’ (H.M. Prison Albany), in *Prison Letters*, Rhodri Williams [ed.], 50-52, (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1981), 51; ‘Wounded Knee,’ *An Phoblacht* (8 February 1974), 6; ‘Untitled cartoon,’ *An Phoblacht* (5 April 1974), 4; ‘FBI agents bungle court case,’ *An Phoblacht* (26 April 1974), 6.

⁷¹ ‘Guerilla War a legitimate political tactic,’ *An Phoblacht* (5 July 1974), 7.

⁷² ‘Untitled,’ *The United Irishman* (Aibrean 1968), 5.

⁷³ Malachy McGurran, ‘Bodenstown,’ *The United Irishman* (July 1971), 7.

⁷⁴ Z., ‘En Torno a La No-Violencia,’ *Zutik* 7 (1962), in *Documentos Y*, vol 2, 295-296; Julen K. de Madariaga, ‘Mas Opiniones Sobre La No-Violencia,’ *Zutik* 8 (1962), in *Documentos Y*, vol 2, 301; R. de Bermeo, ‘Mas Sobre La No-Violencia,’ *Zutik* 9 (January 1963), in *Documentos Y*, vol 2, 312.

Beyond specific references to individual Global South revolutions or revolutionaries, though, were the innumerable references to anti-colonial, anti-imperial, or anti-fascist campaigns and tactics of the early- to mid-twentieth century and to their utility (as sources of general inspiration or of specific tactics) for European separatists, as well as comparisons drawn between governing states and previous deadly regimes in the context of justifying an independence campaign unflinching in its use of violence. In Wales, both the FWA and MAC spoke candidly (at times graphically) about their realisation that they were subjects of an imperial state, aligning themselves with those who had fought or were fighting against imperialism, and stating that violence was necessary to prevent the state's 'application of the capacity and will to kill and destroy on the part of the subject people.'⁷⁵ As Boomgaard has noted, 'The FLB chose to operate outside the realm of traditional politics, opting instead to "revolt" against its "colonization" by France,'⁷⁶ while historian Jack Reece likewise said of Breton separatists, 'By portraying Brittany's relationship to Paris as analogous to that of France's overseas possessions, nationalist leaders obviously hoped that Gaullist-supervised decolonization abroad would have favorable repercussions on the Armorican peninsula.'⁷⁷ The leaders also generated an organisational culture in which members 'saw the emergence of their so-called "national liberation front" within the context of the worldwide movement toward decolonization after 1945.'⁷⁸

⁷⁵ John Jenkins, 'Letter to Cyril Hodges, 12 December 1972,' (H.M. Prison Cambridge Road Bristol), in *Prison Letters*, Rhodri Williams [ed.], 56-58, (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1981), 56-57. Another example includes lines comparing the treatment of Wales by imperialist Britain with a caesarean section to birth a child born as a result of sexual assault. John Jenkins, 'Letter to Robat Gruffudd, 1 May 1975,' (H.M. Prison Albany), in *Prison Letters*, Rhodri Williams [ed.], 114-116, (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1981), 115; 'Appeal from Wales,' *The United Irishman* (July 1969), 11.

⁷⁶ Boomgaard, 'The rise of militant Bretonité,' 287.

⁷⁷ Jack E. Reece, 'Internal colonialism: the case of Brittany,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2 (1979), 276.

⁷⁸ Reece, 'Internal colonialism,' 276-277.

Contemporaneously, ETA's leaders wrote of how they had found inspiration in the decolonization wave in Asia and the Middle East,⁷⁹ and claimed that they were living in the age of 'colonialist despotism, annihilating all human rights and liberties,'⁸⁰ in an 'oppressed and colonised' reality that saw the exploitation of Basque people.⁸¹ In Ireland, the tradition of claiming the British as a foreign, occupying force continued in this period, with the IRA leadership claiming 'imperialism has many forms, not least the cultural and economic takeover of under-developed countries such as ours. This is what happened and what is happening in Ireland of our generation.'⁸² Whether still a unified republican army or divided into the Provisional and Official outfits, the IRA's primary objective was 'smashing imperial rule in Ireland'.⁸³ As the first leader of the Provisionals claimed, 'I knew that the struggle for Ireland's freedom was only part of the worldwide struggle against imperialism.'⁸⁴

In addition to claiming that they were combating imperialist forces, these groups were also very specific in the language that they used, equating their treatment with some of the most repugnant acts and actors in human history. ETA, for example, claimed that French and Spanish policies towards the Basque language were in 'service of genocide,'⁸⁵ and claimed that the French, once subjects of

⁷⁹ Fernando Sarrailh de Ihartz, *Vasconia* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Norbait, 1963), in *Documentos Y*, vol 3, 76.

⁸⁰ 'Manifesto de E.T.A. Al Pueblo Vasco,' in *Documentos Y*, vol 3, 195.

⁸¹ *Zutik Especial* 49-50 (1968), in *Documentos Y*, vol 7, 276. [My translation.] For additional references to imperialism in the Basque context, see: ETA, 'Carta Abierta a los Miembros del Aparto Policiaco en Euzkadi,' in *Documentos Y*, vol 4, 159; ETA, '¿Españolista o Abertzales Revolucionarios?,' (Undated, c. 1971) *Documentos Y*, vol 11, 99.

⁸² 'Republican Exclusiveness Must End,' *The United Irishman* (July 1967), 1.

⁸³ John Horgan, Maxwell Taylor [ed.], 'Proceedings of the Irish Republican Army General convention, December 1969,' *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9:4 (1997) 158.

⁸⁴ MacStiofáin, *Memoirs of a revolutionary*, 52-53. For additional works conflating British and imperial rule, see: Roy Johnston, 'Must Ireland Fall with the Empire?,' *The United Irishman* (December 1967), 11; *An tOglach* (December 1967), in "Agitate, Educate, Organise",' Hanley, 59; *An tOglach* (Easter 1968), in "Agitate, Educate, Organise",' Hanley, 59; 'G.P.O. Pledge to Free Ireland,' *An Phoblacht* (30 April 1976), 1.

⁸⁵ Txillardegi, 'La Lengua Del Opresor,' *Zutik* 23 (1964), *Documentos Y*, vol 3, 257. [My translation.]

Nazi occupation, were behaving like their former oppressors in relation to the Basques and the Catalans.⁸⁶ As Conversi has noted, the characterisation of the Franco regime and authority figures along Nazi lines was a popular trope among Basque nationalists of this era.⁸⁷ On numerous occasions, moreover, the IRA compared those opposed to Irish independence to the Nazis, as evidenced vividly in the cartoon here.⁸⁸ Thus, fewer than two decades after the defeat of the Nazis and



the genocide they perpetrated in Europe, European separatists claimed they were fighting a similar level of evil.

Of the innumerable references to Nazis, the apartheid system of South Africa, and general imperialist violence at the hands of their governments, many notably came in light of criticisms of specific policies they sought to use as evidence of imperialism. For example, the arrest or other restrictions placed on the activities of those suspected of violence, was considered to be a sign of imperialist aggression and a wanton disrespect for basic human rights characteristic of a despotic

⁸⁶ Zutik Especial 49-50 (1968), in *Documentos Y*, vol 7, 282.

⁸⁷ Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans, and Spain: Alternative Routes to a Nationalist Mobilisation* (London: Hurst, 1997), 230.

⁸⁸ Fitz, 'Limerick Gauleiter,' (cartoon) *The United Irishman* (July 1970), 2. See also, 'Britain's Police State, A Legal Analysis of the Six counties Under the Special Powers Act,' *An Phoblacht* (Aibrean 1972), 6-7 & 9; Simon Prince, *Northern Ireland's '68: Civil Rights, Global Revolt and the Origins of the Troubles* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007), 170.

government.⁸⁹ Governmental regulation and societal policing of ethnic minority languages in these states were particularly harsh, and separatists used such regulations as proof of attempts by the state to eradicate a local culture, another known tactic of imperialism.⁹⁰ Economic inequalities between the regions these groups sought to liberate and their neighbours were also held up as evidence of exploitation characteristic of imperialism. Thus, there was a desire by European separatists to not only claim that they were subject to unjust rule, but that they had the evidence to prove it.

IV.

According to one member of the Irish republican movement, ‘It is difficult to see how the strategies of the Third World, which have invariably consisted in national liberation campaigns can fail to apply to Ireland.’⁹¹ Nevertheless, there are merits to questioning the rationale behind the displays of camaraderie and the enthusiastic praise for Global South revolutionaries, as well as the references made about imperialism and fascism, by ethno-nationalists in Europe of this period. Claims of esteem and pledges of application of tactics, it should be argued, cannot be taken at face value, least of all because of the ethno-nationalist language deployed in the rest of the ideology embraced by these organisations. In fact, upon

⁸⁹ For example: ‘Changing Tactics of Imperialism’ *The United Irishman* (January 1971), 9; John Jenkins, ‘Letter to Cyril Hodges, 12 December 1972,’ (H.M. Prison Cambridge Road Bristol), in *Prison Letters*, Rhodri Williams [ed.], 56-58, (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1981), 56-57; ‘Manifesto de E.T.A. Al Pueblo Vasco,’ in *Documentos Y*, vol 3, 195.

⁹⁰ Studies of this repression include: M. Rosa Vila-Pujol, ‘Sociolinguistics of Spanish in Catalonia,’ *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 184 (2007), 71; Andrew Edwards, Duncan Tanner, Patrick Carlin, ‘The Conservative Governments and the Development of Welsh Language Policy in the 1980s and 1990s,’ *Historical Journal* 54 (2011), 532; Stephen Barbour, Cathie Carmichael, *Language and Nationalism in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 75.

⁹¹ ‘Ireland and the Third World,’ *The United Irishman* (October 1970), 12.

closer inspection, it becomes clear that the veneration of foreign thinkers and tactics were based upon somewhat superficial or selective readings.

Primary evidence of the selective reading of these revolutionary ideologies is the fundamentally different aims of separatist groups in Europe and the revolutionaries they cited. With debatably the exception of the aims of Vietnamese combatants,⁹² the revolutionaries cited so frequently by European separatists were not seeking the establishment or recognition of new state borders, as was the case for most separatist movements in Europe. Rather, most cited Global South liberation movements, such as the Batista regime in Cuba, the Chiang Kai-shek government in China, or Porfirio Díaz's regime in the Mexican Revolution, worked to overthrow existing governments. In Vietnam, the conflict was not only between the North and South Vietnamese, but also involved the intervention of several foreign powers. The periods of colonial control of Global South nations were in many instances notably shorter as compared to the period of time states had governed over European communities,⁹³ and complaints from non-European communities about the undemocratic nature of their being denied access to any form

of substantial representative government found no comparison to the European context.⁹⁴

⁹² To believe in the claims of parallel advocacy between European separatists and the North Vietnamese depends on recognising the legitimacy of both the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the State of Vietnam, in order to then have national boundaries be re-drawn in the aftermath of the war.

⁹³ Wales had been annexed by England in the 15th century and England's conquest of Ireland occurred under the Tudor reign. Although a tumultuous union, the Basque Region had been subject to the Spanish unification decrees of the 1700s, while Brittany had been unified with the kingdom of France since the 16th century. Ireland had been officially unified with the United Kingdom in 1800, though had been in some degree of union with the British government since the 16th century.

⁹⁴ With the exception of the Basque Region, which until 1975 was under the authority of an authoritarian regime, there were opportunities for some degree of engagement with a democratic regime via elections.

Moreover, none of the most cited inspirations for European separatists were fellow ‘internal colonies.’⁹⁵ In the particular case of the Irish republican movement, none of the cited sources spoke to the form of revolution necessary to establish the desired unified democratic socialist Ireland, which was a quasi-irredentist movement that required the reunification of the island through the overthrow of the Republic of Ireland’s government and the granting of independence to Northern Ireland by the British government.

Another important point is Global South thinkers clearly wrote without European separatists in mind. For example, in Guevara’s *Guerrilla Warfare*, the text openly states ‘We consider that the Cuban Revolution contributed three fundamental lessons to the conduct of revolutionary movements in America.’⁹⁶ For the duration of the piece, Guevara dissects the conditions for revolution in the Americas, particularly ‘the underdeveloped countries of America’.⁹⁷ While Guevara admits that the Cuban method could find parallels in the activities of revolutionaries in China, Puerto Rico, and Algeria, he is clear in arguing that revolutions executed under alternative circumstances would not find an applicability in the Cuban approach to independence. Meanwhile, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* was culled from his speeches relating to Chinese conditions, and works like *Four Essays on Philosophy* remain largely trained on the particulars of non-European contexts. In *Quotations from*

⁹⁵ This is a phrase borrowed from Jack Reese’s work on Brittany, and is ideal for characterising the specific kind of colonialism against which these separatists claimed to fight given their proximity to the metropole. Reece, ‘Internal colonialism,’ 275-293.

⁹⁶ Note that in this context, ‘America’ is a reference to North and South America. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare: Authorized Edition*, 13. [Emphasis added.]

⁹⁷ Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare: Authorized Edition*, 14.

Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, moreover, Mao was cited as having said “We must give active support to the national independence and liberation movement in countries in Asia, Africa, and North America, as well as to the peace movement and to just struggles in all the countries of the world;’ notably, Europe was not considered ripe for national liberation or violent activism.⁹⁸ The introduction to *The Wretched of the Earth*, moreover, included the lines ‘This is what Fanon explains to his brothers in Africa, Asia, and Latin America: we shall achieve revolutionary socialism everywhere and all together or we shall be beaten one by one by our former tyrants,’⁹⁹ while Fanon himself decries the ‘inhumanity of Europe’ and nests his theories in non-European examples.¹⁰⁰ Even the writings from Cypriot revolutionaries, fellow Europeans, refused to consider the utility of their work in other contexts.¹⁰¹

The reflections of the leader of the Cypriot revolutionary forces also point to another piece of evidence of the selective reading of foreign revolutionaries and assertions that they were all inspirations for European separatism. As General George Grivas-Dighenis noted, the Cypriot campaign for independence ‘bears no resemblance to the insurrectionary movement in Algeria, though both were actuated by the same motive, namely, the throwing off of colonial rule. The liberation struggle of the Algerian people has nothing in common with Mao’s Chinese social revolution or with the revolution in Cuba.’¹⁰² In essence, Global South liberation

⁹⁸ Mao Zedong, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1966), 65-66.

⁹⁹ Jean-Paul Sartre, ‘Preface,’ in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Richard Philcox [trans.], (New York: Grove Press, 1963), xlvii.

¹⁰⁰ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 236-237.

¹⁰¹ General George Grivas-Dighenis, *Guerrilla Warfare and EOKA’s Struggle, A Politico-Military Study*, A.A. Pallis [trans.], (London: Longmans, 1964), 4.

¹⁰² Grivas-Dighenis, *Guerrilla Warfare and EOKA’s Struggle*, 4.

movements were not a monolith, but in fact boasted a series of contradictory ideologies and tactics. While Cypriot revolutionaries claimed to be in conflict with Communists,¹⁰³ for example, European separatists admired the Cypriots and communists such as Mao and Guevara alike. Mao advised revolutionaries to wait until they had won the support of the majority of the people to start a revolution,¹⁰⁴ however, Guevara argued that only a small force of revolutionaries were necessary.¹⁰⁵ While all the revolutionaries of the Global South cited with frequency agreed on the necessity of violence in their movements, Mao's writings that allegedly inspired European separatists still preached controlled violence, opposed wars of attrition, and advocated for limited violence against enemy soldiers.¹⁰⁶ Thus, when claiming to be drawing inspiration and tactics from this array of Global South revolutionaries, European separatists inherently needed to selectively read and apply what they learned.

Finally, there is a particular contradiction in European ethno-nationalist separatists claiming inspiration from non-nationals. The irony of this is perhaps captured in contrasting what the IRA wrote about overseas inspirations and an *An tOglach* article that was critical of those 'who frown on Nationalism and are always looking abroad for inspiration in policy, tactics, and even for an Imperialist enemy'.¹⁰⁷ Throughout their writings, the European organisations in question made conflicting claims about being inspired by and using the tactics of domestic

¹⁰³ Grivas-Dighenis, *Guerrilla Warfare and EOKA's Struggle*, 2.

¹⁰⁴ Zedong, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*, 88 & 124.

¹⁰⁵ Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 13.

¹⁰⁶ Zedong, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*, 96-97 & 138-139.

¹⁰⁷ Hanley, "Agitate, Educate, Organise", 59.

examples of revolutions of generations past, and making similar assertions of foreign revolutions.¹⁰⁸ European separatists likewise claimed the particularity of their language, religion, or cultural practices made them unique, justifying their own form of government; many of these groups were also sceptical of multiculturalism and preached a message of assimilation of immigrants in order to ensure the stability of their people.

V.

Serious reading of non-European thinkers and theories, or even common sense, thus clearly could have demonstrated to European separatists the contradictory or dubiously-founded claims about their utility in European contexts, yet these groups persisted in these assertions for two decades. In reality, European separatist groups embraced very few of the tactics espoused by foreign thinkers beyond a general commitment to socialism, to the use of violence, and to the perpetration of surprise attacks by small bands of revolutionaries on vulnerable symbols of government power followed by a rapid retreat (advice in no way unique to Global South thinkers). As such, it is apparent that aligning with overseas thinkers was a matter of strategy, rather than of course, a means to induce what one Welsh separatist called a 'state of mind' that would assist in the central aim of gaining independence.¹⁰⁹ The motives behind this transcend even the material benefit accrued from claiming certain revolutionaries as comrades, as occurred on a few occasions.¹¹⁰ Instead, it can be seen as

¹⁰⁸ See, for example: 'The New Strategy of the IRA: Interview with Cathal Goulding,' *New Left Review*, 61; Unknown, *Libro Blanco*; Unknown: Unknown, 1960, in *Documentos Y*, vol 1, 193; Clews, *To Dream of Freedom*, 46.

¹⁰⁹ John Jenkins, 'Letter to Gwyn Williams, Undated,' (H.M. Prison Wormwood Scrubs, in *Prison Letters*, Rhodri Williams [ed.], 28-30, (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1981), 28.

¹¹⁰ For example: Prince, *Northern Ireland's '68*, 110; Henry and Lagadec, *FLB-ARB*, 252.

following an anarchic philosophy, by which European separatists attempted to undermine the authority of the state and project the appearance of strength, regardless of the feasibility of their claims.

By asserting that they were inspired by decolonisation thinkers and intent on adopting anti-colonial tactics, while also consistently portraying their government and its actions as imperialistic or fascistic, these European separatists sought to justify their campaigns and the levels of violence they employed in their quests for independence. In essence, they sought to take advantage of an already shifting Overton window in relation to appropriate uses of violence by ethnic groups to attain political independence, stating that their communities were also colonised, subject to unnatural violence and undemocratic governance, and thereby that they had the right to fight for freedom. This was the period in which the language of self-determination was embraced, and when according to historian A.G. Hopkins empires were seen as rightfully crumbling.¹¹¹ As British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan said in his 'Wind of Change' speech, about the rise of nationalisms in Africa 'whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. And we must all accept it as a fact.'¹¹² European separatists of this coterie wanted to consider themselves as having the right to be swept up by the same winds as the African and Asian nations gaining independence. The nations where these European separatists emerged, moreover, were all governed by states who had recently conceded independence to colonies in the Global South, thus making their claims of internal colonialism appear grounded in reality and thereby their claims for independence more expected. Also, the violence

¹¹¹ A.G. Hopkins, 'Globalisation and Decolonisation,' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 45 (2017), 730.

¹¹² Harold Macmillan, 'Wind of Change,' speech (3 February 1960), reprinted in Frank Myers, 'Harold Macmillan's "Winds of Change" Speech: A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Policy Change,' *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 3 (2000), 565.

perpetrated by decolonisation forces could thus be made to appear more justifiable in a European context if classified as anti-imperialist. Comparisons to the Nazis by the 1960s and 1970s also had a particular cachet, as all but Spain and the Republic of Ireland had fought against the Nazis in the previous generation, one that made the use of violence legitimate. Thus, references to colonialism and alignment with anti-colonial intellectuals of this era validated the claims that many in European separatist groups wanted to make: they were subject to an unjust system of governance and that they therefore had the right to use whatever means necessary to escape it and be free.

Beyond this, though, invoking foreign revolutionaries and claiming them as sources of inspiration and executors of parallel independence campaigns allowed the leadership of these European separatist groups to imply the high likelihood of their own success. Notably, the most popular references in this period were to revolutions already won or, in the case of Vietnam before 1975, a campaign soon to be won. Those cautious about joining a separatist movement for fear of its failure or those in the movement whose confidence began to falter could be reminded that allegedly similar revolutions elsewhere had succeeded. IRA icon Sands displays this in his own writing; when challenged about why he felt his protests would force the British to grant IRA prisoners political status and potentially even make the state concede control of Ireland altogether, Sands replied, he felt confident because he knew they had 'done it before in places like Cyprus.'¹¹³ The popularity of Guevara in particular makes sense contextually. Guevara was most popular in the 1960s and early 1970s, and a central element of his message was that a revolutionary force need not wait for the

¹¹³ Bobby Sands, *Bobby Sands: writings from prison* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1998), 53.

perfect time or have a large number of supporters; strategy alone could win.¹¹⁴ This made sense for these groups, then, as they had very few men and were working to recruit more. Moreover, making references to a wide array of thinkers and tactics allowed the leaders of separatist movements to present themselves as trustworthy because they were intelligent and competent, the name-dropping used as evidence of their capacity to learn and glean a great deal from studying in detail the writings of previous revolutionaries.

Finally, as noted, there was a desire among European separatists to tap into the anti-state sentiment of the period, with tensions over the Global South and the idolisation of some Global South revolutionaries among left-wing people providing European separatists a method of engaging the community's interest. Reece perhaps notes this best in his work on post-war France, arguing that separatism there 'hoped that Gaullist-supervised decolonization abroad would have favorable repercussions' within France's borders.¹¹⁵ The social discontent notorious in the Long 1968 period played out in the countries in question—France, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland—and in the student or left-wing protests of each, the figures of Guevara, Mao, the Vietnamese, and the Algerians played a significant role. By claiming that they were part of the same revolutionary milieu, European separatists can be seen to be trying to capture the interest and loyalty of people in their own communities who were seeking to join the revolutionary moment.

While there appears to be a commitment to this strategy across the coterie, it is worth briefly noting the risks associated with such open praise and embrace of non-national, particularly Global

¹¹⁴ Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare: Authorized Edition*, 13.

¹¹⁵ Reece, 'Internal colonialism,' 276.

South, revolutionaries and revolutions. These groups were making references to communist movements in the context of states that were staunch opponents of the spread of communism. Claiming the leading lights of communism as inspirations thereby ran the risk of alienating many who may have believed in the benefits of a nation-state that these groups peddled, but who did not agree with the ideologies of communism as expressed overseas. Meanwhile, among the Irish and Basque separatists, internal conflicts were exacerbated by tensions over the aims of the leadership, and references to overseas nationalists, particularly Marxists or Communists, were often criticized; in both the IRA and ETA, major fractures occurred in this period stemming from the same concerns. Finally, high-profile professions of loyalty to prominent anti-establishment, particularly communist, figures, elicited the attention of overseas intelligence agencies. As a result of its global reach and profound engagement in the Cold War, the United States' security apparatus took an interest in the domestic conflicts in Europe, and worked alongside other law enforcement systems to track and catch members of this cohort of European separatism. Thus, in so publicly aligning with Global South thinkers, the European separatist cohort attracted additional, negative attention that may have hindered its ability to operate and achieve its fundamental aims.

VI.

In the opening lines to *The Rebel*, a popular text in this period discussing revolutionary praxis, Albert Camus observes that probing for rationality among those seeking 'refuge in a doctrine' and working to '[make] his crime *reasonable*' proves a troubling endeavour.¹¹⁶ Historians, theorists of

¹¹⁶ Albert Camus, *The Fastidious Assassins*, Anthony Bower [trans.], (London: Penguin Books, 1953), 1

nationalism, and political scientists alike, however, *should* trouble themselves to interrogate what compelled European separatists to praise non-European revolutionaries and revolutionary ideology as they did in the 1960s and 1970s. Studying the engagement of this separatist cohort with non-European ideologies and individuals provides greater clarity into the context behind this turbulent anti-establishment period in Western history, and into the complexity of these groups' organisational culture. Moreover, it offers greater insight into the deeper philosophical questions about revolutions, not least whether there is an inherent parallel between revolutionaries, an enduring connection between them that allows for the easy invocation of one revolutionary by another. While simply observing that these groups read or claimed to have read non-European, particularly Global South, thinkers in the hopes of applying their tactics in Europe implies an intellectuality of these groups that aligns them as being moved by the spirit of the Long '68 period, this is belied by closer analysis. Despite the risks and the obvious discordances between their movements and those they claimed to embrace, European separatists in Spain, France, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland employed an anarchic logic and rhetorical methodology when they insisted on claiming inspiration and camaraderie with overseas thinkers. Selective and strategic in their readings and referencing, this cohort of European separatists co-opted the names and struggles of foreign revolutionaries in order to undermine their own states and validate their own violent activism, believing that in this and all other acts, the ends justified the means.

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