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**Is Fanon Relevant? Translations, the postcolonial imagination and the second stage of total liberation**  
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*The state of emergency is also always a state of **emergence**.* (Bhabha)

*The rich speak about us as we get poorer.* (Zikode)

At the conclusion of my article “Relative Opacity: A New Translation of Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth*—Mission Betrayed of Fulfilled”<sup>1</sup> I wrote the following:

To speak of Fanon’s relevancy and timeliness, perhaps we should be cognizant that our moment seems so far past Fanon’s presuppositions, let alone his dialectic of revolution. What could Frantz Fanon possibly say to Africa at this moment when the revolutionary presuppositions are apparently off the table? So the question is not what can be ‘saved’ in Fanon, but what can be saved in Africa that a revolutionary theoretician like Fanon could possibly speak to and that is so out of place with both the dominant World Bank ‘pro-poor’ rhetoric and the postcolonial discourses concerned with hybrid émigré identity. The issue of reading Fanon today, then, is perhaps not about finding the moment of relevance in Fanon’s text that corresponds with the world, but in searching for the moments where Fanon’s text and the world do not correspond, and asking how Fanon, the revolutionary, would think and act in this period of retrogression. The issue is not so much about decentering Fanon but decentering the world. But even if the book is out of place, or perhaps moreover out of joint with the world, the point is to find, in a Fanonian sense, the truth in social movements of lower and deeper segments of humanity.

Certainly, the fact that contemporary globalization is considered by many a new form of colonialism, the fact that the Manicheism of the cold war has been replaced by the Manicheism of the ‘war on terror’, gives credibility to Fanon’s analysis of colonial Manicheism as a global phenomenon. But Fanon’s continued ‘relevance’ is not simply articulated in the Manichean statements of a Bush and a Bin Laden. Rather we should begin from the most critical of Fanon’s insights into the postcolonial period and his critique of the nationalist bourgeoisie and the postcolonial petit bourgeoisie.

One place that Fanon’s analysis has taken on a new life is in post-apartheid South Africa where it has been deemed directly applicable. In fact, it seems that the ‘reality’ of neoliberal post-apartheid South Africa has simply been following Fanon’s text.<sup>35</sup> But rather than an ontological optimism based on the revolutionary potential of the peasantry or an ontological pessimism based on the ‘betrayal’ of the nationalist middle class,<sup>36</sup> the Fanonian dialectic not only details the counter-revolution within the revolution but also a new consciousness. As he writes of the intolerable poverty into which the people stagnate, Fanon adds that ‘the masses . . . are never convinced that their lives have changed, despite the festivities and the flags.’<sup>2</sup> Indeed, they ‘slowly become aware of the unspeakable treason of their leaders.’<sup>3</sup> This awareness is becoming apparent in South

Africa where new social movements among the poor have emerged, directly criticizing the 'failures' of the leaders and government. The depth of 'Fanonian' critique articulated, for example, in the shack dwellers movements, by those who have absolutely nothing, whose lives are a daily state of emergency and, in the most Fanonian sense, represent the truth of bread and land, judging wealth not only by indoor plumbing, taps and toilets but also human dignity. As S'bu Zikode, one of the leaders of Abahli baseMjondolo (literally people who live in shacks), sees the history of South African liberation: 'the first Nelson Mandela was Jesus Christ. The second was Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. The third Mandela was the poor people of the world.'<sup>4</sup>

The statement resonated throughout the settlements. The poors weren't Christs, but Christ was the first Mandela, the first liberator. The poors are now their own liberators. Jesus Christ is first Mandela who was reborn and articulated a new heaven on earth. Mandela is the identity and mediating figure grounding liberation firmly on South African soil. His long imprisonment during apartheid is a metaphor for the nation just as his release is identified with the birth of a new South Africa. Yet the failure of the historical Mandela, the leader, to realize South Africa's liberation necessitates the birth of a new Mandela: the poor. In this subtle critique of Mandela's leadership, the poor were taking issues into their own hands they become their own Mandelas. Truth emanated from their own experiences.

In other words, 'the poors'<sup>5</sup> are the truth, and have named the shackdweller's movement a university because they 'think their own struggles' and 'are not poor in mind.'<sup>6</sup> Some intellectuals understand this, some don't, continues Zikode. This is exactly one of the problematics Fanon articulates in *The Wretched*, which remains so pertinent today and yet is so patently absent from Bhabha's new foreword to the work.

Bhabha concludes his foreword with a quote from page 135 (mistakenly noted as p.122 in Bhabha's text) from *The Wretched*: '[T]ime must no longer be that of the moment or the next harvest but rather of the rest of the world'. On the same page Fanon articulates his idea of independence and nation building as a process that is quite in contrast to any technicist solution. The process is long and painstaking but it is a wonderful articulation of Fanon's challenge to intellectuals, aid activists and policy makers that it is worth quoting in full:

In an undeveloped country experience proves that the important point is not that three hundred people understand and decide but that all understand and decide, even if it takes twice or three times as long. In fact the time it takes to explain, the time 'lost' humanizing the worker, will be made up in execution. People must know where they are going and why . . . [T]his lucidity must remain deeply dialectical. The awakening of the people will not be achieved overnight; their rational commitment to the task of building the nation will be simple and straightforward; first of all, because the methods and channels of communication are still in the development stages; secondly, because the sense of time must no longer be that of the moment or the next harvest but rather the rest of the world; and finally, because the demoralization buried deep within the mind by colonization is still very much alive.

Today I don't want to leave it at that. Since one issue tonight is translation, let me give you a quite different translation of Fanon into today's reality. I refer to a concrete expression of Fanon's politics as a critique of national consciousness and the need to develop "the second phase of total liberation" as he puts it in his 1958 article, "First Truths on the Colonial Problem." This article has a contemporary resonance since it speaks of how "the economic battles between France, England and the United States in the Middle East ... give the measure of the imperialist voracity and bestiality.... Today in Lebanon and in Iraq, if we are to believe Mr. Malraux, it is *homo occidentalis* who is threatened," which has a resonance with contemporary discourses about the clash of civilizations. Fanon goes on, speaking specifically: "The oil of Iraq has removed all prohibitions and made concrete the true problems ... The Marines who today are being landed in Beirut are the brothers of those who, periodically are sent to reestablish 'order' in Haiti, Costa Rica and Panama." But Fanon goes on to argue—and I suggest you read the whole piece yourself which is in *Toward the African Revolution*—that the Monroe doctrine (the doctrine that America belongs to the American or as he puts it "the state department") is proving insufficient. America seeks global domination.

The problem for the anti-colonial liberation struggles, which were fought in this context, is that they are exchanging political independence for economic dependence. Such a position today—in this increasingly integrated world—seems almost impossible to comprehend but he says it is a "capital one" precisely because the "future of everyone today has a relation of close dependence on the rest of the universe."

The importance of the "second phase of the total liberation" is rearticulated and expanded on in the *Wretched*. It is essentially a class perspective. A position, he says demanded by the masses because it looks from the ground up, that is to say it is not simply seeking the political kingdom as Nkrumah argued (and we should remember that Ghana had just gained independence when Fanon wrote the article) but a different kind of politics from below that opens up questions of economics to human needs.

While Homi Bhabha essentially dismissing such a politics as outdated if not dangerous and reduces economics, the whole issue of "underdevelopment," to technology, Fanonian resonances can be heard in the contemporary shackdwellers struggles in South Africa where as I mention in the article the "simple fact" of *Wretched*—namely that that the poor, unemployed, and landless do not look for the truth but are the truth—finds new concretization in the articulation of a needed "second phase of total liberation."

First, I want to listen to the shackdwellers and see what you hear. First let's listen to a press statement by Philani Zungu (November 22, 2006), the deputy President of the Durban Shackdwellers' movement, Abahlali baseMjondolo:

I hope that one day it will be realised by our government officials how much betrayal they have served to the floors on which they stand and where they belong. It is very sad that our politicians forget that their power started with people like us, people like the red shirts. Their silk suits come from older struggles, from other people struggling then like we do know in the yellow shirts of the UDF and the unions. When they were coming into power they told us that the only colour that mattered was the colour of the skin. But the

black men in silk suits do not work for us. They work for the rich – black and white. They say that they are working to give us service delivery. They are really working to deliver us to the rich – to smash our informal shacks and either leave us homeless or dump us in formal jondolos in the bush. It is the colour of the heart that matters. In our struggle we have learnt that people of different skin colours have red hearts. It is the colour of the heart that matters.

Freedom is the equalisation of all people.... It is very sad that the people we trusted the most, the people we gave a mandate to secure our freedom, seem not to understand what freedom is. They understood quite well in the struggle but now they no longer understand. It is quite that the struggle is not over. We cannot just wait for service delivery. *We are in a second phase of struggle.* Older struggles put our people in the silk suits. Now our struggle, the second phase of struggle, has to force the men in silk suits to work for the poor and not the rich (my emphasis).

The President of the Durban Shackdwellers' movement, Abahlali's baseMjondolo's, is the 30-year-old gas attendant S'bu Zikode. A father of four who has lived in the shacks for over 10 years he is a former boy scout from a small rural town who gained distinction at school but had no money for university. In 1993 he came to Durban and rented a shack in Kennedy Road. He got a job a gas station and was able to attend the University at Durban-Westville during the very short period after the end of apartheid of reduced student fees.<sup>7</sup> In 2001 he was elected chair of the Kennedy Road Development Committee and before that the chair of the Claire Estate Slum Clearance Project. He speaks of trying "so-called diplomacy" and recounts how he approached high profile members of the ruling party and tried to make deals about access to basic human necessities. But now he says it was "all in vain."<sup>8</sup>

Over the past year he has gained national prominence, appearing on TV shows, radio, and in the national and local print media with his words being reprinted in pop-culture magazines with a combined circulation of 5 million.<sup>9</sup> S'bu Zikode might be the Abahlali philosopher, indeed he articulates the struggle as "thought on the ground running," but he has rigorously resisted calls to run for local government or to be the spokesperson of the movement. He maintains that the problems are more systemic.<sup>10</sup> After his arrest on September 12, 2006, Zikode was asked if he wanted people to protest outside the police station, as they were determined to do, or to make a tactical retreat in the hope of calming the police down. He replied that it was "Up to them! I am fighting for them. Not for myself." In other words, he sees himself only as the people's servant, elected on their behalf and subject to recall.

Zikode has developed a knack of talking over the head of the government to the whole country and his message has been picked up in the media. The challenge to the country therefore was not simply material. In other words, was that not what the struggle had been about, to create a new society where the people shall govern?

In response to their threat not to vote in the 2005 local election, ANC politicians accused Abahlali of being a "Third Force." The charge was picked up and expanded on in the popular press. The accusation is as outrageous as it is threatening since it associates the shackdwellers with the murderous apartheid-sponsored violence in the early 1990s, but

Zikode didn't deny it. Instead, he cleverly turned it back on his accusers and linked the struggle against apartheid to the struggle for basic necessities and spoke of the government's indifference to life in the shacks: "Government officials, politicians and intellectuals who speak about the Third Force have no idea what they are talking about. They are too high to really feel what we feel." Quite literally, high up in their offices they couldn't see the people "down here" – physically, conceptually, experientially. The reality was that the Third Force was something that the politicians could not understand: "We are driven by the Third Force, the suffering of the poor. Our betrayers are the Second Force. The First Force was our struggle against apartheid. The Third Force will stop when the Fourth Force comes. The Fourth Force is land, housing, water, electricity, health care, education, and work."<sup>11</sup>

In a tradition of liberation theology,<sup>12</sup> Zikode was quoted in an article in the *Mail & Guardian* on December 25<sup>th</sup> 2005, to remind people that there was no holiday in the shacks: "When the evening comes, it is always a challenge. The night is supposed to be for relaxing and getting rest. But not in the *jondolos*. People stay awake worrying about their lives. You must see how big the rats are that run across the babies." The point is that something had to get done. Abahlali had made its voice heard but apart from a small grant to help clean portable toilets little had in fact been won. Giving notice to the ANC that their vote could not be taken for granted, the shackdwellers decided to boycott the municipal elections.<sup>13</sup> Based on the equation "No land, no home, no vote," the shackdweller's decision was not simply a critique of local government policy. It also spoke to the content of democracy in post-apartheid South Africa. Abahlali said that it was no longer going to government offices to sit on "comfortable chairs" and listen to "crooks and liars." In the future, "they must come and sit with us where we live."<sup>14</sup> Because the idea of "politics" was "too high," because they saw it associated with city administration and elite decision making, the shackdwellers were speaking a different language that emanated from below and was thus grounded in the struggle of the everyday. They were concerned not with political strategies but principles that would emanate from an egalitarian moral discourse and democratic practice: "Our struggle is for moral questions, as compared to the political questions as such. It is more about justice ... is it good for shack dwellers to live in mud like pigs, as they are living? Why do I live in a cardboard house if there are people who are able to live in a decent house? So it is a moral question."<sup>15</sup>

### **Its own working existence: Participatory democracy in action**

*It is true that if care is taken to use only a language that is understood by graduates in law and economics, you can easily provide that the masses have to be managed from above. But if you speak the language of the everyday... then you will realize that the masses are quick to seize every shade of meaning... Everything can be explained to the people, on the single condition that you really want them to understand.*

Fanon

In a paper presented at the Centre for Civil Society at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Zikode explained that the shackdweller's conception of politics is not about political office. It is a politics, instead, of the masses in the language of the people. "Our politics is a traditional home politics which is understood very well by all the old mamas and gogos because it affects their lives and gives them a home." It is a language which all can speak and understand and thus creates a situation which is consciously collective. Zikode again: "we look after each other and think about the situation and plan our fight together." Zikode's notion is a challenge to the elite politics that has characterized the post-apartheid transition and its technicist aftermath. It not a question of empowerment along the lines of Black Economic Empowerment, or inclusion in terms of having a seat at the policy table, but a challenge to alienation inherent in the attitudes and proposals of the housing policy experts. An alienation that is a result of the elite attitude toward the poor as well as the poor's systemic exclusion from any policy decisions about them.<sup>16</sup>

Thus at first, the Kennedy Road movement saw itself as a movement unto itself. It was utterly divorced from any social movement or left discourse. A year later in the CCS presentation, Zikode directly links the self-activity of the shackdwellers not only to housing politics but also to national politics:

We believe that the housing policy does not only require housing specialists, rich consultants and government. We believe that housing policy requires most importantly, the people who need the houses. *But* [my emphasis] we also know, as poor communities and as Shackdwellers that the broader poor have no choice but to play a role in shaping and reshaping this country in to an anti-capitalist system.

This from a man, we should remember, who had no contact with left discourse and never would have spoken in such anti-systemic terms before the birth of the movement.

For shackdwellers, every day is a state of emergency but what changes that state of emergency into a state of emergence? When does the lid blow off, as Fanon puts it in the *Wretched of the Earth*? In other words, what is the "unique" event that heralds a new beginning? The question can only be answered in the field of practice, I suggest, the movement's birth has a long gestation.

The moment is not simply a product of mechanical forces. It appears spontaneous, local and specific. What allowed Kennedy Road to develop from a demonstration into a mass movement was the democratic organization that already existed. Almost at the same time, shackdwellers at another settlement, Cato Manor, took over the streets for a number of days. The police were able to quiet that revolt through sheer force and arrest of its leaders, but in Kennedy road, a more organized community that came together over similar arrests was able to support those arrested and in doing so was able to articulate the beginnings of a new movement.

The movement is defined by more than its "founding" event but the founding event has now become a story oft repeated.<sup>17</sup> Indeed that event is the nodal point, it is "new," but

here I am interested in how that moment becomes a moment, philosophically speaking, that is to say transcends the particular event in its quest of universality.

This “how to” is not a result of strategy or pragmatic practice, it is not reducible to issues of resource mobilization or the aid of outside forces or even necessarily in material success. In other words, the insistence on open meetings where all could speak and air out issues, coupled with the simplicity of demands and its moral suasion was expressed in its self-mobilization. The movement spread across the settlements through word of mouth and personal communication so that by the end of the year a new movement was born, Abahlali baseMjondolo, with a membership of 30,000. The will to growth is tempered by the importance of principle. Each shack settlement that joined has had to follow the democratic principles of Abahlali, thus expanding the democratic culture of the organization across the settlements. Each march required a number of general meetings, subcommittees meetings as well as communication between settlements. Press releases were written, discussed and distributed. Governed on a grass roots democratic basis, with meetings open to all adults (regardless of age, gender,<sup>18</sup> ethnicity, origin and length of time in residence) decisions are arrived at by consensus with an emphasis on the inclusive process of the meeting of “listening to others ideas” and about “being together.”<sup>19</sup>

At the same time autonomous movement has remained very suspicious of outsiders trying to speak for it or take it over. But also it has come to learn who its friends and who its real enemies are. At its birth a few activist academics at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, who believed that the poor should speak for themselves, helped to put the shackdwellers in touch with lawyers and have helped write press releases. These people became trusted through their acts of support.<sup>20</sup> Thus birth of the movement resulted in a nuancing of attitudes, as Fanon puts it. The feeling of isolation and struggling alone was offset by concrete experiences and new connections. Abahlali developed because other shack settlements saw an affinity with the Kennedy Road struggle. The Kennedy Road movement made connections and met people across the city and country. A struggle that began with many people seeing the councillor as the major problem “is now confronting the systemic nature of oppression”<sup>21</sup> and talking about the task that the “ancestors have giving us”: shaping the country into an anti-capitalist system.<sup>22</sup> Abahlali is “facing a big challenge,” says Zikode, because “various organisations and social movements want to absorb Abahlali ...we are aware that these organisations have got money,” he continues, “but they don’t have constituents, you know, *people*,” nor I might add a philosophy of liberation. “Abahlali is the poor struggle—struggle of the poor—therefore money will not tempt us,” Zikode proclaims, “we cannot therefore be bought”<sup>23</sup> because the poor might be “poor in life but not in mind.”<sup>24</sup>

### **Fanon today?**

That is how I left it, at the end of the article on the new translation of the *Wretched*. But here I want to say something more because I believe that the movement illuminates a number of problematics that Fanon addressed, in

important ways. In the *Wretched* Fanon had spoken of the movement of people toward the colonial urban areas and the growth of shantytowns as a kind of biological necessity. A biological decision, he says, that is a serious security threat to the urban elite. It is that necessity that determines the revolutionary force of the lumpenproletariat, as he terms that class of people who play an absolutely essential but problematical role as mediation between the town and country. A crucial weakness of spontaneity, argues Fanon in chapter 2 of the *Wretched*, is that struggles are local, fleeting and liable to be bought off, crushed or fizzle out. Thus the necessity for an organization, not any organization, but a new type of organization that “lives with the people.” The spontaneous struggle of the shackdwellers, as far as we can call it spontaneous, doesn’t look to be taken over. With Fanon, the organization necessarily comes from outside, that is to say from the urban areas to the rural. What I am talking about here is a radical not bourgeois nationalism, an organization fired in the struggle not the huckstering middle class nationalist party that Fanon criticizes in the *Wretched*. This radical organization is the product of its becoming criminalized by the colonial regime. On the run against the colonial authorities the militants are welcomed by the peasantry who have never given up their struggle against colonialism.

The shackdwellers on the other hand have developed their own organization from inside the struggle; never looking outside, they have held onto their autonomy and have resisted being taken look to be taken over. They too speak of biological necessities—taps, toilets, electricity—in terms of human dignity. At one level this expresses the maturity of the age, first that Fanon is speaking of and writing in the anti-colonial period (though we know that much of the analysis can be applied to the postcolonial period) and second in as far as the moment of independence, post-apartheid South Africa dates from 1994, not 1954 or 1964. In other words, over 30 years after the *Wretched* was written.

Perhaps more importantly is the role of radical intellectuals. Or first, more precisely, who indeed are the intellectuals? For Fanon, the intellectual plays a most problematic and important role in the anti and postcolonial struggles. Indeed they are, to a large extent, the subject and subject matter of postcolonial theory and I write a lot about Fanon’s attitude to them in *Postcolonial Imagination*. Here I only want to talk about the honest (or upright) intellectuals; the small band who have broken with bourgeois society completely. It seems in the *Wretched* that this small group (what Kant might call the men of good will) are central to the second phase.

The shackdwellers movement puts Fanon’s argument into a new light. Certainly Fanon argues that the honest intellectual becomes part of the people’s self-organization. We can see how this works in his essays on the radio where the militant’s role is to help provide a forum for the people to express their views and in this forum the intellectual speaks in a common language; but the shackdwellers movement in contemporary South Africa has given birth to its own intellectuals. It is this “authentic birth”, to use another phrase from Fanon when he spoke of women’s actions in the Algeria revolution, that is new and important, but it does not mean that intellectuals committed to changing the world have no role to play. Indeed, Fanon warns of the intellectual becoming a “common

opportunist” if he/she uncritically praises the actions of the “masses.” Instead their work becomes much more difficult since they must be in the service of the people as Fanon puts it and also encourage the self-expression of the movement. The role of the intellectual from outside is not to translate the movement but to enable it to hear itself speak and think. That is merely the barest beginning for working out the “new concepts” that are so absolutely integral to challenging the multiple crises that we face in the world.

As I put it in *Postcolonial Imagination*:

Despite the centrality of the intellectual, Fanon’s dialectic of organization does not grant a privileged site to ideas per se. In fact, Fanon implies that the intellectual is not necessarily the bearer of the intellect since the *practice of action* itself is the source of a new way of knowing. It is through reflection on such action that unexpected details and new meanings are discovered, and it is through this self-reflected knowledge that the colonized come to be freed from the colonial condition and conditioning. Although the activity of the revolutionary intellectuals makes it possible for the masses to “understand social truths,” the development of the indigenous intellect requires constant dialogue.<sup>25</sup>

It is when intellectuals make such a commitment that they run directly into university administrations and state security forces. Because despite the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal’s mission to create a world class university grounded in free academic research and discourse, it’s the idea of world class (as it is the city’s) that specifically excludes shackdwellers. Thus it views the academics who are working with Abahlali as threats to its world class, elite, goals. Such positions are not unique to South Africa (and we can see how in the U.S. decisions around tenure are often for purposes of disciplining and punishing).

In conclusion, let me quote Philani Zungi who clearly understands the materiality of such actions:

In the first struggle, when there was no freedom at all, people did not accept to be silent victims. People did not compromise. They were brave enough to put their lives at risk. Many people had so much faith that they gave up their lives to invest them in the new generation that would live in a free country. Now that we have some freedoms in law but no full freedom in reality, now that there is no better life for all, now that the government leaves shack dwellers to burn in the fires, beats us when we march and smashes up our homes and either leaves us homeless or dumps in formal jondolos in the bush why should we be silent? Why does the Municipality of Ethekwini expect Abahlali baseMjondolo to remain silent? Why are we expected to have unlimited patience while we are being attacked because ‘service delivery is coming’? Why are Abahlali baseMjondolo victimised when we claim back our humanity and the rights that we are promised with our citizenship? Why are we not allowed to work with academics at the university? Why are academics at the university not allowed to work with the poor? The answer is clear. This democracy is not for us. We must stay silent so that this truth can be kept hidden. This democracy is for the rich who will build and then enjoy themselves at uShaka, King Senzagakhona Stadium and King Shaka Airport. We will only go to these places to protect and clean up for the rich.

Today Fazel Khan, a sociologist at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), is facing charges for speaking to the media. But it is very clear to Abahlali baseMjondolo that the intention behind these charges is to get rid of Fazel from the university. He must go because he has broken the rules. With other academics, academics who are already gone from the University, he has spoken to the poor instead of for the poor. He has worked with the poor instead of with the rich in the name of the poor. Abahlali already know what the outcome of Fazel's case will be. His dismissal is the main objective of the university bosses right now.

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<sup>1</sup> *Social Identities*, (13:1) January 2007, pp.69-95.

<sup>2</sup> Frantz Fanon *The Wretched of the Earth* (translated by Richard Philcox) (New York: Grove Press, 2005), p.114.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* p.112

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Nigel Gibson (ed) *Challenging Hegemony: Social Movements and the Quest for a New Humanism in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2006), p.13.

<sup>5</sup> See Ashwin Desai *We are the Poors* (New York: Monthly Review, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> S'bu Zikode "The Third Force," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* Vol. 41, Nos. 1-2 (2006).

<sup>7</sup> This information is gleaned from Pithouse's "Our struggle is thought, on the ground, running: the University of Abahlali baseMjondolo," pp. 22, 25.

[http://www.abahlali.org/files/RREPORT\\_VOL106\\_PITHOUSE.pdf](http://www.abahlali.org/files/RREPORT_VOL106_PITHOUSE.pdf)

Pithouse notes that Zikode was committed to public participation and even became a reserve constable in Sydenham police station in 1997.

<sup>8</sup> S'bu Zikode transcribed speech made at the University of KwaZulu Natal (Durban) Centre for Civil Society Colloquium, March 4, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Noted by Jacob Bryant, "Toward Delivery and Dignity," University of KwaZulu Natal (Durban), Centre for Civil Society Research Report No. 41, p.69.

<sup>10</sup> See Raj Patel, "Adventures in Memory and the metapolitics of the land struggle in South Africa," unpublished paper, December 2005, p.11.

<sup>11</sup> S'bu Zikode, "The Third Force," in the *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 41, Nos. 1-2 (2006) pp. 185-9.

<sup>12</sup> Bishop Desmond Tutu, probably the most popular and most well known of South Africa's Black theologians was radicalized by Black Consciousness. Zikode's rhetoric highlights the importance of Black consciousness and Black theology ideas of liberation in popular consciousness of the poor in post-apartheid South Africa. Though many consider Black Consciousness an intellectual movement, it was by the mid 1980s firmly integrated into the consciousness of the popular mass movements. In contrast to the technicist ANC the ideas of Black consciousness (in contrast to any political organization that proclaims its mantle), as a notion of liberation of the mind, remains an important source of moral/psychological strength.

<sup>13</sup> Non-participation in apartheid structures was more than a tactic but a central element of South African politics that goes back to the struggle against segregationist representation in the 1930s. The struggle against apartheid from the Soweto revolt of 1976 on was largely an urban one, centered on township revolts, school boycotts and industrial actions. A central element of the strategy to make South Africa ungovernable in the mid to late 1980s was the strategy of nonpayment and boycott. In the early 1980s the nonparticipation in the tricameral elections put to death the hopes of the apartheid reformers and legitimated the anti-apartheid movement around the United Democratic Front (and its smaller rival, the National Forum). See Nigel Gibson "Why Participation is a Dirty Word in South African Politics," *Africa Today*, Vol. 37, No. 2 1990. pp. 27-52.

<sup>14</sup> Zikode, quoted in Pithouse "Coffin for the Councillor," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 41 Nos. 1-2 (2006) p.179.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted by Xin Wei Ngiam, "Taking poverty seriously: What the poor are saying and why it matters," at [www.abahlali.org](http://www.abahlali.org)

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<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, before the March 2005 action, the only people who had consulted the shackdwellers about their livelihoods and their homes were the World Bank.

<sup>17</sup> I am reminded of Rosa Parks' decision not to sit at the back of the bus as a "founding event" of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in the U.S. That Parks was a Montgomery civil rights activist and was not alone in the action is the "organization" and thought behind the activity that is often forgotten in the popularization of the story.

<sup>18</sup> Pithouse notes that though all are included, it is mostly women without young children who are able to go. He says that to be fully democratic childcare will have to be provided, though in some settlements there just simply isn't a space large enough for collective childcare arrangement. "Thought Running," op cit. n.110.

<sup>19</sup> Jacob Bryant, "Toward Delivery," op cit. p.61.

<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that the University is not a neutral party in struggles between Abahlali and the city and the academics supporting Abahlali have come under a lot of pressure to leave the University.

<sup>21</sup> Pithouse, "Coffin", p.180.

<sup>22</sup> Zikode, Speech Made at the Centre for Civil Society Colloquium March 4, 2006 at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.

<sup>23</sup> Zikode interview in Bryant, op cit. p.44.

<sup>24</sup> Zikode quoted in Pithouse, "Thought Running," op cit. p.25.

<sup>25</sup> Nigel Gibson *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2003).