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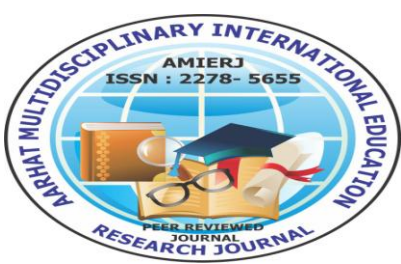
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Lewis Nkosi's *Underground People*: an Exposition of Racialism in South Africa

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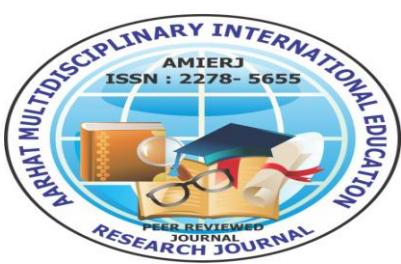
Abstract:

Lewis Nkosi is a vital Black writer in the present-day South African epoch. He noted for his novels Mating Birds (1986), Underground People (2002) and Mandela's Ego (2006). His famous novel Underground People is focused on two characters, Black Cornelius Molapo and White Anthony Fergusson. He is the Black teacher, poet and good speaker in Johannesburg and chairman of local National Liberation Movement. The second one is the White South African Anthony Fergusson who lives in London. This movement works against the racialism of the contemporary White government. He deliberately disappeared from the movement and sent on the Tabanyane mountainous expedition. He fought with the White government for the Black natives until his death.

Key words: *Racialism, Exposition, Apartheid, Exploitation, Racial conflict.*

This paper attempts to analyze the racial conflict in the novel of Lewis Nkosi's *Underground People*. He is one of the famous writers in the realm of racialism in South Africa. He lived during apartheid period. He becomes successful in depicting a real picture of South African society. The theme of his novels encircles around the race, racism and racial conflict. He tries to expose the effects of racialism on human being through his writings.

Disappearance, abduction, kidnapping became a daily routine in South Africa during apartheid policy was ruling over it. This happened with our hero, Cornelius Molapo, also. He is the representative of all Black natives, who raised a voice against racialism. Various incidents show that, how Black natives endures racialism in their daily life. National Liberation Movement works against the racist White minority government. The movement

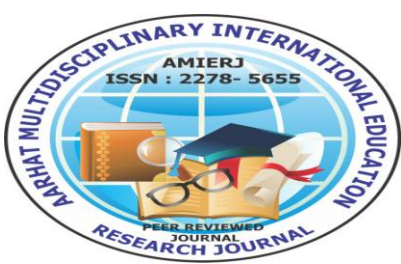


made a formal proposal to the Human Rights International in London, to help them to find Molapo.

Therefore, the movement sent a White man, Anthony Fergusson for investigating Molapo's case. He knows that there is a war going between Black and White. He met Black Joe Bulane in Johannesburg, who is a Black lawyer, in charge of Molapo's case and eminent person in the National Liberation Movement. Disappearing Molapo summoned to appear on a new secret address of the movement. There is a special reason behind his disappearing. Actually, the movement has assigned a new work to Molapo. He is chosen by the movement because of his talency. Bulane said him as, "As you know, Corney, we've brought you into this thing right from the start because of our deep knowledge of the Tabanyane people, their customs, their language, and of course, their terrain. Your familiarity with the people and their ways will be an invaluable asset in the execution of your mission" (58).

Like the National Liberation Movement there is Tabanyane Resistance Movement at Tabanyane mountainous area. A Black union leader in Tabanyane who gives a training to handle all kinds of weapons. Tabanyane land is wanted by the White Pretoria Government. Consequently, they begin ceasing lands from the natives of Tabanyane for the White's inhabitation. There was local resistance group in Tabanyane which works against both the usurper Sekala Seeiso and Pretoria government. Sekala is a Black usurper who exploits and troubles his own people. It means that there are some Black people like him who work against their own people. South African government permits to the Pretoria government to grab lands of the blacks. Thus, South African government is totally responsible for the Black's condition. It means that Whites have authority to take the Black native's land. It happened due to apartheid policy only. The novelist described Molapo as: "He had become part of a vast underground network conspiring to overthrow the Government by violent mean" (69).

Tabanyane is a place at the end of the world and the last settlement between Johannesburg and the border. There is a terrible violence spread over Tabanyane which causes armed clashes between Paramount chief Sekala's home guards and members of Tabanyane Resistance Movement. Molapo takes an experience about the real fact which told



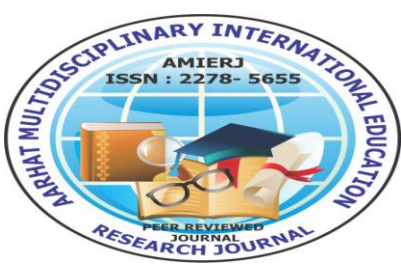
to him by Joe Bulane as: “As long as there had been trouble between white farmers and the Tabanyane people who year after year watched helplessly while their best land was grabbed by the Land Commission and reallocated for white settlement.”(156).

Tabanyane peoples are aware about it so they began to oppose their ruler. They tired by daily beatings, hut burnings, rape and murder. There is Princess Madi who takes a charge of leadership of the Tabanyane campaign against Paramount Chief Sekala. Once, Molapo and Phiri saw white lovers under the bush. They become very happy take both of them as hostages. But, White doesn't agree to leave his supremacy over Blacks. Kristina frightens and looses her faith on the White man. Still White man refuses to tell his name at the first time, whereas he shouted as,

You know very well why not. I'm white. You're black. Listen, I can see you are someone with some education. You must be intelligent. A man in your position, you know very well you can't just go around asking white men...you can't.... 'You can't ask me questions and you know why! I'm white and you're only a kaffir! (213-14)

When Ngo sees Gert, become very furious. He is a former Black worker in his farm. Gert exploits him so much. As he saw Ngo, pleaded to save him. Gert is very cruel and an evil man. Ngo told them about Gert as, once he worked on his farm once, “Ngo admitted, recovering from his shock, Then as if finally released from his dream, he said:’ This was an evil white man. He used to beat his workers every day. If we didn't fill up with maize the allocated number of bags the white man was always there behind us with his *sjambok!* (222).

Racial conflict begins in South Africa. Another members tied both of them to a tree slashed him with birch and smacked, kicked him. But, Gert didn't ready to leave his superiority of color and race over them. On the other side, the Tabanyane Police station becomes a small armed camp. Uniformed officers dragged Black criminals at the police station. There are so many reasons behind the attack; nothing in hands of Black except of do



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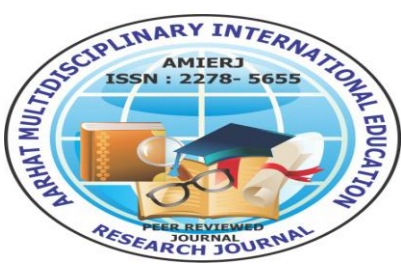
this one as the assassination of a white farmer in Tabanyane. He was an evil man who also exploited and murdered his workers on the farm. So, he deserves for it.

The black people want to get relief from all this trouble, perpetually. It means guerrilla wanted to kill that entire people who exploited them. Anthony got permission to travel at Tabanyane. The National Liberation Movement gave responsibility to him to persuade all guerrillas to surrender. Lieutenant colonel Adam De Kock is in charge of the mission. The government wants to crush all freedom fighters. These are fine examples of exposition of racialism. Bulane has wished to stop the attacks and saves Molapo from it.

Molapo has an experience about prison officer's ill treatment in the prison. So he didn't ready to surrender. Bulane and Anthony requested Molapo repeatedly. Bulane says him as, "We had to get here as quickly as we could before those buggers started shooting at you. Corney, you and your men have walked straight into the arms of De Kock and the SADF. And, Corney, there is no time to lose. I advise you to put away your weapons and follow me I'll explain later!" (301).

Whatever may be happens with Molapo, but he doesn't ready to go into white man's jail. Whereas he says to Anthony, "So tell Adam de Kock we refuse to surrender. Tell De Kock he can go and suck his cock. Tell De Kock he can go and suck his jail. De Kock will have only our dead bodies to send to prison. Tell him that"(305). It is a fine example of devotion and sacrifice of the Black natives. Molapo is truly a great freedom fighter. He was shot by police force during gun firing. De Kock said. 'Go back to England. Go anywhere you like, but go away from here. Here you will always be in the way. In South Africa the war has only just begun' (306). Hence, the racial conflicts begin in South Africa. It was just beginning.

Thus, the novel is an excellent picture of exposition of Racialism in South Africa.



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