

Chapter 3

Official Stories

Telling Soweto, June 16, 1976—The Appropriation of the People's Story into Official Histories

[D]ocuments are not innocent.

—Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*

To know the cause of a phenomenon is already a step taken in the direction of controlling it. To investigate and thereby understand the cause of ... disturbances is an aid to measures "deemed expedient to prevent a recurrence of similar disorders."

—Ranajit Guha, "The Prose of Counter-insurgency"

[S]uppressions of the details of the fate of individuals are the groundwork upon which larger falsifications of history are erected.

—Martin Woollacott, "South Africa's Crisis of Conscience,"
Mail and Guardian

Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I tried to recreate, out of many diverse narratives, a richly textured picture of these events of the Soweto uprising, reflective of the many experiences and perspectives of the multiplicity of individual places, persons, and events that composed it. Schoolchildren, older students, *tsotsis*, police officers, officials of the various administrative bodies, teachers, adult members of the African township community, "expert" witnesses—these were all participants of a kind in the uprising, participants defined here in the broad sense of contemporaries involved in the uprising either in action or indirectly as (eye)witnesses. Each individual has her (his) own story to tell of the uprising. In some cases, the narratives they tell as members of distinctive participant-groups (defined by such categories as race, status, occupation, age, cohort, gender, affiliation, etc., sometimes working in conjunction with each other) collectively constituted different but relatively distinct discourses. 1

Although the boundaries of these discourses are not always clear or their language or purpose necessarily distinct or unique, I have here analytically distinguished several of these discourses and the relationships of power between them. Discourses can be differentiated by their proximity to or distance from the events they seek to describe and explain, by their identification with or distinctness from collective institutions of (political) power such as that of the government or those of the resistance movements or indeed of individual participants/protagonists, and by their relative objectivity or subjectivity as reflected in the relative proportion of the factual, indicative information and the interpretative, metaphorical explanation within them.

It is to the discussion of the narratives of Soweto that are most clearly "official in character"¹ that I now turn in this chapter: to the official narrative of revolt created by the apartheid government and to the official narrative of resistance created by the African National Congress (ANC), one of the key resistance movements that has stood opposed to the government. I will describe the historical and political context in which these narratives were created, the means and methods of their construction, and their immediate and long-term (historical) purpose. The official narratives were marked both by the violence that characterized the context and by the methods of their creation. Regardless of their political incompatibility, I argue, these two discourses inadvertently, and for different reasons, made common cause in their appropriation of the experiences of participants in the uprising for their own ideological purposes and in their tendency to disregard or silence participants' voices and deemphasize their conscious will, agency, and reason—all this despite the actual identities of the protagonists in the uprising being of course of central importance to both of these discourses and determining both the meaning attributed to the uprising and the methods brought to bear against or in support of its protagonists.

It is my theory that, in the case of the state's official narrative of the uprising, the creation of historical meaning was a necessary part of the state's method for dealing with the unrest and was closely linked to its actual physical suppression.

The social and political contradictions generated by the dispensation of the South African state as well as the (mal)functioning of the state apparatus created the crisis out of which the need for this particular state discourse arose. It was part of the function of state apparatuses (such as the Cillió Commission) to maintain the state's characterization of its repressive and ideological mechanisms as essentially just and justified. When that image was fractured by the malfunctioning of all or certain agents/practices of the state, then the need to repair the image through official discourse arose. The Cillió Commission needed to prove the actions of the police "legal" and officially justify increasingly repressive methods of the state. The apartheid state therefore made its power real in two ways: through its practices, such as repressive measures of control, and through ideology, made material through the creation of an official discourse that was "fashioned from the discourse of law, epistemology, social science and common sense."² It is important to place the existence of the discourse in its relationship to state practices. To adequately describe why the state needed this official discourse, one needs to understand the defining characteristics of the South African state in the 1970s and its ideological constructs. 5

The ANC, responding from exile, was largely *reacting* both to the actual events inside the country (from afar) and to the outpouring of responses, critical and sympathetic, that quickly followed. Its leaders needed first to establish what had

happened, formulate a response and a reaction, and put in place mechanisms of support inside the country and outside as large number of youth activists began to pour across the border. In the creation of historical meaning, as in the physical repression of the rebellion, certain truths needed to be either suppressed or appropriated and certain voices needed to be silenced, just as the actual actors within the student movement needed to be apprehended or killed. In this case, where the challenge was precipitated by children, their exclusion from the official state version of this history, like their appropriation into the dominant resistance narrative created by the ANC, raises questions about their recognition as historical actors and witnesses and about a deliberate dismissal of their actions and accounts.

When the image of the state's justice has been shaken, or even shattered, it is a common and proven political strategy³ to hold an "impartial" inquiry to establish what exactly happened (the true and proven "facts"), to formally "discover" the causes of the crisis, assign blame and responsibility, and, in some cases, to make some recommendations with respect to reform and change that might prevent future crises of a similar nature. The discourse produced in this way and made manifest in the written report of such an inquiry allows us some access to the types of arguments on which a repressive capitalist state that perceived itself as functioning within a formal democratic framework might draw.

The existence of a number of opposing narratives or versions of the events in Soweto—and, as it later became apparent, all over South Africa—not only determined the form of the official state discourse. It even brought about that discourse's emergence.⁴ The official discourse, such as the one presented in the report of the Cillie Commission, needed to recover the legitimacy that the crisis of the uprising had claimed, and, in recovering that legitimacy, it needed to confront and appropriate the unofficial versions of events, which needed to be proven inconsequential. This was achieved by discursively commandeering nonofficial versions of the story into the official text. The official version, attempting to appropriate the problematic and often conflicting stories of what happened, would reconstruct the narrative in a way that conformed to the already existing ideological practices and conventions of the state. The official version of events was constructed through the creative and strategic reconstruction, manipulation, and selection of themes, statements, theories, subjects, objects, and arguments. To establish that it was functioning within a democratic mode of argument, the state discourse used language that appealed to "administrative rationality, normative redeemability and consensual values"⁵

The official discourses of the apartheid state⁶ thus systematically used and adapted modes of argument that proclaimed the state's legal and administrative rationality. Such discourses were a necessary requirement for political and

ideological control. They were intended not only to achieve the political incorporation of the dominated classes into the social relations created by a dominant class—in this case, the white South African ruling class—but also functioned, through their pedagogy, to sustain the confidence and knowledge of that dominant class. The task of inquiries into particular crises was to represent failure as temporary, or no failure at all, and to reestablish the image of administrative and legal coherence and rationality. One of the political desiderata of official discourse was therefore to retain the intellectual confidence of the National Party and of the white electorate as well of the South African Police and other functionaries within the state apparatus.⁷

The Cillie Report reflected the power of the state to bring together different, sometimes incompatible versions of the events in Soweto in such a way that the forms they took functioned to serve the strategies of the state to prove its legitimacy and to uphold the dominant ideology of apartheid on which it had based its social, economic, and political policies and structures. The official discourse realized in the report of the Cillie Commission had at least three functions. One was to discursively incorporate different versions of the same events and to bring certain bodies of (mostly scientific) knowledge to bear on them in order to create a new body of knowledge and information, which could then be used in policy decisions or strategies of social control. The second function was one of legitimation, in which the discourse attempted to repair the state's shattered image of administrative rationality and democratic ratification. Gramsci has pointed out that lapses, arbitrary actions, and excesses in the administration of justice "make an especially disastrous impression on the public,"⁸ and it is one of the functions of official discourse to dispel these impressions in the interest of maintaining social control through submission to the ideal of democratic consent and legal judgment rather than by more-coercive means, although those were simultaneously used. Finally, official discourse functioned to restore confidence in the state's rationality and competence after crisis incidents. The expert words and analyses found in commissions of inquiry intellectually affirmed the competence of the state's functionaries and exonerated the system within which they worked. **10**

The question remains why it was necessary for the government to publicly address and repair the damage done by the legitimacy crisis that the uprising represented. There are many historical examples of autocratic states letting such events unfold with impunity, never bowing to the public's demand for accountability. But, I would argue, it is in the particular nature of the South African state (insofar as it is possible to adequately describe that within the limits of this historical analysis) that we need to look for explanations why the South African government entered into this discourse. It is therefore important to understand and therefore describe the nature of the South African state or government. (See Essay: "State and Legitimacy.")

There are several questions that I will try to answer in this chapter. One is why exactly an essentially repressive state found it necessary to officially justify the punitive methods it used to intervene in situations of conflict that were the consequences of contradictions in its own structures. Some of the answers to this question lie with the particular nature of the South African state. Another lies in the goal of official discourse to provide ideological closure:

The function of official discourse is primarily to allay, suspend and close off popular doubt through an ideal and discursive appropriation of a material problem.⁹

The other question is *how* the diverse parts of the "real" story were shaped, argued, transformed, transmitted and manipulated in the official discourse. Deconstructing this official discourse of the South African state is a way of reopening the story and of challenging and questioning both the authority of the state's version of these stories and the official closure that such a report was supposed to have imposed on it. Similar questions must be put to the discourse of the ANC, which sought to impose its own historical meaning on the uprising, although, in the years immediately following the uprising, it was probably less concerned with shaping how the uprising was understood than with formulating appropriate and very practical responses to the new upsurge in resistance and the consequent repression by the apartheid government. Only after the success of the liberation struggle did the ANC try to incorporate the uprising more deliberately into a national narrative of liberation. Accompanying each section in which the making of the two official discourses and their specific historical context is described, readers will find my analysis of the purpose of these discourses.

Responses to the Event

The uprising was ignited by the death of Hector Pieterse following the confrontation between police and students gathered in front of Orlando High School and Phefeni Junior Secondary School. The report of the explosion reverberated through South Africa. For those who were older, it was a grim reminder of the massacre at Sharpeville sixteen years earlier. Uncertainty swept the townships as parents went in search of their children. "As the giant township prepared for a long night of more violence,"¹⁰ the police tried to establish some measure of control, patrolling the gathering darkness of a winter evening made suddenly more menacing¹¹ by the absence of adequate street lighting and by the smoke from numerous fires.¹² 15

Immediate Reactions

For white people, the "riot" embodied their worst nightmares about the African population spun out of control. The troubled confusion of the first day of the uprising produced many conflicting accounts and several mistakes as newspapers scrambled to bring their readers reports on the uprising and pictures and

eyewitness accounts of it.¹³ A more accurate picture of who had done the shooting and who had been armed with stones for weapons and dustbin lids for protection would emerge only later, although the exact circumstances and chronology of events were almost immediately the subject of heated debates. Desmond Tutu, then the Very Reverend Anglican Dean of Johannesburg, expressed his "deep shock and dismay."¹⁴ "Soweto Rocked by Violence," read the headline in the black newspaper, *The World*, "Blacks and Whites Die as March Becomes a Riot: 'World' Car Rushes Shot Schoolboy Riot Victim to Clinic."¹⁵ *The Star* called it "Bloody Wednesday."¹⁶

The battle for the hearts and minds of the people had begun, although the ANC, unlike the apartheid government, did not—at least not until much later, and then with considerably less frequency and fierceness—make use of coercive force to rally people to its cause or to harness the power of the youth movement in its own interests. It is an important distinction to be made in this discussion of what otherwise might seem as two equally powerful and leading "idioms of dominance."²⁶

Early Accounts

To judge by the initial reaction of government and opposition party spokesmen as well as by the newspapers' reporting of the "riots," it may have seemed at first that the uprising would be quickly stifled.²⁷ The press wrote about "death at the hands of *child* power" (emphasis added)²⁸—frightening and shocking, but hardly to be taken seriously—and even members of the opposition in Parliament thought that it needed to be "the priority of the Government to restore law and order, to deal with violence and to contain the threats that there are to the peace in South Africa."²⁹ Colin Eglin in his statement (See: Eglin's statement) before Parliament on June 17, 1976, the morning after the beginning of the uprising, made no reference to police culpability in the escalation of violence and therefore did not yet address the consequent legitimacy crisis for the state and its agents of authority. In his statement he did, however, hint at the hegemonic and political crisis confronting the state in this momentous challenge to its authority and its symbols:

[A] disturbance of a major magnitude has taken place, a disturbance which commenced as a scholars' demonstration, and developed from there into a riot against authority by people blind with *hatred and resentment against the symbols, against the institutions and against the persons associated with that authority.* [Emphasis added.]³⁰

In his statement before Parliament on the same day, the minister of police, in a swift effort to preempt the anticipated criticism of the brutal force with which the police had met a student demonstration, declared police action to have become necessary in response to the actions of the "riotous mass." He summarized the

casualties and damage and assured the public that:

[t]he police have throughout acted with the greatest measure of self-control and applied a minimum of force in the face of the biggest defiance and provocation. Where fire-arms were resorted to, it was with due consideration of the circumstances. Where it was obvious that the use of tear smoke was ineffective and the rioters acted with even greater resolution, warning shots were fired. Where, however, it was quite clear that the police would be overwhelmed and their lives seriously threatened, they fired in self-defence.³¹

30

But the pictures told a different story and outrage was instantaneous. The day after the uprising began, Sam Nzima's photograph of young Hector Pieterse appeared on front pages all over the world. Two days later, the United Nations Security Council expressed its deep shock over the "large-scale killings and wounding of Africans in South Africa, following the callous shooting of African people including schoolchildren and students demonstrating against racial discrimination on 16 June 1976," and it strongly condemned "the South African Government for its resort to massive violence against and killings of the African people including schoolchildren and students and others opposing racial discrimination."³²

(See: UN Resolutions on Soweto 1976)

Allegations of excessive use of force by the police were not immediately forthcoming from white politicians, even if they opposed the government. Colin Eglin, for example, in a speech before Parliament on June 17, 1976, said, "We believe it is the duty of the authorities to act against those who commit acts of violence, of thuggery and of murder." Among the black population, however, the shock and outrage at the actions of the police was more immediate, as the testimony of such witnesses as Sophie Tema revealed:

Some of them threw stones at the police. Then one of the police who was on the extreme right, he was in uniform and it was a White policeman, pulled out a revolver and he pointed it to the students who were more towards the right.

[...]

He aimed at the students. At that time *Stanley, our driver, screamed and said: 'Look at him, he is shooting at the kids.'* [Emphasis added.]

As the uprising continued, the press reported on numerous incidents of indiscriminate shootings and arrests in Soweto as well as on claims by the people of Soweto "that police in camouflage uniforms had terrorised people during unrest in the township." Nkosazana Dlamini, vice-president of SASO (*South African Students' Organization*) and member of the ANC underground inside South Africa, called what happened on June 16 "brutal police killings." Oliver Tambo, the exiled acting president of the ANC, spoke before the UN General Assembly on October

26, 1976. He called police reaction to the students' demonstration "butchery" and described the South African Police as "Vorster's bloodthirsty police" who "wantonly killed" young people in Soweto. (See: Tambo's Speech)³³ Calls for the resignation of the minister of *Bantu Education* and of his deputy were immediate.³⁴ A day later, on Friday, June 18, 1976, the prime minister, John Vorster, explained in Parliament that the police were "actively engaged" in restoring order and that there was "definitely" no reason for panic. By turns patronizing and powerfully authoritative, he assured the public that it would be kept informed of developments in the crisis "as frequently as is necessary," but he also declared that "[t]his government will not be intimidated," that "law and order" would be maintained "*at all costs*" (emphasis added).³⁵ The costs were to be high. By the fifth day, 124 people³⁶ had died, the uprising showed no signs of abating and had spread like a *veldfire* across the country. In the allegations of excessive use of force by the police lay a profound crisis of legitimacy (of its institutions, agents, and decisions) for the government. The attacks on the symbols and institutions of the apartheid state were a momentous challenge to the state's authority, as Eglin had pointed out, and they indicated a political crisis that called into question the structures of apartheid and the system of thought it was premised on:

[A] city like Soweto could not, within the space of a few hours, be turned into a cauldron of violence and hatred unless there was something *fundamentally wrong* with the society and unless there was something wrong in the relationships between the Black society and the [white] authorities. [Emphasis added.]³⁷

35

Together with the destruction and violence itself, as well as the deaths of many Africans and of two whites, the inability of the black and white police force to contain the uprising or to control events as they unfolded everywhere at once caused—in the words of Sir De Villiers Graaff, liberal member of the opposition in Parliament—a profound "loss of confidence in respect of future race relations." It exposed "the full inadequacy of the Government's policy for the urban African."³⁸

Secondary Discourses

The immediacy or abruptness generated by shock and surprise quickly gave way to secondary discourses that included the "various perspectives" of experts, which gave those disclosures depth in time as well as historical and social context and lent them political legitimacy from which meanings and explanations could be derived.

In the report that the Cillié Commission was to produce, the same instant—the moment of the deadly confrontation between students and the police—was invested with a background of "the events and circumstances that led to the disturbances" spread over 17 years and 61 pages. It created a narrative that destroyed "the entropy of the first [moment], its raw material,"⁴⁵ by analyzing

causes, reasons, and contributing factors. The initial reaction of shock and terror remained, however, in a basic form in this later discourse, where it reappeared—now reinforced with data and expert opinion—and helped, I will argue, to "prove" that the uprising was spontaneous, unplanned, incited by agitators. The ANC too needed desperately to find out what had happened, respond to the needs of its constituencies, and make use of this crisis for its own renewal.

Official statements such as that by the minister of police and the report of the Commission of Inquiry were, of course, records and observations contaminated by bias, judgment, and opinion. Quite obviously not the voices of impartial arbiters, state officials like Kruger and Cillié spoke in "total complicity"⁴⁶ with the agents (the police) of the state and its ideology. But even the Cillié Commission, and its report, must be seen in perspective. If the uprising represented a major challenge to the South African state, it had also introduced a "sentiment of doubt,"⁴⁷ resulting from the fact that violence had been employed against children and from the way the state had been caught by surprise.

The uprising had made it inescapably obvious that there were limits to what the state knew and could control: it did not know what the students were saying, nor, literally and figuratively, could it understand their language(s); it could not fathom how they had organized themselves and how they had achieved those skills; and, with few exceptions individuals within the apartheid administration could not begin to understand the experience of oppression, which was not part of the "colonial imaginary" (Edelstein, see Chapter 2, Section 1: "Introduction," and "Du Randt").⁴⁸

In other words, the uprising had undercut and circumvented "colonial circuits of information." The sense of the unknowable that this had produced, as well as the uncertainty and doubt that were a result of the uprising, "threatened the entire colonial psyche and its moralizing and civilizing claims."⁴⁹ Despite the fact that some officials, such as the chief commissioner of Bantu Affairs, F.B. Du Randt, wrote that "if these riots have underlined a single fact for me, then it is that every human being needs to be treated at all times with decency and justice," the government tried to resolve the crisis by means of further acts of violence, both discursive and physical.⁵⁰

The government's discourse was not homogeneous, nor were its officials—contrary to public memory—completely ignorant of what was happening in Soweto. A secret document from June 8 1976 reveals that the two officials in charge of the administration of Soweto, Du Randt and Wilsnach, were well aware of the looming crisis:

GEHEIM

	SECRET
NOTULE VAN DIE VERGADERING VAN DIE KO-ORDINERENDE KOMITEE VIR DIE WITWATERSRAND, GEHOU OP DINSDAG 8 JUNIE 1976.	In MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE WITWATERSRAND, HELD JUNE 8, 1976
[...]	[...]
3. Staking deur Skoolkinders. [....]	3. Boycotts by school children. [....]
3.5 Mnr. Wilsnach [Wes-Randse Bantoesake-Administrasieraad] sê die staking is nie so seer teen Afrikaans as taal nie, maar teen 'n Afrikaanse regering. Die kinders word gebruik om 'n konfrontasie met die blankes af te dwing. Sodanige konfrontasie word glo vir einde Augustus 1976 beplan en skoolstakings is net 'n inleiding.	3.5 Mr. Wilsnach (<i>West Rand Bantu Administration Board</i>) says the strikes were not so much against Afrikaans as a language, but against an Afrikaans government. The children are being used to force a confrontation with the whites. Such a confrontation is apparently planned for the end of August 1976 and the school boycotts are just an introduction.
3.6 Mnr. Ackerman [Departement van Bantoe-onderwys] meen dat Tuislandverteenwoordigers moontlik met die aangeleentheid bemoeid is want hulle is meestal anti-regering gesind.	3.6 Mr. Ackerman [Department of <i>Bantu Education</i>] is of the opinion that representatives of the Homelands are possibly meddling in this issue because they are generally disposed to be anti-government.
3.7 Die Voorsitter [du Randt - Voorsitter en Hoofbantoesakekommissaris, Witwatersrand] sê dat daar juis deur sekere swart leiers versoek is dat pamflette aangaande verhoogde bustariewe nie in Afrikaans gedruk word nie want Afrikaans word as sinoniem met die Regering beskou.	3.7 Chairman du Randt says that it was for that very reason that some of the black leaders requested that pamphlets about the raised bus tariffs not be printed in Afrikaans, because Afrikaans would be seen as synonymous with the government. ⁵¹

this document as in so many others,
inconsistencies and contradictions are particularly clear. At times, insight—"the
strikes were not so much against Afrikaans as a language, but against an
Afrikaans government"—vies with prejudice—"the children are being used"—and
momentary perspicuity is lost to habits of racism. (See: Du Randt's comments)

While self-evident, bias, once recognized and named, needs to be proved. The
components of the discourse, factual and interpretative, need to be examined for
how they were brought together to produce a certain version of the events in
Soweto. The way Kruger, and later other government spokesmen, combined fact

and comment (often implicit or explicit value judgments and assessments) and the proportion in which these elements of language stood to each other took the statements beyond a simple account of what happened to impress on them meaning and interpretation. One result that emerged from such interpretative intervention and invention was that the protagonists of the uprising, the historical actors at its center, appear, in the end, not as students but as "rioters."

Neither was the ANC an impartial arbiter. It too impressed its own meanings and interpretations on these events, quickly declaring the participants heroes, publicly claiming its own hand in the organization of the uprising, while rapidly organizing its own practical and discursive responses. The ANC faced its own set of challenges: Almost immediately after the beginning of the uprising, it would need to organize itself to meet the needs of those young participants in the uprising who were secretly crossing the borders out of South Africa to flee police persecution and who looked to the ANC for help and inspiration. Even more urgent was the ANC's need to articulate and make public its own responses to what had happened. All of this was, of course, made much more difficult by its status as an illegal organization and by its distance (physically but also psychologically) from the events within the country. And there was the inevitable time delay. Consequently, the ANC's effort to gather information was greatly complicated and hindered, as were its ability to plan practical reactions and articulate responses that would engage with the debates in South Africa and would reach the intended audience. **50**

State practices and their consequences may have determined the conditions for the emergence of the official government discourse. But it would not remain the sole discourse for long. The people who had challenged the state's ideology and practices would not long remain silent. Almost immediately, participants in the uprising, witnesses of it, and members of the African community and of African institutions created their own discourse out of the alternative, unofficial versions of this historical event. The official discourse constantly, if not always explicitly, addressed these alternative, unofficial versions. (See essay: "Winnie Mandela" also later in this chapter.) Out of the many versions of the events in Soweto opposing that of the government, the ANC's eventually emerged as the dominant—the official—story of the resistance.

Notes:

Note 1: Ranajit Guha distinguishes between three types of discourses: primary, secondary, and tertiary, each separated from the other by "the degree of its formal and/or acknowledged (as opposed to real and/or tacit) identification with an official point of view, by the measure of its distance from the event to which it refers, and by the ration of the distributive and integrative components in its narrative." See Ranajit Guha, "The Prose of Counter-insurgency," *Subaltern Studies*, no. 2 (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 3.

Note 2: Frank Burton and Pat Carlen, *Official Discourse: On Discourse Analysis, Government Publications, Ideology, and the State* (London: Routledge and Kegan

Paul, 1979), 34.

Note 3: This is not just true for South Africa (see Adam Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth-Century South Africa* [Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1990]) but also for other contexts, such as that of England (see Frank Burton and Pat Carlen, *Official Discourse: On Discourse Analysis, Government Publications, Ideology and the State* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979) and the United States (see the so-called Kerner Report: *United States, Kerner Commission, Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder* [Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968).

Note 4: Burton and Carlen, *Official Discourse*, 35.

Note 5: *Ibid.*, 46.

Note 6: The most comprehensive treatment of a series of such discourses, reports of commissions of inquiry that stood in the "grand tradition" of apartheid, has been undertaken by Ashforth: "[A] commission of inquiry ... is a theatre in which a central 'truth' of state power is ritually played out before a public audience" to help establish and reproduce the power of the state (*The Politics of Official Discourse*, 9).

Note 7: Burton and Carlen, *Official Discourse*, 46 and 48.

Note 8: Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and tr. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), 246: "[T]he hegemonic apparatus is more sensitive in this sector, to which arbitrary actions on the part of the police and political administration may also be referred."

Note 9: Burton and Carlen, *Official Discourse*, 13-14. Simplified, the state used official discourse to justify its practices and ideology and to buy time in which it repaired damage and reestablished control.

Note 10: Don Knowler, "One Shell—Then All Hell Broke Loose," *The Star*, Thursday, 17 June 1976.

Note 11: Though *The World* reports that the "crack new Anti-Urban Terrorism Unit" of the South African Police, "hand-picked men from stations all over the Witwatersrand," had been sent into Soweto, June 16 was the first time the unit (according to police statements, a counter insurgency unit from Maleeuskop), had "seen action." Many of the policemen in Soweto on that day were inexperienced and unfamiliar with the territory.

Note 12: In many cases, newspapers report, firemen "refused to go to fight the blaze" (*The Star*, 17 June 1976). "One shell—then all hell broke loose." Sophie Thema reports in *The World* (17 June 1976) that students had overturned cars and set them ablaze. Though "a fire engine passed by almost immediately afterwards," it did not stop. "[T]he firemen were afraid to engage students who were still milling about in their hundreds," she writes.

Note 13: On the morning of 17 June 1976, *The World* reports, incorrectly, that during the first day of the uprising *four* whites were killed—"two policemen, who were stoned to death, a motorist was dragged out of his car and stabbed, and an official of the West Rand Administration Board, who was hacked to death"—and only two blacks.

Note 14: "Oh God, Help Us, Dean Tutu Pleads," *Rand Daily Mail*, 17 June 1989.

Note 15: *The World*, 17 June 1976.

Note 16: Don Knowler, "One Shell—Then All Hell Broke Loose," *The Star*, 17 June 1976.

Note 17: James Kruger, minister of police [his full title was Minister of Justice and Police], statement before Parliament, 16 June 1976, quoted verbatim in "Riot—Kruger Speaks," *The World*, 17 June 1976.

Note 18: James Kruger, minister of police, House of Assembly debates, Hansard vol. 20 (17 June 1976), 9640.

Note 19: *Ibid.*, 9642.

Note 20: Colin W. Eglin, statement, House of Assembly debates, Hansard vol. 20 (17 June 1976), 9631.

Note 21: African National Congress, "People of South Africa—The African National Congress Calls on You. Amandla Soweto!" Flyer distributed by leaflet bomb, Johannesburg, 8 July 1976. For this ANC document, see the Web site of the ANC: (Historical Documents, Major Campaigns and Struggles—III, Underground Documents [accessed 9 September 2004]).

Note 22: Many of them were "comrades" who had been former Robben Island prisoners, among them Joe Gqabi, who was assassinated in 1981, and Laurence Nzame who died in detention in 1977. "He was trade unionist. This is the old man who would teach us about the ANC, about the struggle, to understand correctly." Zakes Molotsi, interview by Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, tape recording, Johannesburg, May 1995.

Note 23: Oliver Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising" (extract from the Political Report of the National Executive Committee to the second National Consultative Conference, Lusaka, 16-23 June 1985), in *Preparing for Power: Oliver Tambo Speaks*, ed. Adelaide Tambo (New York: George Braziller, 1988), 129.

Note 24: Oliver Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising," 118.

Note 25: Adelaide Tambo, introduction to "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising," 115.

Note 26: Ranajit Guha, "Discipline and Mobilize," in *Subaltern Studies*, no. 7, ed. Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 108.

Note 27: Colin W. Eglin, before Parliament: "The question is: Where do we go from here? It affects all of us. I do not believe that we can afford to sit back and wait for another explosion." Hansard vol. 20 (17 June 1976), 9637.

Note 28: *Rand Daily Mail*, 17 June 1976.

Note 29: Colin W. Eglin, before Parliament, Hansard vol. 20 (17 June 1976), 9632.

Note 30: Colin W. Eglin, House of Assembly, Hansard vol. 20 (17 June 1976), 9631.

Note 31: James Kruger, minister of police, House of Assembly, Hansard vol. 20, (17 June 1976), 1241-44.

Note 32: United Nations Security Council resolution, *Situation in South Africa—Killings and Violence by the Regime in South Africa in Soweto and Other Areas*, S/RES/392 (1976), 19 June 1976. See: (Historical Documents, United

Nations, United Nations in the Struggle Against Apartheid, Selected United Nations Documents on Apartheid 1946-1994, Security Council resolution: Situation in South Africa—Killings and violence by the apartheid regime in South Africa in Soweto and other areas, S/RES/392 (1976), 19 June 1976 [accessed 9 September 2004]).

Note 33: Colin W. Eglin, House of Assembly, Hansard vol. 20 (17 July 1976), 9631-32; Sophie Tema, testimony, 21 September 1976, SAB K345, vol. 139, file 2/3, part 1, Commission Testimony vols. 9 and 10; South African Institute of Race Relations, *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa: 1977* (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1978), 112; Nkosazana Dlamini, "The ANC Is the Answer," *Sechaba: Official Organ of the African National Congress South Africa* 11, no. 2 (1977): 31; Oliver Tambo, "Support Our People Until Power Is Restored to Them," speech, Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 26 October 1976, reprinted as "The Victory Of Our Cause Is Assured," in *Sechaba* 11, no. 2 (1977); (Historical Documents, United Nations, United Nations in the Struggle Against Apartheid, Speeches by Oliver Tambo to the United Nations Committees and Conferences, Support Our People Until Power Is Restored To Them, Statement at the Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, New York, October 26, 1976 [accessed 9 September 2004]).

Note 34: Colin W. Eglin and R. M Cadman, House of Assembly, Hansard vol. 20 (17 June 1976), 9639.

Note 35: John B. Vorster, prime minister, House of Assembly, Hansard vol. 62 (18 June 1976), 9696.

Note 36: This is the official number published in the Cillie Report; the unofficial numbers tend to be much higher. South Africa, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16th of June 1976 to the 28th of February 1977* [hereafter cited as *Cillie Report*] (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1980).

Note 37: Colin W. Eglin, Thursday, House of Assembly, Hansard vol. 20 (17 June 1976), 9632.

Note 38: Sir De Villiers Graaff, House of Assembly, Hansard (24 June 1976), 10429-30.

Note 39: Adam Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth-Century South Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 9.

Note 40: Robert J. Thornton, "The Shooting at Uitenhage, South Africa, 1985: The Context and Interpretation of violence," *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 2 (1990): 218. Thornton points out that this is to be expected from authoritarian systems that need to "continually ... pre-empt the space of radically opposed utterances and so to prevent them from being uttered."

Note 41: The public was informed of the appointment of the Commission by Government Notice No. 1187, dated 2 July 1976.

Note 42: SAB K345, Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16th of June 1976 to the 28th of February 1977.

Note 43: Helen Suzman, outspoken opposition Member of Parliament, called such routinely used arguments (for example the one that South African blacks are better off than anyone else in Africa), "good old chestnuts." Although according the Cillie Report "considerable value in that it analysed the causes of the unrest and contained an unmistakable indictment of government policy," she also commented that the Commission did not reveal anything that anyone critical of apartheid and aware of race relations in South Africa would not already have known, "nothing we had not known for years": that influx control, pass laws,

migration, inferior Bantu Education, low wages, inadequate housing and transportation were all contributing causes to the uprising, that the issue of the introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in African schools was "just the catalyst." Helen Suzman, *In No Uncertain Terms: Memoirs* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1993), 182 and 201; and Helen Suzman, interview by Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, tape recording, Johannesburg, April 1995.

Note 44: Burton and Carlen, *Official Discourse*, 13. The Commission of Inquiry on whose investigations the Cillié Report was based was criticized both in the public and in the press for the narrowness of its terms of reference, the selection of its sole chairman, and the packing of witnesses.

Note 45: Guha, "Prose of Counter-insurgency," 18.

Note 46: *Ibid.*, 15.

Note 47: Premesh Lalu, "The Grammar of Domination and the Subjection of Agency: Colonial Texts and Modes of Evidence," in *History and Theory*, Theme Issue 39 (December 2000), 58.

Note 48: F.B. Du Randt, commissioner of Bantu Affairs [*Hoofbantoesakekommissaris*,] Witwatersrand, Department of Bantu-Administration and Development, Memorandum to the Cillié Commission, 23 September 1976, National Archives, SAB K345, file 3, part 2/2/1/2-1.

Note 49: Lalu, "The Grammar of Domination and the Subjection of Agency," 53 and 57.

Note 50: Du Randt, Memorandum to the Cillié Commission, 23 September 1976, National Archives, SAB K345, file 3, part 2/2/1/2-1.

Note 51: Secret Minutes of Meeting, Co-Ordinating Committee For The Witwatersrand, June 8, 1976, National Archives, SAB K345, file 3, part 2/2/1/2-1.