
LEWIS NKOSI'S UNDERGROUND PEOPLE: A DOCUMENT FOR ACTION

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Abstract: National liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth: whatever may be the headings used or new formulas introduced, decolonization always a violent phenomenon. - Frantz Fanon (Fanon 1967 p.27) Decolonization acquired a new thrust after the 1950's in African and Asian countries. Many radical thinkers and political philosophers encouraged protests and violent struggles. The works of the third world ideologues like Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Lepold Senghor, and Julius Nyereri and Nelson Mandela inspired a host of new writings and helped the movements in third world countries.

The colonization by Boers (and other White groups of people), in South Africa denied basic human rights to the indigenous Blacks. The South African White government introduced many perverse laws like Group Areas Act, which separated races geographically, and Special Amenities Act, which segregated beaches, parks, graveyards and playgrounds for races. Most of the fertile land was kept by the Whites, who were only nineteen percent of the population and the Blacks who were the majority, got twelve percent of the fertile land. The Government of South Africa even introduced Immorality Act, and prohibited sexual relations between persons of various races, made them a criminal offence. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act prevented marriages between any two races. The Government introduced the doctrine of separation, even in education. The schools, colleges and universities were segregated. The Black people with higher education could not get higher jobs, and all the superior jobs went to Whites, this led to many social economic and political problems and created inequalities in the country. The educated Blacks thought that they had a duty to their society, and started to attack apartheid in their writings. The writers who opposed apartheid through their writings were banned to write, publish and to hold public recital of their works. The Suppression of Communism Act helped the government to silence and arrest its critics and poets like Dennis Brutus were imprisoned. To escape persecution under the racist regime and to contribute to the fight against apartheid, many writers left South Africa and went into exile. Lewis Nkosi (1936-2010) was one of the writers who were banned by the South African government. He was a South African Black essayist, critic and novelist. He was a multifaceted personality who attempted every literary genre. Nkosi lived and worked in various countries like America, England, France, Zambia and Spain. The main concern in his works is political situation in South Africa, commitment to his country, the racial question, progressiveness in the literature of South Africa, and using critical standards to this end. He asks "how

does one begin to write about in a way that would be meaningful to people who have not experienced apartheid." (Nkosi, 1981 p.79) His ideas were shaped by these factors; as a Black who suffered social marginalization, his opposition to apartheid and commitment to Africa. He sees a vital role for the writer in the society. He views literature for the liberation of society. During the apartheid era, repression continued on an intense scale, and many restrictions were imposed on non-Whites and made life miserable for them. Many political organizations were formed to fight the apartheid, like African National Congress, and Pan Africanist Congress. They organized protests and strikes throughout South Africa. The state turned more brutal and many laws were passed, restricting the movement and freedom of blacks. On March 21, 1960, police shot the unarmed demonstrators who were agitating against the system of passes. More than 60 people were shot dead, and 300 people were injured. Later government imposed emergency, many political fighters and activists went underground, fearing repression and brutality. During this time many resistance movements started in South Africa. They resorted to bombing, arson, kidnapping and murders. Their aim was to overthrow the white fascist regime in South Africa by armed rebellion. Writers like Nkosi contributed to the struggle through their writings and supported violence. Lewis Nkosi firmly believes that armed struggle as prophesized by Fanon in his *The Wretched of the Earth* would help the societies like South Africa in its transition from colonization to freedom. Frantz Omar Fanon (1925-1961) was a West Indian psychoanalyst and a social philosopher. He was a theorist, political activist and author of *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks*. His works influenced the struggles and movements across the Asia, Africa and many third world countries. He is undoubtedly the greatest theorist after Marx and Mao. Frantz Fanon unveils his theories to fight colonialism in his famous *The Wretched of the Earth* which became a guide book for the resistance movements. In this work, he predicts that the rural peasantry in colonial countries

is the backbone of the revolution whether it is Africa or any third world country. The intellectual at first under the influence of the colonizer, distrusts the peasantry, and later recognizes their potential, gets engaged with the struggle, and leads them. Fanon further declares that violence is essential in the struggle for decolonization; it not only brings freedom, but also restores the native's pride and self-respect. Many works that emerge from third world reflect his ideology and influence. Nkosi's novel *Underground People* follows the philosophy espoused by Fanon and a close study of the novel makes it obvious. Cornelius Molapo the protagonist in the novel is a language teacher in Dube Town Ship. He loves comforts and city life. He writes poetry and plays cricket. He has romantic notions about 'revolution'. He is an active member of National Liberation Movement, an organization waging armed struggle and fighting apartheid. He criticizes policies of the Central Committee, often irritates its members. When there are serious differences in the party, he has chosen to stay on the Nationalist side, instead of international side. The Central Committee, to cure this malady, decides to send him to a remote part of the country, because a spell with the cadres in the battlefield would make him ideologically strong or would kill him. In the beginning he is suspicious about his ability and suspects the revolutionary movement, hesitates to join it and finally leads the struggle after overcoming the internal contradictions and weaknesses and becomes a Fanonian hero. Therefore Nkosi's *Underground People* should be seen as a document for action and a guide for the oppressed people to fight colonial forces, Africa in general and South Africa in particular. One day a messenger informs Cornelius Molapo, the decision of the Central Committee to depute him to take over the Tabanyane uprising. While speaking on many things the messenger reveals his opinions and that of National liberation movement, about peasant's participation and their involvement in the struggle: The peasants, comrade Molapo, are stupid, conservative -they prefer bread and butter to freedom. We cannot leave the business of revolution to the shaky hand of the peasantry. Again and again they will betray us. In our situation the peasants are the most counter-revolutionary class! (Nkosi, 2002 p.70) These lines only reflect the cynicism and intolerance of the people, who plan and run the revolution from their secret shelters. National Liberation Movement used the peasants in the past. However, they have a very poor opinion of the poor peasants. The Central Committee members fail to see that unarmed civilians, who live in the main stream, cannot fight indefinitely in any social set up. Fanon recognizes peasantry as the most authentic

revolutionary group in the third world: The peasantry is systematically disregarded for the most by the propaganda put out by the nationalist parties. And it is, clear that in the colonial countries the peasants alone are revolutionary, for they have nothing to lose and everything to gain. The starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays. For him there is no compromise, no possible coming to terms; colonization and decolonization are simply a question of relative strength (Fanon, 1967, p.47) Fanon stresses the importance of lumpen proletariat i.e....the class of farmers who can fight the colonizers, but the National Liberation Movement understands it in complete reverse terms. Before embarking on the mission for Tabanyane, Cornelius meets JB a member of the Central Committee. From the beginning, JB suspects the decision to send Cornelius on such a mission, which requires a trained and seasoned man. He objects to Cornelius career of disruptive activities, and his preference for nationalism, instead of international socialism, besides that his failure in marital life, and heavy drinking rendered him an emotional wreck. The separation in Cornelius's life has led him to periodic outbursts, and emotional breakdowns. Though Cornelius is unwilling JB convinces him to go to Tabanyane. A critic writes "... the main character, is something of an urban dandy, very much the figure of 1960's township life ...a practiced speaker at political rallies despite being cool and cynical about the capacity of the movement to achieve anything.(Anonymous) He also speaks about the plans of the organization to highlight the disappearance of Cornelius, through public propaganda and the press. Cornelius Molapo gets instructions on how to disappear. There is a state of emergency in force, and abductions and missing are very normal. National Liberation Movement would campaign that Cornelius has been held incommunicado. They would file a habeas corpus petition. JB asks Cornelius to contact Princess Madi the daughter of the deposed Chief, in Tabanyane to co-ordinate his activities. After the willful disappearance of Cornelius Molapo, his Head master and one of his drinking companions searches here and there, and even enquires Maureen, the estranged wife of Cornelius. Finally, he arranges a press conference and gives extensive coverage to the disappearance of Cornelius. The incident figures in the Human Rights International report with a title, State Crimes: East and West. The Head Master searches for Cornelius out of affection and concern, but he becomes a pawn in the game plan of National Liberation Movement. Tabanyane movement has its origins in the displacement of lands. Government has asked Chief of Tabanyane to cede the ancestral lands

of the people for industrial expansion and development. He has opposed the proposal, and amid rumours of Government crackdown, he has started mobilizing people. Government has sent a police force, deposed the Chief Seiso, and installed his authoritarian brother Sekala Seiso as a puppet in his place. The deposed Chief dies of stroke, and the Government declares emergency, which leads to unleashing of terror. The struggle intensifies between the displaced farmers who have taken up arms, and the new Chief backed by the police force. This movement has spontaneously turned against the Government. Now, it must be taken over by the National Liberation Movement, under the leadership of Cornelius. The National Liberation Movement's strategy is to expand their base in new areas. The depiction of land struggle in the story is not routinely taken up by Nkosi, under the influence of Fanon, he recognizes it as an essential issue in the struggle against colonization: For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all dignity (Fanon, 1967, P.34) Nkosi's presentation of repression in Tabanyane recalls postmodernist theorist and Marxist thinker Louis Althusser's description of 'Repressive State Apparatus', which says that the state uses its organs like police, army or military and use violence to (maintain its diktat) continue its sway. In the novel Chief Sekala, and his men and the police forces act as 'Repressive State Apparatus' to wipe out the resistance movement. It is a known fact, that Nkosi is an admirer of Mandela. In this novel, even for the names of places, he draws from the life of Mandela. Transkei is a place of Mandela's home and South Africa's largest peasant Reserve. Similarly, Tabanyane the countryside town and birth place of Cornelius Molapo matches the real life details of Mandela. He manages to reach Tabanyane amid heavy police surveillance. There he meets Princess Madi the daughter of the deposed Chief. In the conversation Princess Madi criticizes National Liberation Movement and tells about the resistance movement: Our people don't understand your revolutionary slogans, but they do understand one thing. Land is the mother and father of our nation (Nkosi, 2002, p.163) National Liberation Movement is conventional in outlook not caring the ground realities, but based heavily on theories. National Liberation Movements is blind to see the vital role for peasantry, but egoistic in its position to supply leadership to peasants in Tabanyane. Princess Madi firmly opposes this very idea. Fanon in his theories predicts that rural peasantry would lead urban war. Cornelius needs the help and co-operation of the Princess, in building a people's resistance into a revolutionary struggle. He

addresses her: our Royal Highness, ...the National Liberation Movement is a coalition of many diverse forces; it is a mixture of various Political elements and factions with different shades of opinion, of people who are united only in their main objectives. ...From time to time, many voices are hard within it, disruptive, irresponsible voices which purport to speak in the name of National Liberation Movement. We do not necessarily agree with all such voices, but our policy is not to carry out our squabbles in public. (Nkosi, 2002, p.163-164) However she suspects that National Liberation Movement has a hidden agenda, in the veil of resistance movement. She believes that National Liberation Movement wants to carry out its programme of international socialism. She asks him whether Cornelius Molapo is a communist. He replies: Your Royal Highness, I don't know what communism is. I know only what the South African government says it is. Those of who demand justice; ...those of us who demand the implementation of the democratic principle of one man one vote; those of us who fight for the freedom of movement and association, and for a fair share of the land and the wealth which comes from this land; those of us who want all South Africans, black and white, to marry whom they like and to live where they like; those are the people the government calls communists, and they are.... banned, banished, imprisoned, tortured murdered and maimed in the name of suppression of communism. ...if asking for the right of our people to be fairly represented in the political institutions of our country and to have security of employment is communism, then I am a communist. (Nkosi, 2002, p.165) Nkosi is not a communist, and expresses his unpleasantness at it. Nkosi follows Mandela in this aspect, and is impatient with solidarity criticism which aims at making art subservient to political struggle. With his eloquence and emotion Molapo convinces Princess of his sincerity. She welcomes him like a long lost brother. After reaching Tabanyane, Molapo spends about nine months adjusting to the life in the mountains and forest. He is a commander of local guerrilla fighters, which mostly consists peasants and uneducated workers. Simultaneously another team under the leadership of Thekwane works in the area. The men of Cornelius are not educated, but are starving uneducated illiterates, and classless idlers as described by Fanon. His deputy is Phiri, the other members are Ngo, Rathebe, Red Ramusi and Matebesi. As Cornelius tries to establish links with the leaders of Tabanyane Movement Phiri sometimes leads attacks on the isolated targets of Sekala. Minor disagreements often surface as fighters regard themselves independent and treat Cornelius as a hired commissar. Even Phiri, the deputy resents any authority or control over him, and sometimes has to

be mollified by the Princess for Cornelius. With the passage of time, Cornelius begins to deal with men and matters more easily, the need for intervention by the Princess, to sort out issues becomes less and less. More men begin to join under the leadership of Cornelius. Though Cornelius is their leader with indisputable knowledge and intelligence, the other guerilla fighters merely regard him as a teacher, who is known to the luxuries of city life. Of course, there are reasons for their opinion. He is easily tired during the long walks in the bush and slows them down. During sleep at night, sometimes he wakes up screaming because of nightmares. They hurriedly get from the sleep and are unable to sleep again. They wonder how National Liberation Movement has sent him, to take on formidable Sekala. Phiri tells everyone that Cornelius is a woman for his inability to endure pain and troubles. Cornelius writes poetry in the evening to pass time, while men share stories. He is soft, easily tired, and tight-lipped. The reasons for their disposition towards Cornelius are natural. Here Fanon says that the country people are suspicious of townsman, because the latter dresses like a European; and he speaks the European's language. (Fanon, 1967, p.89) One day an aero plane drops arms across the border on a river bed for the use of guerrillas. Cornelius and his men bring the load on their shoulders. He appears tired and restless. The load on his shoulders seems more than enough for him. Phiri asks him to take rest for a while, and start again;

"Listen, it is not necessary to play the hero before us.

We all know that a teacher like you is not

accustomed to heavy labour" (Nkosi, 2002, p.177).

When Cornelius turns down his offer of rest, Phiri shouts: 'you are no lion' (Nkosi, 2002, p.178). His miserable condition evokes only laughter and contempt rather than sympathy. Upon their return with arms load they accidentally take a Whiteman and a girl as hostages. The Whiteman was Gert Potgeiter a rich farmer. Old Ngo, who has worked as a labourer recognizes him. Based on the evidence deposed by Ngo, Cornelius declares that Gert Potgeiter, who has beaten black workers mercilessly on his farm, 'guilty' and asks Ngo to slap him. As a revolutionary, Cornelius understands well the importance of this small act. This is a symbolic act of repayment for the ill treatment of native by his oppressors. Cornelius, the intellectual among the revolutionary peasants, is well read and aware of the need to uplift the morale of the native, and root out the inferiority in him by using violence, however slightest it is against the oppressors. Precisely for this reason he asks Ngo to slap Potgieter, his former employer. The influence of Fanon is evident: At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It

frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect (Fanon, 1967, P.34) The unexpected taking of White hostages, causes mixed emotions in the fighters. They have an idea to have the girl in turns, but Cornelius rebukes them. As for Cornelius, he has relations with many women, first at the university and later with Maureen and Margot; he does not allow any idea about Kristina the White girl, into his mind. In a spur of the moment decisions, he could have decided to allow the men to rape Kristina, or he could have committed the offence himself. However, his life in the bush, his commitment to the cause saves him from the peril. This situation shows Cornelius in good stead of the combat unit. Phiri who has been at loggerheads with him reposes confidence in him. While others too realize that Cornelius is better skilled, ideologically well fed, and morally balanced to deal with such situations. Lewis says this character was partly inspired by Can Themba, whose eloquence and passion he remembers from his Drum days. (Administrator 2002) Colonel De Kock is one of the characters in the novel, who is racially prejudiced, arrogant and a morally degenerate White police officer. He is incharge of Tabanyane Police Station and supervises the operations against the resistance fighters. He detests natives and treats them contemptuously. Every day from his house, he sees the hills and valleys in the distant area; he is under 'an obscure conviction that God had put the Whiteman here for a purpose.'(Nkosi 2002, p.75) Owing to the continued efforts of National Liberation Movement, the Human Rights International responds and asks its official Anthony Ferguson to go to South Africa to investigate the disappearance of a revolutionary, named Cornelius Molapo. Anthony Ferguson is a South African White settled in England fifteen years ago. He reaches South Africa to investigate the disappearance. As part of his enquiry Anthony meets JB the Central Committee member. He intentionally misguides Anthony. He knows well that Cornelius is not in detention, but actively fighting in Tabanyane. Again with a tone of sarcasm he says about Cornelius Molapo

"A man of exceptional intelligence and political courage. What's more a great poet of the masses" (Nkosi, 2002, p.131)

Even the Central Committee members, who have sent Cornelius to Tabanyane, do not want him to succeed in his mission. When they learn that not only Cornelius received the arms consignment without any trouble, and has taken two White hostages, they immediately want to use the hostages for the possible release of Dabula Amanzi, their leader in prison. For this, they want to observe ceasefire through the country, including Tabanyane. The revolutionary

party, instead of fighting against the government, tries to come out of it, through compromise and concessions. The attitude of National Liberation Movement, recalls the lines of Fanon:

“... inside the nationalist parties, the will to break colonialism is linked with another quite different: that of coming to a friendly agreement with it”

(Fanon, 1967, P.98)

As per the carefully conceived plan of National Liberation Movement, Cornelius is fighting in Tabanyane against Sekala. Another facet to the plan, roping in Human Rights International and its official into the trap works well. Anthony starts searching all the prisons and police stations for Molapo. Lewis Nkosi presents the contrast between the aspirations of the people or resistance fighters, and the Central Committee, the policy makers of the revolution. Everywhere in the world, where battles are being fought over in the name of revolution, there is a widening gap between the fighters and their leadership. National Liberation Movement's latest shift is the release of Dabula Amanzi from Robben Island; in return, it wants to observe ceasefire which would ultimately result in negotiations between the government and National Liberation Movement. Both Thekwane and Cornelius feel that they are being let down on this count. They are fighting on the instructions of National Liberation Movement, and helped it to realize its goal of spreading discontent and unrest in other parts of the country. The goal of Tabanyane people is to fight Chief Sekala and to regain their lands. Though countrywide revolution is not their programme of action, they have joined National Liberation Movement, but in the end, their dream is being sacrificed. This pains both Thekwane and Cornelius, and the latter particularly, because he is born and brought up in Tabanyane. They are on the verge of breaking away from National Liberation Movement on the issue of ceasefire. Thekwane explains: Very soon ...we are going to be asked to sit down at the table and sup with the same devil who has murdered hundreds of our innocent people and has made martyrs of many of our brave freedom fighters (Nkosi 2002, p.225) Notwithstanding the decision of National Liberation Movement to suspend operations, the two men decide to continue their fight. This surprises Thekwane, who has never expected Cornelius to confer to this decision, because he has been reluctant in the past with the life in the bush. He tells Thekwane: You forget I belong as much to the Tabanyane Resistance now as I belong to the NLM. Another thing. I am not a stranger here. I was born in Tabanyane. As long as that murderous scoundrel Sekala remains paramount Chief of Tabanyane our struggle goes on much as before, with or without the NLM (Nkosi, 2002, p.226) This

metamorphosis of Cornelius from a teacher, poet, and a part-time revolutionary to a committed and dedicated guerrilla underground fighter is wonderful. Cornelius Molapo realizes by the end that only a violent struggle liberates his people, but not his poetry and literature. The decision of the National Liberation Movement to suspend military operations against Sekala in Tabanyane is a dilution of their cause. The character of Molapo can be likened with the hero of Sembene Ousmane's *Bakayoka*, in *God's Bits of Wood*, who plays an intellectual with his bookish knowledge, in the trade union. Where Nkosi differs, is the transformation of Molapo into a true revolutionary in the end. Like *Bakayoka*, who has a particular fancy to speak French, Molapo has a fancy to read Hegel, play cricket and write poetry. The people of Tabanyane now have to fight against two forces, one the racist government, another anti-people Central Committee of National Liberation Movement. Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* is immense on Nkosi's *Underground People*, in the former, Fanon elaborates at length the role to be played by the writer or intellectual, who becomes the voice of the people in their struggle against colonialism. Cornelius's criticism of National Liberation Movement is modeled on Fanon's vision of the individual: 'they (the intellectuals) will begin to criticize their party's lack of ideology and the poverty of its tactics and strategy.' (Fanon, 1967, p.98) Raffella Vancini observes, with real life comparison: With much sophistication, the author manages, to bring to the surface the 'sins' of the NLM, a fanciful version of ANC, that like former is shown to include two types of underground people: those that were branded socialists and those with a nationalist imprint. (Vancini, 2006, p.200) The portrayal of the party also reminds the reader, of the developments in Nepal, and the bitter struggle that is being waged for power, between a 'once revolutionary party' that has abandoned armed struggle, and the parliamentary parties. The National Liberation Movement in South Africa, in its blind commitment to international socialism ignores ground realities. It fails to understand the mechanics of revolution in a colonized state. Thekwane and Cornelius carry out their attack on Tabanyane police station meticulously. After the attack, Cornelius wants to mix with the villagers in Tabanyane. He wants to stay with them until the excitement dies down. The attack on Tabanyane has its repercussions too. Government views that it cannot happen without the support of outside force, and suspects the hand of Princess Madi and National Liberation Movement. Next day Anthony is called to the police station, he expects that Molapo would be produced there. Much to his astonishment he finds a White couple who were set

free by the resistance fighters. The couple recognized Cornelius and confirmed his presence in Tabanyane and his role in the attack. The police now suspect that Anthony's presumed lookout for Cornelius is part of a big drama, and Anthony's compliance is suspected. He is interrogated for four hours. Police ask Anthony to travel to Tabanyane and convince Cornelius to surrender, in order to vindicate himself from this affair. When Anthony meets JB, he again plays foul. He lies that he is not aware of the presence of Cornelius in Tabanyane, and expresses willingness to accompany Anthony, as his driver to Tabanyane. JB's intentions are very clear. It is obvious that, Cornelius is out of the control of National Liberation Movement by mounting attacks on Tabanyane police station and hotels, and has become self styled and is pursuing his own course. JB decides to convince Cornelius of the Central Committee's decision to observe ceasefire for the release of Dabula Amanzi. Both Anthony and JB reach the shelter zone of Cornelius with the help of police Chief De Kock who surrounds them with a police team. JB tries to convince Cornelius, to surrender. He tries to convince Cornelius that it is better to surrender to government rather than die in the firing. He also tells Cornelius that he may not be hanged but likely to get an amnesty. Finally, he begs Cornelius:

"I'm begging you, Corny. Give up your weapons. I repeat, you won't be to get out of here alive if you do not surrender" (Nkosi, 2002, p.259).

By this time Cornelius fully understands the true nature of Central Committee, and its plan to come to a compromise with the Government. Then Cornelius replies: JB you sound more and more like a junior partner in some future political arrangement. Our answer to all that is: No! ... you might say I've grown into the job, so to speak. I'm sticking with the people of Tabanyane until justice is done to them (Nkosi, 2002, p.260) As persuasion fails, JB calls Cornelius mad, and then Cornelius explains his reasons for staying with the people: You're wrong, JB. I've always lived with the people. Even before I became a combatant that was my strength. It's my strength now. On the contrary, its people like you, sitting in offices, taking decisions behind closed doors, who will always betray the people. (Nkosi, 2002, p.261) Cornelius categorically says to Anthony: ...we have no desire to lay down arms. Our experience of South African conditions in jail and the men we have to deal with, whether it's De Kock or that murderous killer Sekala is that laying down arms does not pay. (Nkosi, 2002, p.261) The role for manipulators power brokers has ceased. Both Cornelius and Thekwane have understood, that only struggle would solve their problems. The conclusion of the novel is on the lines of vision, envisaged by Fanon: Illuminated by

violence, the consciousness of the people rebels against any pacification. From now on the demagogues, the opportunists and the magicians have a difficult task. (Fanon, 1967, p.74) The bloodthirsty police Chief De Kock are ready to shoot the guerrillas if they do not surrender. The novel ends with indiscriminate firing; Anthony falls on the ground to cover himself, Dekock helps him rise. It is not suggested that Cornelius has perished in the firing, but the survival of De Kock points to the upper hand of the police, over guerrillas. De Kock's final comments suggest the ensuing struggle, to be fought by black and whites for power, in South Africa. Jane Rosenthal writes,

"Written in a swift and engaging style, this multi-layered novel moves from wonderfully observed characters and situations to theoretical discussions".

(Rosenthal 2003)

After careful examination of the novel *Underground People*, it is obvious that it has been modeled on the philosophy of Frantz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Fanon, shows the ways to end colonialism, elaborates on the role of the proletariat, and the revolutionary peasantry. He recognizes the peasantry, much to the disbelief of his critics, as possessing the potential to stir revolution in rural areas, and spill over it into urban areas. Fanon believes that rural peasantry is conscious of the class differences in the society, and stresses the cleansing function of violence. He believed that violence and struggle was the appropriate strategy for solving the problems of the people. The belief of Nkosi in Fanon's philosophy seems to have played a role in shaping the characters of Cornelius and Thekwane, who reject the idea of ceasefire with South African police and the offer of talks between National Liberation Movement and government, and instead opt to fight for the people. They do not heed to the suggestion of Central Committee for restraint, and their attacks on select targets of Meerdal Hotel, and on the police station of Tabanyane, is the result of their belief in struggle and violence. When JB tries to convince Cornelius, the latter's refusal firm and leaves no room for further discussions. He accuses JB of compromise, and as a partner in the future agreement. He views JB and other members of Central Committee as retrogressive in revolutionary movement. His prevention of JB from returning is to prevent the people's movement from being cheated further. After all, he is a native of Tabanyane only he could understand them better. He would continue the struggle with or without the National Liberation Movement. Maureen Issacson says

"That the novel probes the sanctity of struggle heroes." (Issacson 2003)

The journey into the Tabanyane should be seen as an

opportunity to learn from the people. But the retrogressive Central Committee views that time spent with the masses would be a fitting lesson for Cornelius to cure his criticism about the party's ideology and policies. The criticism of party by Cornelius, is a feature of the intellectual of Fanon in a colonized country (Fanon, 1967, p.98) As for Cornelius, he becomes heroic by defying the NLM's decision. One critic writes

"Nkosi goes beyond protest literature, because he places more importance on the characterization of the main protagonists within the struggle ..." (Vancini 2006, p.203)

The transformation of Cornelius is not sudden; Fanon elaborates on the role to be played by the native intellectual in a colonized country. In the first phase native assimilates the culture of the occupying power, similarly Cornelius speaks English, reads Hegel, writes love poetry, plays cricket and stays in a city. In the second phase, he comes into contact with his own culture and gets disturbed. Cornelius joins Tabanyane movement, lives in the bush, and

understands the troubles of the people. In the third and final phase, he becomes an awakener of people and attaches himself to the people. The three women characters Hazel, Kristina Kemp and Princess Madi are not important except Princess Madi. She stands above the two, she realizes her belongingness to Africa and refuses betrothal with an English Prince, and dedicates herself to the service of the people of Tabanyane. She even supports the struggle of the people and leads it. Perhaps she is one of the best woman portrayals of South African fiction, in which depiction of women as revolutionaries is rare. The novel *Underground People* seems to be a self-conscious reply of Nkosi, against the criticism for his first novel, *Mating Birds*. He satisfies both his literary and political critics. Nkosi with this novel shows himself, not as an armchair theorist, but as an intellectual who supports armed struggle of the people. Finally, this novel establishes Nkosi, as a creative artist who could write with post-modern literary techniques and blend postcolonial theories in his fiction.

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